

**LINN JT. 6 SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
Reek Elementary School  
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District Administrator: Dr. Samantha Polek

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May 13, 2020

Dear Representative Loudenbeck, Representative Tyler, and Senator Nass,

Thank you for the work you are doing at this very confusing time. I appreciate your various communications including The Nass Report and Representative Loudenbeck's COVID-19 updates. News is conveyed at lightning speed from a barrage of sources. I appreciate your efforts at delivering a clear message.

As you know, Linn Joint 6, also known as Reek School, is a small, rural 4K – grade 8 district located in Lake Geneva. Please allow me to share some of the issues we are working with during the pandemic.

When Governor Evers announced that schools would close, Reek School staff took two days to plan for online learning. Due to our commitment to technology, we were fairly well prepared for the move to online learning. We had one-to-one devices in place for students, and students knew how to access many online platforms. We began delivering online instruction on Wednesday, March 18, and teachers and students continue these efforts now and will continue through our last scheduled day of school, June 4. Both teachers and students have refined instruction and learning along the way. We provided tech devices for families as well as hot spots. We have found that some families needed texts to further help with learning, and some students needed more paper/pencil activities. Both the online instruction and learning have evolved and continue to morph as we determine the changing needs.

I am very impressed with the teaching staff who are on call answering emails and telephone calls from 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM Mondays through Friday. They have learned new apps and platforms. They create videos of themselves teaching and meet via Facetime or Zoom when needed. They have moved assignments and assessments to Google classroom and have increased the functionality of Google for their content areas. They provide daily clear lesson plans with attention to Standards yet also with creativity and a focus on the individual child. Staff continues to collect and assess assignments, and we are proud that 97% of our students are completing work on a timely basis. We also take a daily attendance even though this is not required by DPI; we feel this helps with parent accountability.

Our families are also working hard. I've heard from parents that they are overwhelmed with all they have happening in their homes. Many of our families do not have work and face economic hardship. Yet, they are extremely appreciative of the Reek staff at reaching out. Families are

emotionally needy right now, and our staff addresses the social emotional needs by calling families, texting, emailing, and creating weekly positive videos. Here is the link to one of our videos we created for families - <https://youtu.be/3T3dTrLsPXQ>

Additionally, we provide “grab and go” breakfast and lunch bags to students each day. We deliver these meals to our families using the school van. Not all families have the means to come to school to get the meals, so we help by delivering.

As the school administrator, I continue to come into the office each day. It is very strange to say that I am very busy – odd since there no students and no staff in the building. It is an effort to keep abreast of the all the ever-changing information. I stay current with information coming from DPI, WASB, SAA, and WASDA. I continue to network with other superintendents so we can provide both information and support to one another. I review teachers’ lesson plans and give them praise and encouragement. I call families to check in with them and see what they might need. It takes daily commitment to keep our staff and families connected with each other and with school when the building is closed.

In addition to the unknown about how school might look in the fall, another huge unknown is our budget and how to try to provide stability when finances are uncertain. We are doing our best to be fiscally shrewd and save what we can now. This is difficult in a place like Reek School where we do not have many frills and most of our costs are in personnel – one teacher per classroom and most special classes are part-time employees.

I appreciate you reading my thoughts and being aware of what is happening here at Reek School. I have had a long career in education, and I know that adversity will challenge us and make us better in the end. Thank you for all you are doing to help our schools. Please let me know if you would like further communication.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Samantha Polek". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Samantha Polek