

Chalkboard

By

Dr. Randy C. Barrett, Superintendent

Gentry Public Schools

We're back. Well, actually if you read this on the day the newspaper hits the stands then only the staff is back and the students will not return until Monday morning, August 20th. As most of you know there is a group of school employees who have 12 month contracts, including yours truly, who work year round except for two weeks of vacation. For us, the summer is one of the busiest times of the school year.

Like any business during a "shut-down", an enormous number of routine things have to happen before "start-up" can happen. Without boring you to tears with a detailed list, I will note the general areas of personnel replacements, maintenance, budgeting, purchasing and planning.

For me, Monday will make my 48th "first day of school". The last 47 start-ups can be delineated as follows- 4 as a classroom teacher, 1 as an university graduate assistant, 2 as a high school principal, 5 as a junior high principal, 4 as an assistant superintendent, and 15 as your school superintendent. I offer that not for commendation but rather as a prelude to saying that the first day of school is still as exciting to me as that first day I climbed off a bus to go through the doors of Star City Elementary school. It's just as frightening too.

I think that each staff member understands the awesome responsibility of being placed in charge, for seven hours or more a day, of some parent's child. Each also knows the equal amount of trust that is required for you to allow that to happen.

Needless to say, we ask that be patient with us the first few days of opening up. Regardless of how much planning has occurred, there are always "bugs" to work out of the system. With your help and understanding a good routine will be established as quickly as possible.

Please be extra watchful of our student pedestrians, bicyclists, skateboarders, and first-year drivers. Each poses a unique concern, especially down Pioneer lane.

It is our desire that when the last Chalkboard in May is penned, that staff, students, parents, and patrons will think this was the best school year ever. You, our stakeholders, can help make that wish come true.

Check out the district's website at <http://www.gentrypioneers.com/> for the latest happenings and upcoming events. Parents will want to note the

Open House schedules: **High School & Middle School Open House** is Thursday, August 16th from 6-8 p.m. Freshmen orientation is the 16th at 2:00 p.m. in the auditorium. **Primary Open House** is Thursday, August 16th from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. and **Intermediate Open House** is Thursday, August 16th from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Come join us as we begin the new school year.