

Hello Families!



Welcome back to a new school year at Kahlotus!

Our staff is excited to welcome all our students and especially our new families. In addition, this year we are pleased to introduce several new staff members: [Julia Saenz](#), our new Transitional Kindergarten teacher; [Corri Ellis](#), our new 7-12-teacher (teaching ELA, Business, Entrepreneurship, Personal Finance, and Publishing and Computer Applications); [Taylor Bourbon](#), our new paraeducator; and [Timber Frohreich](#), our new Social and Emotional support specialist.

We are grateful for your support as we experience a [few new changes this year](#).

[Early release Wednesdays](#) are part of our Kahlotus professional development strategy. In a community meeting last year, our families, citizens, staff, and students shared their hopes and expectations for student learning. Participants expressed that they would like to see our students experience engaging and rigorous learning that is hands-on, purposeful, and prepares our students for life. We are eager to explore and implement the leadership and instructional practices to make that happen for our Kahlotus students.

As in all businesses, professionals must commit to continuous improvement throughout the life of their careers. In the past, professional learning opportunities took place almost exclusively in the two days before the start of the school year. This year, we will be using the Wednesday time for staff development, focused study, and examination of our students' performances, and deep conversation in order to make changes in our students' learning.

[A new schedule](#) If you haven't already, soon you will notice changes in our high school students' learning—with a focus on projects, community involvement, computers and robotics, personal finance, business, engineering, and a more engaging English and Language Arts program.

Our new schedule in the high school offers us an opportunity to continuously improve the learning environment for our middle and high school students.

Here's how: Traditional teaching and learning relies on students working through text book assignments, lectures, quizzes, homework, etc. This kind of learning, focused primarily on accumulating knowledge, can easily be accomplished in 45-50 minutes. However, our new schedule of 90 minute periods allows teachers and students the additional time to set up experiments, "dig into" more active learning, develop and learn through projects and research, get out into the community, etc. Our secondary teachers will continue to develop instructional practice to create more active learning so that our students feel like their learning is purposeful, interesting, challenging, and engaging.

In the words of one teacher who was summing up our hopes for this year: "We want a school that our kids want to run to every day." We'll be working to make that goal come true.

One evening soon I will be inviting you to join me for a ["Dessert and Discussion with the Superintendent"](#) in order to visit together about our goals for teaching and learning this year, the changes I've described above, and your own insights, questions, and hopes for the new school year. Expect that invitation soon.

Please reach out to me if you'd like to visit, or if you'd like to come in and see our students and staff "in action!" My door is always open! ~[Kate](#) 😊