

May 13, 2020

Dear Representative James:

As I write this letter, we have 16 days remaining in our school year and despite all of the challenges we have faced, we continue to serve our community well through this pandemic. I have written this letter to give you an update on what is happening within our school district. I am proud of our students and staff on how they have risen to the challenge and are working extremely hard during this health emergency.

Due to our scheduled Spring Break and the timing of the emergency closure, we have not had face-to-face instruction since Friday, March 6. After our break, staff met on March 16, 17, and 18 and changed the way we deliver the majority of our instruction. Virtual learning platforms and electronic resources that were once used to supplement instruction were retooled to help deliver the high-quality instruction our students and families expect.

Pupil services for students with special needs have continued as much as possible. Social-emotional skill instruction, online social skills games, as well as telephone and web-based conferencing, have been used to meet with students regularly to help provide a continuum of supports. Although not ideal, we know the importance of these services to students and families.

We continue to deliver meals daily to children in our district. Our office staff, food service staff, and bus drivers have worked tirelessly to help ensure any student in our district who wants to eat, has food not only available but delivered to them. As of April 30, we have served over 180 families within our district. During March and April, we served 12,560 lunches and 9,401 breakfasts. We will continue this service until June 5, our last day of instruction, then change to a more sustainable structure for families during the summer.

Although we are working our hardest, this change in operations is far from the best way we know to educate children. The children in our district who have significant disabilities or do not have structure or support at home continue to have a disadvantage in their educational services. Compounded on these already existing hurdles, technology disparity has created another. Although our district provides devices for every student to use, many homes in our school district do not have the web connectivity to sustain appropriate services. We provide paper and pencil materials for students to complete but they miss out on the quality of daily teacher interactions. We have considered mobile hot spots but many of the areas I refer to do not have strong enough cell service to provide internet. This makes the only viable solution satellite internet but that has difficulty on anything but a clear sunny day.

I hope you, your family, and your staff are healthy and well. If you have any questions, I welcome your calls or emails so that I can explain our work and answer any questions you may have. In spite of the fact that we still have many problems to solve as we finish the year, begin the summer session, and prepare for our new school year, I have full faith in our staff to continue to serve our students at a high level.

Sincerely,
Jeff Koenig
Superintendent