July 29, 2019

Dear Students and Families:

I would like to welcome you all to the 2019-2020 school year at Conifer High School. As I enter my seventh year as the proud principal, I will continue to build a foundation of success at Conifer by dedicating my time toward inspiring and empowering our students; supporting and encouraging our amazing staff and teachers; engaging parents in their child’s education; and building community partnerships that help our students prepare for college and future career aspirations.

During the first days of school, I look forward to meeting all the incoming freshmen, and all the returning sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Together we will work to make this year a rewarding and productive school year for all.

Facility Improvements
Last November, Jefferson County voters approved the ballot initiative that will directly support Conifer’s ability to provide innovative learning opportunities in a state-of-the-art facility that provides a safe and welcoming atmosphere. These improvements include updating aging classroom spaces, the addition of a desperately needed auxiliary gym, building a performing arts theater to showcase the talents of our students, the installation of all-weather turf fields that will increase the opportunity for our athletes to practice and play on their home field, and significant improvements to the safety and security of our building.

Over the summer, construction crews have been hard at work making improvements to our outdoor athletic facilities with the installation of turf fields. As a result, our athletic department is working with fall coaches to coordinate practice times and locations to support our student athletes. Please visit the Conifer High School Athletic’s Page to contact your child’s fall coach about practice times and locations (https://conifer.jeffcopublicschools.org/athletics___activities).

This fall, representatives from Conifer will be selected to meet with architects to plan for the remodeling of classroom spaces and designing the addition of an auxiliary gym space and performing arts facility. The construction phase for these building improvements will begin in the later part of the spring semester and continue through the 2020-2021 school year.

Academics
Conifer is one of the highest performing high schools in Colorado. Each year the teaching staff demonstrates their dedication to maintaining excellence in student achievement and growth by focusing on professional development and collaboration. This year they will focus our efforts on transforming how our students cognitively engage in their learning and continue to support each of our student’s success. We will also continue to look at ways to differentiate instruction and provide individualized feedback to help students determine what they need to know and how they will demonstrate their understanding.
We are also very proud of the 25 AP (Advanced Placement) courses we offer our students, and our concurrent enrollment partnership with Red Rocks Community College. We clearly understand the importance of having our students complete their freshmen year of college while attending high school.

**Athletics and Activities**
I want to welcome Eric Kragel as our new Athletic Director. Eric has served as an exceptional English teacher and dedicated coach of multiple sports programs at Conifer for the past 19 years. Eric wants to strongly encourage our parents and community members to join us when we host home games. Your participation motivates our students to do their best in competition and lends to our Lobo spirit.

As a hallmark of our athletic programming, we encourage our athletes to strive towards building athletic endurance, enhance their knowledge of the game, demonstrate good sportsmanship, and most importantly, maintain academic eligibility. Research indicates that students who are involved get the most out of their high school experience. Please encourage your son/daughter to get involved at Conifer by participating in one or more of our clubs, activities, and/or athletic programs.

CLUB (Conifer Lobos Unified Boosters) consists of an athletically diverse representative group of parents that continues to work toward improving Conifer’s athletic facilities for **ALL** of our student-athletes. Please consider offering your time and financial support to their efforts.

In a concerted effort to recognize our students’ accomplishments, we recommend you visit our Conifer High School Facebook page (http://www.facebook.com/coniferhighschool). You will find a plethora of candid photos of student involvement, student celebrations, and student dedications to the success of our athletic and activity programs.

Last year, the Jeffco Public Schools Athletic Department implemented an online registration process for athletes. Please use the following link to register your athlete: https://coniferhs-ar.rschooltoday.com

**Attendance and Behavior**
The most important element in being successful is "SHOWING UP AND DOING THE WORK". Therefore, to support student attendance and student academic success, we will follow a comprehensive Attendance Policy, that strengthens the partnership between home and school. This policy includes more consistent monitoring of student daily attendance and supporting students making it to school on-time.

If high expectations are to be held for academic achievement, it is clear that behavior expectations be adopted as well. The goal is to create a culture of honor and respect that is consistent from classroom to classroom and can be carried over into the community. It is the goal of our school for behavior expectations to stand with academic standards to create a total learning environment for all students. Please visit the Jefferson County Public Schools Code of Conduct website (http://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/schools/code_of_conduct) to review and better understand the policies regarding student conduct.
**School Supplies**
I know many of you have begun to look for school supplies for your son/daughter. During the first days of school, individual teachers will provide students with a small list of items needed for each class.

**First Day of School**
The first day of school for freshmen is Tuesday, August 13, 2019. Freshmen need to be at school by 7:25 a.m. We have several motivating events scheduled for their first day organized by our LINK program that will help all freshmen make the transition to the high school a bit smoother. In preparation for this fun and worthwhile experience, students should come dressed comfortably, avoid bringing a backpack, and be prepared to have their yearbook/ID picture taken by LifeTouch. There will be no Jeffco school buses for freshmen orientation, so parents will need to make arrangements for transportation. Lunch will be provided for all students.

To support the academic success of new transfer and exchange students, the Conifer Counseling Center is hosting an orientation session and school tour on Tuesday, August 13, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. in the Counseling Center.

New Conifer parents are encouraged to attend a Parent Orientation and Question/Answer Session hosted by our PTSA in the Conifer Cafeteria on Tuesday, August 13, 2019 from 7:45 until 8:45 a.m. The session provides a great opportunity to answer parent questions and help parents navigate the “high school experience”.

All students will start school on Wednesday, August 14, 2019, which will be a Green day. A copy of the bell schedule and a copy of the green/silver days is included with this communication packet and can be found at the Conifer website with further information about the daily start and end times for school.

**Back-to-School Night**
Back-To-School Night is scheduled for Wednesday, August 28, 2019, from 5:00 until 8:10 p.m. Parents will be provided the chance to ask questions and learn about the opportunities we provide students. In addition, many of the extracurricular clubs and activities are represented during the evening to demonstrate their contributions to our great school.

Once again, I’m excited to start the school year and meet with all the parents and students. If you have any questions or concerns, or if you would like to schedule a conference, or volunteer to help out, you can contact me at 303-982-5251. I look forward to working with you all on making this a great school year.

Sincerely,

Wesley Paxton
Principal
Conifer High School