

A Year Like No Other

On March 13, 2020 I informed parents and staff that we would be closing schools indefinitely as the worldwide pandemic began to take a grip on the United States. Days later, Governor Evers announced a statewide mandate to close schools by March 19. I never could have predicted on that Friday evening last year how much the world would change.

A new vernacular was built upon words and phrases such as; flatten the curve, social distancing, contact tracing, quarantine, isolation, safer at home, unprecedented, PPE, asymptomatic, and community spread. Similar to how I track winter weather to determine school closures, I found myself following the virus spread and latest updates daily. Once familiar routines were quickly broken and a new way of living was evolving.

Sixteen months ago our teachers had to completely shift their teaching model from in person to fully virtual with little time to prepare. Our technology department had to ensure internet access for all of our families as we shifted to online learning. Our food service staff had days to shift meals from a traditional hot lunch menu to bag lunches, and administration was thrust into coordinating meal deliveries, student supply pick-up, and managing a \$41 million referendum project.

Last summer our administrative team put together a school reopening plan like no other we had prepared in the past. Throughout our planning, information constantly was changing and plans were adjusted. Nothing was certain as the COVID-19 virus began to take a grip on our area. Decisions were made which impacted classroom arrangements that supported social distancing, cohorting of students to ensure our ability to contact trace, face covering requirements, safety measures, and cleaning protocols. In addition to preparation for in-person learning, we had to develop a rigorous virtual option for those families not ready to have their children attend in person.

Athletics and other co-curricular activities were adversely affected by COVID-19. Seasons were modified, events were cancelled, and all protocols were revised to address new COVID-19 restrictions and safety measures. Attendance at athletic and performing arts events was restricted in response to state and local mandates. Fortunately, we were able to provide our students with most of the athletics and other co-curriculars they've participated in the past.

Throughout the entire school year our staff, students, and families had to make adjustments to daily routines and schedules as the COVID-19 virus progressed. We had to adjust schedules, the school calendar, and instructional methods due to the constant changes required as the virus progressed. Our ultimate collaborative goal was to keep our school doors open throughout the pandemic as often as we could safely accommodate.

Making it through this past school year required heroic efforts from our staff, students, families, and the entire Edgerton community. Through all the uncertainty of the pandemic and adversity

that resulted we worked together to provide our children the outstanding education our community has come to expect.

This spring presented a few signs that perhaps we were turning the corner on the pandemic. Concerts were performed with an audience, athletic events had fans in attendance, and restrictions began to be lifted at the local and state levels. Personally, attending the Senior Awards celebration and our graduation ceremony were signs that we are returning to a lifestyle that is more familiar.

This summer, our administrative team will be preparing for the fall and it is our hope to begin the new school year in a manner that is more reflective of a normal school year start. More information will be forthcoming as the summer progresses.

Thank you to our families and entire community for their support, understanding, and encouragement these past sixteen months. Thank you to our School Board members for their courage and service during what one could argue has been the most challenging time in recent educational history. Thank you to our staff for their continued commitment to excellence in light of all the uncertainty and change. Finally, thank you to our students for their perseverance, tenacity, and determination throughout all the changes.

It truly is a privilege to serve as the District Administrator in the Edgerton School District.

Dr. Pauli