

Update – December 22, 2020

Dear Parents, Patrons, Staff, and Students,

Boy, it has been a while since you have seen one of these from me. While we have been extremely busy taking care of some necessary reports for different entities, we can also say things have ran rather smoothly the past month. I am so pleased we have arrived at Christmas break. If you were to ask me back in September if we would make it to Christmas still holding school, I would have bet the other way in a heartbeat. I am not only proud of the fact we have made it to this point, I am also proud of how we got here. I would like to take a moment and thank a few groups of people responsible for our achievement.

- Staff – While you are not perfect, there is no doubt in my mind each and every one of you is a miracle worker. You have made incomprehensible sacrifices for the children of this community. If your worth to society was ever in doubt, I truly believe this pandemic has solidified you as the glue that holds our society together. I challenge anyone to find a district where the staff has offered more options to students and families during these unprecedented times, and for the most part done so quite well. I am proud to be considered a staff member of the Blackfoot School District #55, what an amazing FAMILY!
- Parents – This whole situation has not been easy on you. The constant uncertainty and a superintendent who could change his mind in a heartbeat are a lot to handle. We could never have made it to this point without your patience and support. Each of you has been asked to make sacrifices and possibly take the lead in your child(ren)'s learning on a moment's notice. Your willingness to support our expectations and procedures has been unparalleled. I truly am hopeful things will improve in the months to come, and we won't have to put so much pressure on you as parents. Thank you for your support through these unprecedented times, without it we could not do what we do.
- School Board Members – You have been thrust into an unenviable position, balancing the desires and needs of so many different stakeholders, all the while with little to no room for consensus. I have been amazed at your ability to listen and make agonizing decisions that will never be universally accepted. Your support of our staff, our community, and me, as the bumbling leader, has been unwavering. We are not always in 100% agreement, but I could not work for a finer school board in the entire state. Thank you for your service and dedication to the children of this amazing community.
- Patrons – Blackfoot is the best kept secret in Eastern Idaho. I am never surprised when I work with individuals from outside the area and I constantly hear, "I never knew Blackfoot had this", "This is amazing, I never knew Blackfoot would do this", "The people here are so great and willing to lend a hand". I am never surprised, because it is not a secret to me. Blackfoot, you are an amazing community, there is none other like

you. This community has never given up on its schools, even when things could have looked better. Thank you for your support and never giving up on us.

I am not sure I have ever been so happy to see the coming of a new year. For me, this year has felt like 5 years. I hope when we have a chance to look back on 2020 we will recall our triumphs rather than our short comings. We were faced with a situation like nothing I have ever seen before, and I truly believe we are stronger and better because of it. Here's to 2020 and all the unexpected twists and turns, and down right "the sky is falling", that have taught us lessons we never knew we could learn.

I am SOOOOO hopeful for 2021. I hope we will continue to see our staff perform miracles, our parents be supportive and patient, and our community continue to do what it does best – come together and do what needs to be done. I look forward to amazing opportunities in 2021. One such opportunity has the chance to set the Blackfoot School District and the community of Blackfoot apart for all the others in Eastern Idaho. The upcoming new year brings so many possibilities. I can't wait to see what 2021 has in store for Blackfoot. No matter what comes our way, I have no doubt Blackfoot will not only overcome, but prosper.

Thank you for your trust in me, I never take it for granted. Thank you for your patience with me and my uncontrollable passion for supporting our children in our community, sometimes it gets the best of me. May I take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and VERY Happy New Year!

God Bless!

Brian Kress