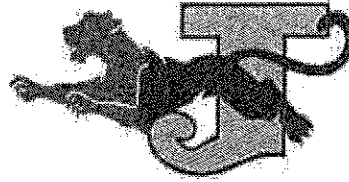


School District of Juda
N2385 Spring Street Juda, WI 53550
(608)-934-5251



May 28, 2020

Dear Representative Spreitzer and Senator Ringhand:

I hope that this letter finds you both doing well in this unprecedented time. I wanted to give you an update of how the Juda School District has been handling the educational process since the closing of schools.

Our spring break was scheduled during the week of March 16-20th. Our band and choirs were supposed to be going on a joint music trip to New Orleans with the Albany, Monticello and Blackhawk School Districts. There were many discussions about the trip. The administrators decided that we did not feel it was appropriate to send the students on this trip. We are still working with the company to get refunds for our families. This has been a very difficult and frustrating process.

During spring break there were many, many updates from various organizations. At that time we were thinking that we would be closed until the end of April. On Monday, March 23 and Tuesday, March 24, the staff sprung into action and cleared lockers, delivered materials, set up online platforms, communicated with students and parents and prepared to teach in a whole new way.

Since March 23, 2020 we have continued to deliver and supply meals (through our school breakfast and lunch program, through our backpack program and our on site food pantry) to any and all families that requested or needed it. We are at about an 80% poverty rate and delivered 500+ meals each week (our student population is 300). Our community has been fantastic by donating different items such as cheese curds, grilled cheese baskets and both monetary and other food donations.

Our high school students were the only ones that had a chromebook issued to them. We expanded this and allowed anyone, middle school and elementary, to borrow one. We also ordered different options of internet to help those that did not have internet.

We have continued to pay staff during this time and staff have been very good about attending meetings, coming in when needed, doing things virtually and in person. We have routinely had staff and unit meetings.

As an administrator, I have worked everyday and been in to the school almost everyday to support the food operations and delivery of educational material. We have several collaboration meetings each week with the state organizations as well as with the local education and health organizations.

We are a small school and I am the middle school and high school principal as well as the superintendent. Some of the most difficult parts of this have been the decisions I have had to make as a principal. Sports seasons, banquets, scholarship nights and the most difficult of all, graduation.

Our staff has been committed to do the best that they can. We have learned a lot and will continue to reflect on our practices in the event the schools close down again. It has not been easy and is not the way our parents, students and staff want things to be done. We have had many comments about how students miss school!

Here are some of the things that we are concerned about moving forward:

- Internet-even if we had affordable internet, in many places it is inconsistent or unreliable
- Nursing services-we have only ever had 6 to 8 hours a week. We see this as a need
- Staffing-bringing in substitute teachers, having enough janitorial staff
- Supplies-having the correct type of cleaning supplies and the amount needed
- Guidelines-knowing what we can and can't do to keep everyone safe

This has been an ever changing situation and there will be many more things to consider. The Juda Schools thanks you for your support and all you are doing to keep our educational systems strong, especially during this time. The staff has worked differently and I would argue harder. They have accommodated different schedules (for parents and students), tried to support students with special education needs in different ways and learned different ways of communicating and educating students.

I would be happy to answer any questions or provide more information as we continue to navigate this situation.

Sincerely,



Traci Davis
Superintendent/Principal
Juda School District
davis@judaschool.com

Here are some comments from various teachers:

From a special education teacher:

Teachers have done an exceptional job transitioning from school to on-line learning. Teachers had no time to plan for this change and had to learn different technology. Also, teachers were always there for their students, either by phone, zoom, or computer. Many times teachers were there for their students at more hours than just the school day. (some students would contact teachers in the evening).

From a board member and parent:

The assets/assistance provided by our school during this crisis is immeasurable and the value simply cannot be calculated. In addition to ensuring education has been continuing, our district

has been providing ways to keep in touch with other members of the community. Maintaining these social connections with others in her class is just as important to our daughter's education as ensuring homework is completed. Academics and socialization aside, in-need members of the community continue to be provided with food assistance, which is absolutely critical at this trying time. Apart from what is being done at school and online, district employees are spending hours "racking their brains" as to what else can possibly be done to make this easier for all parties involved. At best, I find it extremely disingenuous to infer that the taxpaying members of the community are "getting something for nothing" with all the hard work being done.

From an art teacher:

My journey into online teaching was not an easy one, especially because I teach K-12 art! After about two weeks of testing and working through all of the different apps and resources being thrown at me. I was able to develop something that worked for me and my students. I presented online instruction in the form of demo videos on Youtube, and offered optional online sessions for students to make art with me. It may not have been perfect or how I would normally do things, but to hear the kids say that their time online with me was the best part of the week was all I needed to hear to know I was doing the right thing.

From a middle school special education teacher and a parent:

We have all come to one conclusion--students and teachers alike-- being together is so much easier than the work that it takes to continue to learn and support/teach students virtually. So to say that--no one is teaching or learning-- could not be further from the reality in our case. One positive aspect of all of this is students who formerly detested school-- can't wait to get back in the classroom.