

Dear Wellington Community:

We are excited the new school year is just around the corner and look forward to school hallways and classrooms echoing with the excited voices of students and staff. Truly there is much to be excited about during the upcoming school year as we seek to implement the district's new vision: *USD 353 will be leaders of innovative, future-focused learning by bringing schools, community, and students together to adapt to the changing world.* Truly our world is changing in dramatic ways, and our schools must stay ahead of the changes to ensure each student experiences success. One innovation we are proud to announce is a new technology initiative at Wellington Middle School.

During the 17-18 school year, the district will begin a "one to one" computer initiative for students in grades 6-8. During the first quarter of school, each middle school student will be issued a laptop, which will go home with students each evening. Providing each student with a laptop will allow teachers to better meet the needs of each student while providing 24/7 access to learning for all. This technology initiative will eventually expand to all district schools. Another effort to innovate in the upcoming year will include the planning for a complete redesign of one elementary school and one secondary school.

In conjunction with Cowley College, staff, students, parents, and local business and industry, will engage in planning for a school redesign that meets the needs of 21st Century students. The redesign of two district schools will likely include an emphasis on individualized learning, and an increased focus on real-world learning, career exploration, job shadowing and internships. As the district vision states, we will be leaders of innovative learning, but our vision can only be realized through collaboration with our stakeholders; with help from each of you. Together we will prepare our students for the exciting opportunities that are ahead.

Innovative, future-focused, real-world LEARNING! It's going to be a great year. Come and catch the excitement!

Best wishes,

Mark Whitener
USD 353 Superintendent of Schools