

## **Here's a Shout-Out to Our Rural Educators**

Rural schools offer unique advantages, especially in the close connections between teachers, staff, and students. However, it's essential to recognize that our students will likely compete for jobs and opportunities not only locally but also statewide or even globally.

Therefore, as we prepare for teacher appreciation next month, I want to take this opportunity to focus on the many important roles that teachers and educators play in our rural school district to prepare students for their futures.

### **Wearing many hats**

One thing that makes working in rural schools like Edgar unique is the many hats we all must wear every day. From in the classroom, to coaching and advising, to assisting on educational improvement efforts, teachers indeed fill many roles. For example, curriculum is essential to every district's program. In Edgar, all teachers are involved in reviewing and selecting resources to support teaching and learning. We have an ongoing process for this, and teachers spend many hours outside the classroom participating in selecting, reviewing, and implementing new curricula. Similarly, to effectively prepare students, teachers must remain current in their professional learning, too.

### **Staff is always learning, too.**

The Excellence in Teaching Program (ETP) is CESA 9's Educator Preparation Program. Edgar currently has several teachers enrolled in this program to obtain their Reading Teacher 316 license. This 18-month licensure program consists of coursework, clinical experience, and a capstone portfolio. The coursework is grounded in the science behind how children learn to read. The research-informed content and practices embedded within the program expand the teachers' knowledge base and further prepare them to meet a wide range of literacy needs. I am excited to share that Edgar will have 12 staff members with the 316 reading licensure by May 2025.

The benefits of this type of commitment and collaboration are evident in the successful recent implementation of the English language arts curriculum and our math team's success.

### **Working beyond the classroom**

Often, the end of the school day does not mean the end of the workday for our staff. We know that not all learning happens in the classroom. Teachers and other staff members

step up to organize academic enhancements. For example, a favorite program in Edgar is “A Walk in Their Shoes” and it is spearheaded by Colin Hanson. The mission of this program extends beyond Edgar into Marathon County and even beyond. This program provides students access to powerful speakers, authors, and other individuals who have first-hand experience with contemporary issues. This effort is to help students develop a broader understanding of the issues they hear about on social media and in the news, and give them the inspiration that one person can affect change. It is activities like this that demonstrate the dedication of our staff to preparing students as global citizens.

### **Extending our appreciation**

I want to recognize all the staff members who coach or advise academic or athletic co-curricular activities, plus all those who work on our plays, musicals, FFA, Future Business Leaders of America, to name a few. These sorts of opportunities expand the student's understanding of the larger world and help them feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to our school. This is so important to helping all students not just survive through their school experience, but to thrive!

I hope you'll join me in thanking our resourceful and knowledgeable staff for their dedication to providing a comprehensive educational program in the Edgar School District. Our teachers find ways to serve diverse needs, develop talents, and inspire the aspirations of our students. When you see us celebrating educators in May, please remember that our staff are dedicated from early morning to sometimes late in the evening. Their wide range of duties range from ensuring we provide a current curriculum to professional learning; delivering a high level of teaching and learning; coaching our teams and advising our activities. We simply can't thank them enough for the work they do to educate and nurture our youth!