



CARDINAL FLYER

Hayes Center High School Journalism

Thursday, September 3, 2026

BACK TO SCHOOL!

BY CARLY SOFTLEY

It's finally here. The moment that parents anticipatngly await and students hate. The one day that kids are constantly reminded of every time they step into their local Walmart. It's the first day of school. For Hayes Center Public Schools, this day was no different as the school building that had remained empty for most of the summer, was suddenly flooded with students as the new school year kicked into gear.

With the start of a new school year also came a couple new faces in the school. This included several new students and teachers as well as the new superintendent, Mr. Khris Freeland. In addition to Mr. Freeland, new teachers included 2nd grade teacher, Mrs. Sherri Freeland, and 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Angela Christner. New staff include the director of maintenance and transportation, Mr. Travis Soundy, elementary secretary, Ms. Alissa Gubbels, high school secretary, Mrs. Ashli Cox, and several new bus drivers. Since day one, these new faces have brought an exciting energy to the school and have made a positive impact.

Along with getting to know these new staff members, students also have had to step back into the school routine. The beginning of a new year means a new class, new teacher, and perhaps a new schedule for many students. It also means the beginning

of several high school sports seasons such as volleyball, football, and cross country. For the first time in years, the football team will host an extra regular season home game which will give our community at least three games under the lights. In addition, the sports teams now get to ride to games in the comfort of the new activities bus that was purchased at the end of the last school year.

The new bus hasn't been the only addition to the school. The old ice machine that once remained in the ice room has now been replaced by a new one that produces the much-loved pebbled ice. Also, thanks to Addison and Harper Richards there are two new MHC murals in the elementary school.

As Hayes Center Public School embarks on a new year with activities already in full swing, all of the students and staff are looking forward to the months to come - months of experiences to keep students having fun and enjoying yet another amazing school year.



Photo by Megan Soundy
Maddox Loomis smiles while he waits to serve punch to the elementary students and their parents at the back to school night on Wednesday, August 12th.



**HCPS Superintendent
Kris Freeland**

GETTING TO KNOW SUPERINTENDENT KRIS FREELAND

BY MONICA DIMAS

Some of the most life changing teachers are the ones that make us dream bigger. For Hayes Center's new superintendent, Kris Freeland, that inspiration came from the teachers that believed in him. Their influence on Mr. Freeland helped him to determine his future early. He knew from the start that he wanted to be a teacher to positively impact the lives of his students.

Mr. Freeland started his career as a teacher, 31 years ago. He first taught at Lynch Public Schools for 12 years where 2 of his children graduated from high school. Later, he taught at Dundy County Stratton for 18 years where he became the elementary principal. He also was the head coach of the boys basketball team and coached football and track. Three of his children also graduated from DCS.

There is always a change in surroundings when you move. For example, going from one small town to another, you always notice something different like the size of the grocery store or other businesses. When asked if he had any trouble adjusting to Hayes Center's small size, he said that Lynch was also a small town of around 300 citizens and that he truly enjoyed the town and the students.

When he's not leading the school, Mr. Freeland always makes time for his family. He has been married for 34 years to his wife Sherri Freeland who is also currently working at Hayes Center as the second grade teacher. He and his wife have five children, most of which are living all over the state of Nebraska with one daughter living in Florida. Balancing a demanding career with family life isn't always easy, but Mr. Freeland finds joy in the little things. What made Hayes Center feel like home, he said, was seeing his grandchildren run across the Hayes Center gym floor soon after he moved into town.



Photo by Carly Softley
Elena Gallegos is happy to be at school as she organizes her supplies on her first day of Kindergarten.



Photo by Harli Cox
Mrs. Jeffers teaches addition during 1st grade math.



9th-12th graders responded to the question, “What is one song or movie that describes your summer?”



“Working Men's Blues,” because that’s all I did. -Braydon Cox

The song that describes my summer is “Slipping Through My Fingers” because this is my last summer together with my friends before I move on to the next chapter of my life. -Ayleen Hernandez

“Church Clap” is a song that describes my summer, because I played this song every day and my days are filled with God. -Mikaella Peligrino

I think that “A Million Dreams” describes my summer because I started to realize that my dreams are unfolding right in front of my eyes. In less than a year, I will make some big decisions and that is really scary, but also really good. It’s finally time to chase my dreams! -Caylie Softley

A movie that describes my summer is High School Musical 2. I chose this, because I spent my summer doing sports and at the pool. -Chloe Jeffers

The song that describes my summer best is “Landslide,” by Fleetwood Mac, because it’s about transitioning to a bigger part in life. I’ve been emotional because I don’t know if I’m ready to leave yet. -Kynleigh Fisher

“Lazy Song,” by Bruno Mars. I chose this song because I spent most of my summer just relaxing and doing nothing. -Harper Richards

“End of August,” because I spent the whole summer with Grace and Kynleigh. Grace went off to college at the end of August, and Kynleigh and I started our last year together at the end of August. -Kady Fisher

“Back to Friends,” because I went back to Mexico and saw my friends and family.
-Emmanuel Lopez

“When We Were Young” by Adele would describe my summer, by transitioning from junior high and high school. -KaiKayle Landry

“7 Summers Ago,” by Morgan Wallen. I chose this song, because it is explaining a summer that he had was so great. I can relate to this song, because this summer was one of the best summers I have ever had, but now it’s gone and I can’t go back. -Quaid Brott



SPORTS SCORES

Varsity Football @Sutherland, Friday, August 28

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Sutherland (0-2)	16	0	0	0	16
MHC (1-0)	0	6	8	8	22

Varsity Volleyball vs.Paxton, Thursday, August 27

	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3
Paxton (1-3)	19	25	20
MHC (2-0)	25	23	25

Varsity Volleyball vs.Sandhills Valley, Thursday, August 27

	Set 1	Set 2
Sandhills Valley (0-3)	15	17
MHC (2-0)	25	25



Photo by Ava Messersmith

Senior Caylie Softley goes up for a back row attack in their game against Sandhills Valley Thursday August 27th.



Ayleen Hernandez runs during the first meet of the season at DCS on Thursday, August 27th.

Photo by Mateo Hernandez

Cross Country

@DCS

Thur., Aug.27

Girls (2 mile)

Team 2nd Overall

Individual

Carly Softley (4th)

13:44.71

Agneshka Sankey (7th)

14:13.80

Ayleen Hernandez (13th)

16:03.54

Ava Messersmith (14th)

16:22.39

Boys (2 mile)

Team 5th Overall

Individual

Rubiel Lopez (13th)

13:27.87

Aaron Lawson (19th)

14:38.19

Steven Werkmeister (23rd)

15:06.99