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Dr. John W. Thomsen  
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

May 27, 2020

Greetings Whitefish Bay School District Community,

We hope this message finds you and your family safe and well. As our school year winds down, we would like to share with you some of the ways that the Whitefish Bay School District has served our students and families during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the preparations that are underway for the future. The collective response during the emergency shutdown reflects strong support for our District and the value placed upon public education in Whitefish Bay.

We are extremely proud of our District team members and thankful for the support of our Board of Education and the Village of Whitefish Bay as we work together to serve our school community. Though District school buildings and facilities remain closed through June 30<sup>th</sup>, virtual learning is ongoing. We are especially appreciative that our team members have opened a virtual window into their homes as they support students and families in new and profound ways.

In the weeks since the closure was announced, the School District of Whitefish Bay accomplished the following:

#### **Implemented Virtual Learning**

- Rolled out highly reliable virtual learning for all 3,000+ students from junior kindergarten through 12th grade, including implementation of the software platforms Seesaw (grades 4K-5) and Canvas (grades 6-12).
- Ensured that student privacy was protected, and that Federal laws were followed as we communicated virtually with students and families.
- Facilitated many hours of professional development to instructional staff, followed by virtual training for students and families to best position them for online instruction.
- Secured and deployed over 1,000 technology devices so that all students (approximately 3,000) have access to online learning.
- Implemented technical support and provided opportunities for Wi-Fi connections to households as needed.

#### **Ongoing Improvements**

- Surveyed our students, families, and staff regarding the effectiveness of our initial virtual learning experience and adjusted processes based upon the feedback.
- Examined and adjusted our third and fourth quarter calendars to better meet the needs of students.
- Reviewed and modified our third and fourth quarter grading - resulting in a system which reflects the educational standards of the school community while supporting all learners.
- Exercised flexibility when possible regarding school-based events and celebrations and sought opportunities for virtual student recognition and continued connection.
- Provided social and emotional resources for staff and families to promote the overall well-being of our students.
- Communicated regular updates to school communities in an ever-changing environment.

#### **Managed Facilities and Safety**

- Closed buildings, grounds, playgrounds and athletic facilities due to the emergency shutdown order that remains in place through the end of the day on June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Developed and implemented a deep cleaning schedule in all school buildings.

- Briefly and safely reopened our school buildings so teachers and students/families could collect essential learning materials to facilitate online learning from their homes.
- Modified or cancelled most scheduled in-person recreation department programs, and then produced virtual opportunities for continued engagement for community members of all ages.
- Accomplished numerous building maintenance projects to take advantage of unexpected facility closures.

### **Nurtured Positive Partnerships**

- Collaborated with area partners including village officials, WFB Police Department, the North Shore Health Department, the North Shore Fire and Rescue, as well as other North Shore school districts to work through unprecedented situations effectively.
- Adjusted plans based upon ongoing updates and new information provided to us by local, county, and state health officials, the Governor's office, the Department of Public Instruction and the CDC.
- Worked closely and collaboratively across the state with other districts, school leaders, and officials from the Department of Public Instruction as we consider all future programming.

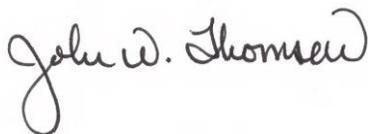
We are thankful for the messages of support and gratitude directed towards our staff, school teams, and our administrators during these difficult times. Our work is ongoing, and we remain flexible while we position the District to be responsive to new information and its impact on our schools.

### **A Few of Our Next Steps:**

- Evaluating options for the graduation ceremony for the class of 2020 -- these plans continue as we monitor parameters and safety guidelines.
- Modifying our summer school programming so that it can take place virtually.
- Continuing to enroll new students as families move into the Village.
- Gathering and organizing student items from lockers and desks, and developing a plan for safe return of these items to families. Included in this process will be coordinating the return of school district owned materials, including items such as technology, textbooks, and library books.
- Developing several different scenarios of what school may look like in the fall. Full traditional face-to-face, full virtual learning, or a combination of the two will all be options. Decisions will be based upon the safety guidelines and parameters placed upon public schools.
- Redesigning our professional learning plan for adults beginning in mid-June so that we are best positioned to support our students in the fall, regardless of the instructional format.
- Working on enhanced safety practices that are appropriate and designed to minimize risk for all.
- Recognizing now more than ever that every student, family and team member will be responsible for attending to and cultivating a culture of safety for all.

The District Focus Plan envisions supporting each student academically and building relevant transferable skills in a supportive environment that nurtures the whole child. Regardless of what our future brings, this will continue to be our mission. We know that our staff, students and community members will continue to work together through this pandemic, and we look forward to the day where we can all be together again.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions. Thank you for your understanding and support - be well.



Dr. John W. Thomsen  
Superintendent of Schools