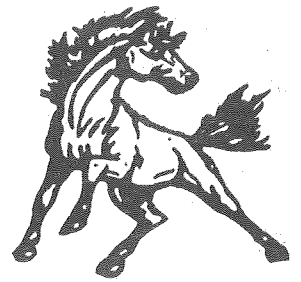


SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MARION



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James Bena, District Administrator
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June 5, 2020

State Senator Olsen & State Representative Petersen,

Thank you for your continued support of Marion and our surrounding communities. Most citizens of our great state will acknowledge that our public schools are focal points in small towns across Wisconsin. The increase in state aid to schools for the upcoming 2020-21 school year is very much appreciated, and is essential toward maintaining quality programming for our children.

I would like to share with you how the Marion School District has responded to meeting the needs of our students and our area families during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The Marion School District closed its doors to students on Friday, March 13th. Due to our rural location, many of our families have limited access to quality internet service. In response to this problem, our district purchased and provided several internet "hotspots," which were delivered and installed at families' homes by school staff. To maintain academic progress, Marion Elementary teachers created a series of academic coursework packets, which were delivered by district staff in school busses over the course of the school closure period. Through a family survey, our district learned that Junior and Senior High School students had better access to internet services. Marion Jr. & Sr. High School teachers created academic coursework packets, and also provided students with a portion of their instruction online.

The move to at-home and online learning created new levels of stress and responsibility for parents. The Marion School District provided assistance to families as they took on their new roles, communicating best practices for learning at home through the local newspaper, letters to families, emails, social media, and through the district's COVID-19 resource webpage.

In addition to continuing to provide academic coursework for students, the Marion School District supported district families by offering a daily breakfast and lunch to each child in the district. The meals were assembled, bagged, and loaded into school vans, which were driven throughout the district by school district bus drivers. Meal drop-offs were done at each rural home; families who live in the city picked up their meals at Marion High School. Providing over 225 meals each day, Monday through Friday, took a great deal of effort, dedication, and coordination by district transportation, custodial, clerical, technology, paraprofessional, administrative, and food service staff.

As we enter the summer of 2020, the Marion School District is working with both local and state agencies and other professional resources to ensure that we are doing everything within our power to provide safe and exceptional educational opportunities for our students. It is a logical assumption to believe that schools saved money by not having our buildings open during the spring, but monies are being spent on previously unbudgeted supplies as we prepare for the challenges of reopening our buildings. We understand that schools will be asked to play a role in resolving a potential state budget shortfall. Please consider the facts that our schools have used our resources wisely during the crisis to provide basic needs for our families, and will continue to need strong financial support to do so as we move forward.

Thank you for continuing to support Wisconsin's public schools. We appreciate your ongoing leadership, advocacy, and support.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. James Bena
Marion School District Administrator & Elementary Principal

The School District of Marion, in partnership with families and community, is committed to the continuous growth of every student. By ensuring a safe, respectful, and challenging environment; and by providing quality, comprehensive, educational opportunities, we will prepare all students so they can learn and contribute to society for a lifetime.