

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF STRATFORD

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June 2, 2020

To: Senator Bernier
Senator Petrowski
Representative Kulp
Representative Spiros

From: Scott Winch, Superintendent
School District of Stratford

First, I would like to thank each of you for your representation of Central Wisconsin and your support for our public schools throughout the region and state. I chose June 2nd as the date to write this letter to each of you as today is the last day of school, both on our calendar the Board approved in February of 2019 and in the actual work done in this unprecedented time in our history.

I am in my sixteenth year as Superintendent in Stratford and I want to tell you the Stratford community has always been extremely supportive of its school district as I'd evidenced by the passing of two building referendums and several hundred thousand dollars of donations to the school to enhance our facilities and programs. I can say without a doubt that I have never been more proud to be part of this school community than I am right now after what I have witnessed these past ten weeks. The community has pulled together to support the teachers, support staff and students and we found a way to provide a virtual education to our students, feed up to 140 students twice a day and get educational materials to all of our students, including hotspots for areas that have poor internet connectivity. For those families that the hotspots didn't help with their internet issues - we had staff members deliver education materials to their houses to ensure all of our students would have the opportunity to learn.

I think we have all learned from this new educational experience and it has made us all better educators. We had staff members learn digital platforms to provide instruction to our students and see the impact that doing so had on families. One example of this is a 30 year veteran teacher saw first hand the impact that using "Class Dojo" had on her teaching and classroom. Not only was she able to provide education to her kindergarten class but she also provided an avenue for a child's mother to connect with her child's education while still in Mexico. The teacher made the comment on how it made her see the positive impact the use of technology can have in more ways than just providing education to her students.

MISSION:

Committed to Students, Committed to Community, Committed to Excellence

We did encounter challenges in the past ten weeks as well. Connectivity in rural Wisconsin is an issue, we were fortunate enough to take care of most of ours with hotspots that we provided families at no cost to them. The few that still didn't get the internet, we provided packets of work and did our best to communicate with them about their child's education. We need to continue to work on improving internet access for the entire state.

It has been a long and somewhat difficult process to make sure we did our best to provide an education to all of our students? There is no question in my mind that face to face instruction is what is best for children and I hope we are back to that in some fashion in September. Students missed being in school both for educational and social reasons, we are ready for students to return and I think students are looking forward to the 2020-21 school year with great anticipation. The students have been through a lot and I think they will be better for it in the long run and will do great things for our community, state and country!

I am a former history teacher and in a letter I wrote to our Senior Class I mentioned that they came into the world in the heels of 9/11 and they now graduate from high school with the COVID-19 Class. I share this letter with you all to provide insight into the past 10 weeks in Stratford and let you know I think our students, staff and community did a great job reacting and overcoming the challenge of a very difficult situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Winch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "W".

Scott Winch, Superintendent
School District of Stratford