



May 12, 2020

Dear Senator Ringhand and Representatives Kolste, Loudenbeck, and Vruwink:

The world has certainly changed significantly since March 13, 2020, and we appreciate the work you have done in the legislature to keep Wisconsin informed, protected, and safe. So much has happened since then, and I'm sure you have been very busy throughout this Safer-At-Home period.

Consider this: when students left school on the afternoon of Friday, March 13, 2020, no one knew that was potentially the last “regular” day of school for the 2019-2020 school year.

Since then, our School District of Janesville (SDJ) team rallied to:

- pull together logistical miracles to collect, package and prepare students’ belongings for easy pickup/retrieval;
- develop a plan to implement and provide short-term online learning resources and opportunities for our families;
- scour the district to source 9,700 internet-connected devices so that each student has one at home to access the online learning resources;
- implement a system to regularly clean/disinfect all district buildings during this emergency;
- provide access to free “grab and go” lunch and breakfast packages (on average 5,500 meals per day) for all children 18 years old and younger in Janesville, available at 8 locations or by home delivery,
  - In the month of April alone, our foodservice professionals prepared a total of 114,902 meals. The breakdown: 76,642 meals were delivered to family doorsteps, and 38,260 meals were picked up by families at school pick-up locations;
- deploy Wi-Fi “hot spots” at each elementary school, providing online internet access for students at no cost;
- plan and start delivering online instruction for all students;
- keep families and staff informed of the almost constantly changing situation; and
- exhibit the professional attitude; service heart; and concern for students, families and colleagues that is expected of us.

We also worked to survey our parents to better understand how they feel about the online instruction that we are providing students. We had more than 2,400 parents respond, indicating an overall positive experience regarding online instruction for their students:

- The amount of work being given is appropriate - 80% (strongly agree/agree).
- The level of the work being given is appropriate - 86% (strongly agree/agree).
- How productive was your child on the assigned work this week - 85% (very productive/mostly productive).

Of course, these victories do not come easy, nor without some challenges. With all the uncertainty related to this public health emergency, we struggle with preparations for providing a virtual summer school session, and preparations for the coming school year that may be different as well. With so many unknowns, it is difficult to budget for the 2020-2021 school year.

We are one of the largest employers in Janesville/Rock County, and are grateful that we have kept our employees working and paid, with their income continuing to be infused back into the local economy. We know that there are state revenue concerns due to the economic impact COVID-19 has had on the economy. With our fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020, action by the legislature and Governor to adjust state aid to schools becomes more difficult to address and accommodate the further we move into the year.

We also know that with a new normal, we will be required to purchase items and provide additional services school districts have traditionally not needed, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for example. The need to increase the frequency of thorough school cleanings and the supplies needed to do so will also impact our budget. This goes along with expected increases in costs to provide nursing services, mental health services, and additional supports for students to catch-up on academic achievement, particularly for those students that have limited resources at home.

Yes, there are challenges facing all of us as we put Wisconsin back to work. Our schools are the foundation of this community, providing so much more than the 4K-12 education that our families expect. We are ready to accept that challenge—the people of Janesville/Rock County have proven their grit before in difficult and challenging times.

Again, thank you for your work as public servants -- we understand that you do not always get the credit you deserve for that very important work. We stand ready to answer your questions and provide more information as you need it. We are stronger together.

With Gratitude,



Steve Pophal, Superintendent  
School District of Janesville

PS: In case you missed them, on the next page are links to articles in the Janesville Gazette that have appeared since mid-March. They relay an important story--the School District of Janesville remains working for our families, supporting their many needs, and adapting to a new 'normal.'

Finding new ways to work and connect: Teachers learning, adapting to changes  
[https://www.gazettextra.com/news/education/finding-new-ways-to-work-and-connect-teachers-learning-adapting-to-changes/article\\_671a020f-f23f-5c9b-ab2f-ada7fe3812e6.html](https://www.gazettextra.com/news/education/finding-new-ways-to-work-and-connect-teachers-learning-adapting-to-changes/article_671a020f-f23f-5c9b-ab2f-ada7fe3812e6.html)

Virus means virtual: High schools consider graduation ceremony options  
[https://www.gazettextra.com/news/education/graduation\\_2020/virus-means-virtual-high-schools-consider-graduation-ceremony-options/article\\_806237eb-871a-5f42-8597-649e466f1270.html](https://www.gazettextra.com/news/education/graduation_2020/virus-means-virtual-high-schools-consider-graduation-ceremony-options/article_806237eb-871a-5f42-8597-649e466f1270.html)

Virtual school, virtual love: Teacher adjusts to online learning  
[https://www.gazettextra.com/special/in\\_this\\_together/virtual-school-virtual-love-teacher-adjusts-to-online-learning/article\\_18ecd2ae-53c3-5d39-a9bd-f6931d2b0b05.html](https://www.gazettextra.com/special/in_this_together/virtual-school-virtual-love-teacher-adjusts-to-online-learning/article_18ecd2ae-53c3-5d39-a9bd-f6931d2b0b05.html)

Most Janesville students attending school online most of the time  
[https://www.gazettextra.com/news/education/most-janesville-students-attending-school-online-most-of-the-time/article\\_e1ad3d4b-a7c5-508b-8835-97f8b6ec70d9.html](https://www.gazettextra.com/news/education/most-janesville-students-attending-school-online-most-of-the-time/article_e1ad3d4b-a7c5-508b-8835-97f8b6ec70d9.html)

Janesville School District offers new meal options  
[https://www.gazettextra.com/news/health\\_care/coronavirus/janesville-school-district-offers-new-meal-options/article\\_36c6d119-e8f5-5d10-9e24-78baaf0466e5.html](https://www.gazettextra.com/news/health_care/coronavirus/janesville-school-district-offers-new-meal-options/article_36c6d119-e8f5-5d10-9e24-78baaf0466e5.html)

Making up for lost time: Janesville School District plans to address knowledge gaps  
[https://www.gazettextra.com/news/education/making-up-for-lost-time-janesville-school-district-plans-to-address-knowledge-gaps/article\\_04f14f58-ad5f-5aae-a999-f7968ed41646.html](https://www.gazettextra.com/news/education/making-up-for-lost-time-janesville-school-district-plans-to-address-knowledge-gaps/article_04f14f58-ad5f-5aae-a999-f7968ed41646.html)

Janesville's school custodians dealing with sanitizing routines, shifting plans  
[https://www.gazettextra.com/news/health\\_care/coronavirus/janesvilles-school-custodians-dealing-with-sanitizing-routines-shifting-plans/article\\_ad5ba5f6-32fc-5a9e-bf05-eab897201ea2.html](https://www.gazettextra.com/news/health_care/coronavirus/janesvilles-school-custodians-dealing-with-sanitizing-routines-shifting-plans/article_ad5ba5f6-32fc-5a9e-bf05-eab897201ea2.html)

Making the connection beyond the ABCs with PJs and parades  
[https://www.gazettextra.com/news/education/making-the-connection-beyond-the-abcs-with-pjs-and-parades/article\\_46686e80-04ea-5f9a-80f8-98a65e8f5460.html](https://www.gazettextra.com/news/education/making-the-connection-beyond-the-abcs-with-pjs-and-parades/article_46686e80-04ea-5f9a-80f8-98a65e8f5460.html)

Janesville School District asks for waiver from instructional hours requirement  
[https://www.gazettextra.com/news/education/janesville-school-district-asks-for-waiver-from-instructional-hours-requirement/article\\_ed8f2969-49cc-5920-8852-0489f211b677.html](https://www.gazettextra.com/news/education/janesville-school-district-asks-for-waiver-from-instructional-hours-requirement/article_ed8f2969-49cc-5920-8852-0489f211b677.html)

Janesville schools tracking seniors, changing course and focusing on the basics  
[https://www.gazettextra.com/news/health\\_care/coronavirus/janesville-schools-tracking-seniors-changing-course-and-focusing-on-the-basics/article\\_86a525dc-f8cd-54b2-88af-57f1f1792101.html](https://www.gazettextra.com/news/health_care/coronavirus/janesville-schools-tracking-seniors-changing-course-and-focusing-on-the-basics/article_86a525dc-f8cd-54b2-88af-57f1f1792101.html)