

# Avoca West starts a 'brave' new school year

**SUBMITTED BY AVOCA WEST**

In order to prepare for the new school year, Avoca West Elementary Principal Jessica Hutchison challenged the Avoca community to consider the question, "How will Avoca West be a better place because of you?"

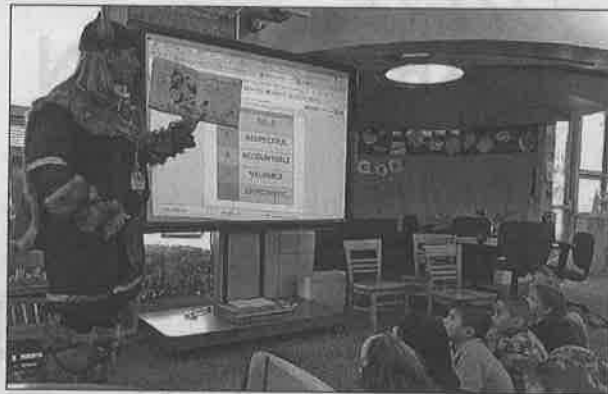
In hopes of appealing to the mindset that all things big start small, and each person matters, Hutchison asked students, parents and staff to consider how they could contribute to the betterment of Avoca West. These ideas were captured in photos or videos and shared through email or via social media under the hashtag #engageAW.

The collection of these pledges and the thought toward improving the school culminates in the introduction of a new school wide positive behavior model

to help shape a culture of kindness and responsibility within and beyond the school walls. Along with a team of teachers and student input, Hutchison developed a fun way to promote the philosophy by playing off the school's mascot, the viking. This year at Avoca West, Vikings are BRAVE — Bold, Respectful, Accountable, Valuable and Empathetic.

In addition to welcoming students in full viking garb, Hutchison spent time with each grade level to launch those values, framing an exciting new school year.

"Vikings aren't often known for their admirable traits...until now! This mantra of BRAVE captures everything we hope to build in our children beyond just their academics," Hutchison said. "As the school 'mom,' this really captures the whole



**Hutchison promotes BRAVE — Bold, Respectful, Accountable, Valuable and Empathetic — In class.**

child and social emotional elements I want to foster in my own children."

Students and staff will be challenged to live as BRAVE Vikings, ultimately making everyone know how valuable they are in making the school and world a better place. Two days into a new school year, Avoca West has already launched an initiative to partner with Her-

rod Elementary School in Houston, Texas to provide support to those in need as a result of the devastation left behind by Hurricane Harvey.

Avoca School District 37 is excited to see where this year will go in grades K-5. Follow Avoca West on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to stay up to date on the BRAVE new year.



**Jessica Hutchison, principal of Avoca West Elementary, greets students on the first day of school in full Viking garb. PHOTOS SUBMITTED**