



# Cedar Grove–Belgium School District

**Providing a Superior Education to All Students!**

321 North Second Street  
Cedar Grove, WI 53013  
District Phone 920-668-8686  
District Fax 920-668-8605

---

Dr. Claire Martin  
*Superintendent*

May 11, 2020

Dear Representative Katsma,

I hope that this letter finds you, and your family members, doing well during these unprecedented times. Times such as these, call for even greater demands upon our State leaders. Thank you for your continued service to the people of your District, and the State of Wisconsin, as we journey through these uncharted waters.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with some insights from the Cedar Grove-Belgium School District as we work together to address the challenges presented to us by the COVID-19 pandemic.

First and foremost, you should know that the Cedar Grove-Belgium (CGB) community, both parents and educators, are working collaboratively together to provide continuity, to the best of our ability, in our educational programming. Fortunately for us, our students were utilizing technology resources, both in and out of school, prior to the pandemic. All of our students in grades K-12 have individual access to a district-owned Chromebook. High School students took their devices to and from school daily. Now, of course, all students have these devices at home and rely upon them for their instructional programming. Although the transition out of our physical buildings, and onto a virtual platform, was sudden and abrupt, our teachers and students have adapted to this new reality and the work of school continues for all.

In addition to our educational programming, within two days of our school closure, our school lunch program was up and running by serving “grab-and-go” lunches to any school-aged child whether, or not, they attend the Cedar Grove-Belgium Schools. Having this program available

to our students was important to all staff members, as we knew the impact that the pandemic would have on many of our students and their families. Our school lunch program is operational on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of each week that school would have been physically in session. On Monday and Wednesday, each lunch bag contains enough food for two days, so students have lunches throughout the week. Currently, we serve 660 lunches on Monday and Wednesday, and approximately 330 on Friday. This encompasses about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of our student population and the participation numbers continue to grow weekly. In addition to our school lunch program, our High School facility also serves as the local Food Pantry for the CGB community. This traditionally has been a function of one of the local churches. However, with school lunch distribution occurring, we thought having this service on our school grounds would consolidate the number of trips required for a family. On Monday, the Food Pantry operates out of our High School building, as well as at a site in Belgium. This program is currently run by school district staff members until such time as it makes sense for the Church organization to resume its operation again.

Despite our many successes during this uncertain time, we face many challenges. As time moves forward, virtual fatigue is real. Students and families are struggling to stay engaged while so many factors are influencing them at home. In many ways, public education is the great equalizer. We provide a comprehensive educational program to all students in a nurturing environment that gives them equal access to teachers, educational supports and resources. As CGB teachers interact with their students on a daily basis, it is evident that the inequities within their home environments are taking a toll on the educational progress of our students. While many students are making progress, those that can least afford it, are not keeping pace. The gaps in learning among students are growing, in addition to our now limited ability to deliver the comprehensive curriculum that has been our long-standing tradition. While almost all of our students have internet connectivity at home, for those students who live in the more rural areas, the connections are not reliable. In addition to the other challenges at home, this adds one more layer to the complexities of virtual schooling for many children. High school students currently have to worry if their internet connection will “hold” as they take their AP tests at home. In addition to all else, this is not what anyone would want them to concern themselves with at this time.

Despite the challenges and the inequities that seemed to quickly surface, we know that as an educational system we will emerge from this experience stronger as a result. By virtually visiting with students, and their families on a daily basis inside of their homes, teachers are learning more about their students than previously known. This knowledge will help them to better meet their needs in the future. Additionally, our teaching staff have learned to utilize technology communication platforms and tools in ways that were simply unimaginable to many just a few short months ago. This learning and hard-earned expertise will transform their classrooms moving forward. They know that they CAN do it, as well as our youngest learners, and they know that technology can be continually relied upon to enhance their classroom practices for improved student engagement and learning. Quite frankly, some students have thrived in this environment. While that number of students remains small, teachers are learning which

students suffer from the distractibility that a school setting can create, and they will be better prepared to modify accordingly for these learners. All in all, there is no turning back from the depth of learning that has occurred during this time, for our students and our teachers, and our educational efforts will be forever positively impacted, as a result.

Should you have any questions about how our school system is moving forward, now or in the future, please don't hesitate to reach out to us in the Cedar Grove-Belgium School District. We appreciate all of your efforts, on our behalf, and welcome you to visit our schools at any time. A great deal lies ahead of us as we wrap up this school year, and look forward to the year ahead. In whatever format available, we look forward to connecting and supporting our students in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Dr. Claire Martin  
Superintendent  
Cedar Grove-Belgium School District

***CGBSD a School District with Purpose***