

School District of Black Hawk

202 East Center Street
South Wayne, WI 53587
P: 608.439.5371
F: 608.439.1022



Proudly serving the communities of Gratiot, Martintown, South Wayne, Wiota and Woodford

May 9, 2020

Dear Representative Novak,

I hope this letter finds you, your family, and your colleagues well. I know you are well aware of the challenges created by COVID-19. I cannot pretend to understand the scope of issues that are presented to you by the many different facets of our society. I am taking this opportunity to provide you with information on how Black Hawk School District has chosen to address the many challenges we face as a school community.

The Black Hawk School Board chose to meet on Sunday March 15 to close the school building immediately. The Board made this decision in order to promote the safety of our community. The Board's decision ended in person contact with students three school days prior to the state order. I believe the Board was confident in the ability of the staff to develop an effective plan to continue educating the students without the advantage of those few more days of contact.

The Black Hawk staff took immediate action and the extra days to prepare and plan for educating our students. The early childhood through 5th grade classes chose to develop packets which were sent home for instructional purposes. The 6th through 12th grade classes chose to employ Schoology as a tool to implement on-line instruction.

Our process includes many strategies to ensure the engagement and the safety of students. We do a homework exchange on a bi-weekly basis. Buses and vans are used to run routes to stop at every home to pick up and drop off homework and other resources. Our teachers are asked to make contact with students via Class Dojo, email, phone, Zoom, or Schoology. If students do not engage with the teachers, their names are shared with administration in order for the administrators to attempt to make contact.

The food service staff with the assistance of paraprofessionals and others are preparing meals for student in the district. Currently meals are prepared and delivered to about 30% of our student body. The meals are delivered via two vans or can be picked up at sites in any of the three villages of Browntown, Gratiot, or South Wayne.

We have experienced many challenges in making education accessible to our students. Many students lack technology. We have checked out 107 devices to students since closing school, which represents 28% of our student body. At the time of the closure 14% of our student body reported not having access to the internet from home. Some have gained access due to the generosity of providers, others simply cannot. Another difficulty we are experiencing is

Administration:

William Chambers – Superintendent and Director of Special Education | Cory Milz - 4K-12th Principal | Roger Trame, Athletic Director

School Board

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providing services to our special needs children. In some instances, services require in person contact or in other situations the parents do not want their child to engage at this time.

Our staff has overcome many of these challenges by creating packets for those without internet access, even for those in 6th through 12th grades and by making the contacts via phone calls or text messages. Other challenges, such as special needs services, will be addressed in the future by providing compensatory services.

In order to better meet our community's needs, the staff meet via Zoom at least bi-weekly to discuss solutions to challenges, share new ideas and to impart thoughts about assisting individual students. During this time our staff has engaged in on-line training offered by CESA #3 and others to improve their on-line instructional strategies and their pedagogy in general.

I understand you are extremely busy and dealing with concerns from many of your constituents. If you would like to discuss what we are doing at Black Hawk School District in more detail, please contact me. My contact information is: email – chawil@blackhawk.k12.wi.us, work – (608) 439-5400 x108, or cell (608) 234-1581.

Sincerely,

Willy Chambers
District Administrator

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