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May 26, 2020

Dear Legislators:

The school closure due to COVID-19 has been quite the challenge. Despite this disruption, our teachers, administrators and support staff have been working diligently to provide the best education possible for our students.

Our teachers are developing materials for students that lead to 2-3 hours of instruction for elementary students, 3-4 hours of instruction for middle school students, and 4 hours of instruction for high school students. Our school district has invested in 1:1 devices so all students in grades 2-12 have access to an iPad allowing them to connect to their teachers and curriculum on a daily basis. We are mailing hundreds of packets a week to families that prefer paper copies or have limited internet access.

All of our teachers are in contact with their students on a weekly basis. Many of our teachers are meeting face-to-face virtually with their students daily. One-on-one counseling is provided to any student who needs it and teachers call to help students who are struggling. We are engaging over 90% of our students on a regular basis throughout this school closure. The lengths our teachers are going to in order to provide a quality education during this school closure is simply amazing!

We are providing breakfast and lunch to all students who need it throughout the school closure. Our food service workers are preparing thousands of meals weekly. Because we are a geographically spread out district, we are delivering food door-to-door to ensure every student gets a meal if they need one. Our bus drivers and paraeducators are driving routes to deliver meals and make contact at distance with students and families. Despite the obstacles in place, we have safely delivered breakfast and lunch daily to every student who requested it in our district.

Our support staff is continuing their work either from home, or as needed, at school. Secretaries are monitoring phone lines, answering emails, helping parents and checking in on students just as they would if school were not closed. Our paraeducators are calling students, checking in with students virtually, assisting with lunch preparation, meal delivery, and cleaning. Custodians are

deep cleaning rooms, maintaining our grounds, and developing safety measures to ensure staff and students are safe. They have all chipped in wherever needed to keep our schools running.

The school closure due to COVID-19 has been difficult. We feel for our families and students who are at home when they want to be at school. To overcome this difficulty, our teachers, administrators, and support staff are working incredibly hard to ensure that every student gets the best possible education they can. We would prefer to meet in person but given these conditions, I know that our students are receiving high quality materials, are given individualized instruction, and are connecting with each other and their teacher as frequently as they need to.

As we reflect on what this pandemic has done to public education in the short term, and as we imagine how public education will be affected over the next couple of years, please consider the incredible lengths to which our educators have gone to support students' social, emotional and academic growth. We have stepped up to this challenge and we will meet any future challenge head on, providing high quality education to students no matter the circumstances.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Engel', written in a cursive style.

Aaron J. J. Engel, Ph.D.  
District Administrator