

Dear Future Iroquois Intermediate Students and Families,

I am reaching out to introduce myself as the new principal of the intermediate school, and want to let you know that I am beyond excited and honored to be in the position to reopen Iroquois Intermediate School. My name is Ryan Harding, and I am joining Iroquois with more than 20 years of experience in education. I have spent the last nine years as an administrator in the Williamsville Central School District working with students from grades 5-12 as both a principal and assistant principal. Prior to entering administration, I was a social studies teacher at Cleveland Hill Middle School for 12 years.

Having worked at both middle and high schools, it has become evident to me that each level plays an important role, but the foundation laid for our students in the early grades is so critically important to their later success. I have had the professional goal of becoming an elementary school principal for many years based on the ideas of early intervention, addressing both the academic and social-emotional needs of students - a "whole child" approach - and the desire to work with a team of highly skilled and deeply committed elementary educators. After spending just a few short days with many of the faculty who will join the intermediate school, I am confident I am in the right place and as a building we are headed in the right direction.

Transition to a new school can cause feelings of excitement and maybe a little anxiety. Our goal at Iroquois Intermediate will be to tap into the inherent excitement of something new, and in the process of accentuating the positive, aim to reduce the anxiety for students and parents who might be feeling unsettled. To that end, there are several strategic goals I would like to share with you all.

In the coming weeks, Iroquois Intermediate will develop its own dedicated website as part of the district website. On this site, you will be able to find contact information, details about building tours, answers to Frequently Asked Questions and opportunities for two-way communication with myself.

For the students, the strategy will be straightforward. I will be getting to know them ALL as best I can well in advance of them stepping foot into the intermediate school. Each week, I plan to visit Elma, Marilla, and Wales, so that the kids know who I am, learn my personality, and most importantly, feel safe approaching me for anything. Candidly, this opportunity to meet and familiarize myself with my future students is rare in education and quite special. In addition to the day-to-day interactions, the last part of the strategy for entry of rising fourth and fifth graders into the intermediate building will be to provide what's known as *peak moments*. Whether it's a building tour I lead to see a model classroom, a trip to the Bison's game, a 3rd

or 4th grade picnic at Elma Meadows Park, or a brand new event put on for students and families, the goal will be to provide opportunities for joy and excitement as the kids progress to the next step of their educational journey.

As the intermediate school parent organization continues to come together, I am very much looking forward to a productive partnership in planning events that honor some of the great traditions that our 4th and 5th graders have participated in. I am confident that together we will be able to find new and exciting ways to connect and enrich our students' learning experiences. I would like to invite all parents and caregivers to engage with the Iroquois Intermediate and our parent organization.

Please know that one of my core educational values is the belief in the home-school partnership. I view my role as principal as one of service leadership. I am here to serve our students, our families and our teachers and staff. I do not do the heavy lifting of day-to-day teaching or raising the kids; I can't do the learning for my students, but for each of those groups (teachers, families and students) I am here to provide support, resources, problem-solving and encouragement.

In the months to come I look forward to building bridges with everyone and facilitating a smooth transition to Iroquois Intermediate in the Fall of 2024. With that being said, please do not hesitate to reach out to me for anything at any time! My contact information is: rharding@iroquoiscsd.org or 716/ 652-3000 ext. 5000.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Harding". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ryan" and last name "Harding" clearly distinguishable.

Mr. Ryan Harding
Principal
Iroquois Intermediate School
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