



Message from Superintendent Mike McGrory

After much reflection, I have decided to retire at the end of this school year as Superintendent of the Ottumwa Community School District. This was not an easy decision, as serving as the Superintendent of Ottumwa Schools has genuinely been one of the greatest honors and most rewarding experiences of my professional career.

From the day I arrived, Julie and I were welcomed with open arms, and Ottumwa quickly became a special place we are proud to call home. I want to extend my deepest gratitude to this incredible community and to our parents for your unwavering support of our students, schools, and staff. Your belief in public education and your commitment to making Ottumwa the best are making an incredible difference.

I am so fortunate to be part of a team of caring and talented educators who are second to none. Each day, our teachers and support staff work selflessly and tirelessly, and give their very best to help our students grow and succeed. The passion, dedication, and care they bring every day have inspired me and made leading this district an incredible privilege.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to my outstanding administrative team for their unwavering commitment and sacrifices in helping turn our district's vision into reality. Your leadership and dedication have made the many recent improvements and positive changes possible. It has been a true honor to lead alongside you.

Our school improvement efforts would not have been possible without the leadership and vision of our dynamic school board. During these politically turbulent times, our school board has been a pillar of civility, professionalism, and a model of effectiveness. Their steadfast commitment to providing our educators with the resources and support needed for student success has been unparalleled, and it has been a pleasure to collaborate with such a dedicated and progressive group of individuals.

And, of course, I want to thank our amazing students. They are the heart of our work and the reason we do what we do. They continue to impress, inspire, and uplift me every single day. You have made my time as superintendent both enjoyable and deeply fulfilling.

When we launched the *Be the Best* initiative, our goal was to transform Ottumwa Schools into one of the premier districts in the state—a true destination district. The progress we've made — from facility improvements, grade reconfiguration, and program expansion to the strengthening of our culture and systems — has been remarkable. We are a growing and thriving district that has seen dramatic gains in academic performance, including one of the highest graduation



rates in Iowa. Our students now have more opportunities than ever before—academically, in activities, and through innovative programs that prepare them for bright futures. I am proud of our commitment to supporting wellness, which includes providing all students with free breakfast and lunch, as well as offering free three- and four-year-old preschool in one of the state's top facilities.

We have also made tremendous strides in providing state-of-the-art facilities that allow our educators to teach and our students to learn in first-class learning environments all accomplished without going to bond and without raising taxes. Perhaps most importantly, these collective efforts have led to a cultural transformation—instilling pride, optimism, and confidence in the future of Ottumwa Schools.

As I step away from the role of superintendent, please know that I will always be cheering for the continued success of our students and our district. I will always be a Bulldog at heart—proud of all that we have accomplished together and excited for what the future holds for the district.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not thank my supportive wife, Julie, and our four wonderful children for their unconditional love and support over the years. I look forward to the new adventures that lie ahead for the McGrorys.

Thank you again for the incredible honor of serving as superintendent of Ottumwa Schools. It has truly been a privilege and one of the most meaningful chapters of my career.

With deep gratitude,

Mike McGrory

Superintendent

Once a Bulldog, always a Bulldog!