

Greetings Parents and Students:

School is back! School begins on August 17th and I know there is great excitement in the air from not only the parents and some students, but maybe most of all- district and school staff. As the recently appointed Interim Superintendent, I know I am very excited for this next year to start. I believe it is going to be the best one yet! I want to extend a warm welcome to each and every student and I want to extend an invitation to each parent/guardian to be highly involved with your child's education. Working together, we can ensure your child learns at higher levels.

So what's new this year? Well for one thing, a sea of bright green t-shirts. Twice a month you will see a sea of green t-shirts. The following businesses have partnered with the district to purchase a shirt for every single district employee: San Juan Credit Union, Resolute Energy Corp, MHTN Architects, Blue Mountain Meats, Grand County Credit union, and Energy Fuels. These companies have ensured that no tax dollars have been spent to purchase the shirts, and I wish to recognize and thank these partners for being involved in the lives of children. Why a sea of green shirts? The shirts have a couple of specific purposes.

First, they promote our theme and focus for the year. Printed on the front is our SJ Quest Model. The **SJ QUEST model** stands for **Q**uality **E**ducation **S**ystem **T**ools. In all schools we are relentlessly striving to implement research based tools of support that are consistently found in highly successful schools. These systems of support for our schools take into account the needs for all students. Those research based tools include elements such as:

- positive behavior support systems to provide safe and inviting schools.
- professional learning communities (PLC's) to provide specific and focused teacher collaboration.
- comprehensive curriculum alignment to support effective delivery and timely and focused interventions/extensions.
- meaningful heritage, language, and culture experiences to help our students to feel connected.
- blended learning opportunities to help our students be prepared for the 21st century and jobs of tomorrow.
- successful recruiting and retention strategies to ensure a healthy talent pool.

On the back of the shirts, we have our creed for the year: "To Empower." "To Empower" our students to reach new heights in their lives is the reason we go to work each day. It is the driving "Why" for all that we do. This will be printed in English, Navajo, Ute, and Spanish.

Secondly, the shirts promote unity within our organization. We have a great SJSJ team; we are approximately 500 strong, and it takes all of us to be successful. There truly are no unimportant jobs in our organization. Likewise, there are no less important schools. These shirts help unite us from North to South in our focus to develop highly successful schools.

How can parents/guardians help in these efforts of implementing the SJ Quest model? Every effort you make to support your child's learning, will support success in the SJ Quest model. However, today I want to focus on one most critical way parents/guardian support the model: Attendance. I ask that each of you closely monitor your child's attendance record. All the best improvements in schools are worth nothing to the child who is not in attendance to benefit from them. During this summer, I was

very concerned as I reviewed the chronic absenteeism reports from our district. Far too many students are missing over 10 and even 20 days of school. Research is very clear that high absenteeism has a profound negative effect on student learning. I encourage each parent/guardian to limit your child to no more than 8 days absent this coming year. To do this, one must be very proactive in scheduling things within one's control to be placed outside of the regular school day. I realize there are situations with extreme and extenuating circumstances outside one's control, and those cases certainly do not apply here. Still, any and all help in this area by parents will be greatly appreciated by not only me, but also your child's classroom teacher.

It is my belief that every child deserves an effective teacher within a highly successful school. As Superintendent, it will be my goal to facilitate a system where the Board of Education, staff, parents, students, and stakeholders are unified in vision and effort to provide just that for all 3,000 students attending a SJSD school. Please join us in our QUEST to serve your child and all children in San Juan School District and "To Empower" them to new heights. Thank you so much for your support in making this a great year!