

**MAY 2, 2016**

## **DEAR WYOMING TEACHERS:**

Thank you for your service this past school year! You have my heartfelt and sincere admiration for a job well done. A solid educational foundation is vital to the success of our state, yet many do not understand how difficult it is to be a good teacher.

Teaching is more than just facilitating facts and skill. It is a process of imbuing vision and success into Wyoming students, and you are a hero for your skill and efforts.

What does a hero in Wyoming look like? You are a hero if you wanted to go home, but stayed to better prepare for a lesson that you wanted to make an impact, or took the time to support and encourage a student in crisis. You are a hero if you wanted to quit, but stuck it out because you knew your students needed you. You are a hero for helping students find their passions and fostering the discovery of new ideas and new career paths, and for inspiring self-confidence in students who doubt themselves. There are thousands of heroes like you all over our state, quietly doing their job, working tirelessly to help students grow and thrive.

The future will bring new challenges, and we will need our heroes to meet them. It will take more than intelligence to navigate these coming turbulent times, more than aligning to state standards, more than an 80% or 90% test average, and more than a good performance on the PAWS tests. It will take dedication, passion, and drive to help our students transform, and become heroes themselves.

Here are ten axioms I suggest we incorporate into the Wyoming educational equation:

- Encourage students to seek lifelong learning.
- Communicate wisdom.
- Be an example and a mentor.
- Instill courage.
- Help students develop a sense of right and wrong.
- Pass on skills to foster economic independence.
- Create individuals excited to volunteer and serve others.
- Innovate solutions to new teaching challenges.
- Personally seek continuous improvement.
- Love our students.

I cannot fully put into words my profound gratitude for all of you. I know the teachers of Wyoming, who love, support, and challenge kids, will be able to overcome whatever educational obstacles come our way. This is what being a teacher in Wyoming is all about: finding solutions and making the world a better place.

I hope that you keep this vision in mind as you continue to positively change the future of our country one student at a time.

## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT.**



Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction