

Dear Highline Students and Families,

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year! I am excited to get started. We are making progress on student achievement, and this year we'll be building on those successes as we prepare all students for college, career, and citizenship.

I want to take this opportunity to reiterate our vision of all students college-ready and state why that's so vitally important. When a student steps over the threshold leading from high school graduation to LIFE, we want to make sure she faces an array of *open* doors. Each student should have choices and options about her next steps. In order for that to happen, the mindset of students – and parents – must be focused on post-high school education. Not *if* a student will attend but *what* they will choose—two-year or four-year college, technical school, apprenticeship, or some other training program.

I want every Highline student to hear a message that says college ---some form of education or training beyond high school--is where they are headed. We are working to create a culture of high expectations for all students, a culture that says, "Well, of course, you're going to college."

In our high schools, a college-going culture should be like air; something students are immersed in, something they're breathing constantly, so that post-secondary education becomes an inevitable ticket to a better future.

In our middle schools, our goal is to make sure every student envisions an exciting future for himself. We will be talking to our middle schoolers about the College Bound Scholarship, which pays college tuition and books to students who keep their grades up and stay out of trouble. We aim to make learning exciting and to show students how their learning connects to their interests and dreams.

In our elementary schools, we want students to learn the importance of becoming a strong reader, writer, mathematician, and scientist and to begin to see how these skills are connected to their goals and aspirations. Elementary school is not too soon for children to be hearing about college, and we want to plant that seed early.

Every student prepared for college, career, and citizenship is a student prepared for life and a bright future. Together, as educators and parents, we have the ability to stack the odds so that our students - and the generation to follow them - will not have to experience the challenges that come with a lack of education.

I have great confidence and pride in our teachers and staff who work with our children every day. I know that when we team up – parents, students, and educators – every Highline student can cross that graduation threshold with abundant opportunities in store.

Sincerely,
John P. Welch
Superintendent