

MINERAL POINT

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



705 Ross St. • Mineral Point, WI 53565 • mineralpointschools.org • p: 608.987.0740 • f: 608.987.3766



May 17, 2020

Dear Senator Marklein and Representative Novak,

Thank you for all of the time and energy you have been putting in during this strange and chaotic time. The number of difficult decisions you have had to make is unimaginable. My purpose for reaching out today is to share what the Mineral Point Unified School District has been going through so you have some background knowledge as you continue to make tough decisions.

Like the entire state, we were notified on the afternoon of Friday, March 13th that schools will be closing as of 3:30 pm on Wednesday, March 18th. On Sunday, March 15th, we held an emergency administrator meeting that included two local doctors. That meeting was followed by an emergency school board meeting to decide our local course of action. We closed our schools to in-person instruction immediately and prepared to deliver an alternative educational program for all of our students.

I am confident in saying that Mineral Point is similar to many other school districts across the state as we struggle to maintain a connection to our students. We have provided equipment, including hotspots, to increase our ability to continue our education of all students. The biggest issue we have faced is the lack of reliable, high-speed internet for many rural families. As is typical, my teachers have continued to adapt to do the best possible job.

The district has made a commitment to continue the employment of all staff members. The teaching staff has continued a level of dedication to providing an education unlike any other profession. We have tapped into our instructional assistants to continue their supporting connections. Many of the staff have maintained their educational support with the students that need it the most. Others have stepped up and helped prepare and deliver food for our struggling families. Because of their extraordinary efforts, we have made and delivered 3000 meals each week. Our maintenance staff has continued to deep-clean our buildings preparing for the day students and families can return. The staff that make sure our districts run smoothly have been unshakable in their dedication.

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While some people may refer to them as secretaries or bookkeepers, we know them as assistants. They assist each building administrator or Superintendent and make their jobs easier during an unprecedented time.

The main purpose for my letter is to help give some guidance when you are faced with making another difficult decision. The Mineral Point Unified School District is extremely proud of the level of education we provide. Not only that, we are the largest employer in our community. As you look at places to make cuts to offset the revenue shortfall, please understand that schools also employ many individuals. Another issue to keep in mind is that many schools spend money in their own communities. If I have a plumbing, or electrical issue, we can hire a local business to provide that service. We purchase milk from a local dairy and tap into local farmers for farm to table programs. As a school district, we look at the partnerships we can maintain for the benefit of our students and community. We continue to support each other.

My district, like many others, has not been able to save a great deal of money during this crisis. Money that was budgeted in one area has been moved to purchase cleaning supplies, PPE, and additional food. Schools do not run like businesses where there are profits. We continue to prepare for the future and now is not the time to take away support for schools. The potential cure for this pandemic, or the next one, could be earning a diploma this very year.

I would be more than happy to answer any questions or give examples of how our staff members are going beyond what has been asked of them during this time. We will make it through this and be stronger for it. That's what educators do! We are #PointerNation!

Sincerely,
Mitch Wainwright

Mitch Wainwright
Superintendent
Mineral Point Unified School District