

2020, a year like no other...

Like most new years, 2020 began with great hope and promise as we entered a new decade. In the Edgerton School District the referendum project was proceeding as scheduled, winter sports and clubs were in full swing, juniors and seniors were planning trips to Germany and Washington DC, and students were still hoping for the first snow day of the school year. Yes, it was a typical start to a new year.

Then the corona virus began spreading rapidly throughout the world and eventually into the United States. The excitement and optimism of the new year quickly turned to uncertainty and concern as a series of unprecedented challenges began confronting all Americans. No one could have predicted the changes brought on by a worldwide pandemic.

In March Governor Evers issued a safer at home order and closed all schools statewide. In a matter of days our teachers had to pivot from a full in-person instructional model to a completely virtual plan. Our technology department worked tirelessly to ensure all students had internet access and a device for learning online. Administration had to quickly develop plans for feeding hundreds of students in need of assistance. We were forced to respond immediately to the rapidly changing situation.

The spring was challenging for all of our students, families, and staff. Unfortunately the seniors missed out on time honored traditions such as the Washington DC trip, various awards nights, spring sports, the spring play, prom, and graduation. Everyone made sacrifices as the pandemic changed our daily routines and way of living.

Each day seemed to present a multitude of new challenges and decisions. It often felt as though we were navigating uncharted waters in which the tides were constantly changing and we had no map or compass to guide us. We would create plans only to have them change within hours due to the constantly shifting effects of the pandemic.

Along with our challenges in the school district, individuals in our community experienced the loss of loved ones due to COVID, others lost jobs as a result of the pandemic, and many struggled from day to day due to the uncertainty brought on by the coronavirus. Events were cancelled, trips postponed, and basic routines such as going to the grocery store became a risky activity. The normal lifestyle we took for granted was completely changed with little time to prepare.

During the summer months administration planned and prepared for reopening schools in the fall. We were developing plans for a highly unpredictable and constantly changing situation. We had to use the best data at the time to make decisions fully aware that it would likely change. Our plans continually evolved as the virus fluctuated. We realized there would be no perfect plan that would completely eliminate the risks associated with COVID-19 and reopening our schools.

On September 1, we welcomed back approximately 1,300 students in person and 500 students virtually to the new school year. We have had periodic closures of classrooms and one school closure for two weeks, however the reopening plan has been effective and students are the direct benefactors of our staff's efforts. I applaud the hard work and efforts of our entire staff and School Board members.

Throughout 2020 we completed a \$40.6 million referendum project which included significant renovations at the high school and Community Elementary School along with a new Primary School addition at the elementary school. We look forward to the day we can have an official ribbon cutting and open house for the public to visit our new facilities.

It is a pleasure to serve as the District Administrator in the Edgerton School District. I wish each of our readers all the best in 2021.

Dr. Pauli