

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

As I draft the November edition of the newsletter, our students are closing out the first quarter of the school year on Thursday, October 29, 2020. Despite the ongoing challenges caused by the global pandemic, most (approximately 80%) of our students have returned to the classroom for in-person learning, and for the first time ever our district now regularly delivers an on-line learning platform as well as the more traditional in-person instruction. Additionally, the District is taking precautions that when students and/or staff test positive for COVID-19, those identified as close contacts are moved to intermittent virtual instruction. The high school experienced this several weeks ago and resumed in-person instruction, however, at a 50% capacity beginning on Thursday, October 22, 2020. The goal is to renew full capacity on November 2, 2020. Additionally, over the past seven weeks the District has paused in-person instruction at the middle school as well as with individual sections of elementary classrooms. Throughout the 2020-21 school year there will undoubtedly be the aforementioned interruptions and shifts to intermittent virtual learning with the goal to keep student learning moving forward at all times throughout the 2020-21 school year. To those families and students that opted for remote/virtual learning on a regular basis, know that we miss seeing you in person. Please do not hesitate to reach out when you need assistance, as we are here to serve you to the best of our ability. Thank you to all of teaching staff for all of their efforts the first quarter of the school year! Additionally, thank you to our students; large in part, their efforts each day have been great!

As we enter the month of November, we know that at some point in the upcoming months we will face some kind of inclement weather. Whether it be ice, freezing rain or an excessive amount of snow, at some point there will be a need to cancel, delay or early release the students of the District. We do this to ensure the safety of the students we serve each day. The District will do its best to make a decision to cancel or delay classes no later than 6:15 a.m. Please realize that late-breaking weather may call for a late decision, and in this event, the District will utilize radio and television sources as soon as it has made a decision.

The District will utilize the following four methods as our primary way of communicating with the public. The first will be the school messenger service. This will provide a phone call to the number you have provided the District within the Skyward student management system. The other media sources are the District Facebook page, WISC-TV 3, and WNNO 106.9 FM are the earliest contacts that the District makes. The District will be contacting other media as well, however, in the order as mentioned. Please realize that canceling school is one of the most difficult things to do as the weather conditions can change rapidly, especially in the case of freezing rain. If the District deems it necessary to early release students because of inclement weather and you have elementary age children, please make sure that we have your alternative

day care arrangements in advance and on file at one of the elementary offices. This will greatly assist the office staff as well as the classroom teachers and aides who ensure that your children are on the correct bus or for any alternative pre-approved arrangements. This will ease some of the confusion in an already hectic day!

On Monday, October 26, 2020 the Board of Education adopted the 2020 levy. Earlier this year, at the annual meeting a preliminary mill rate of \$7.68 was forecasted. Following the receipt of some key variables such as equalized valuation and the third Friday student count, a certified levy of \$7.63 was approved. A year ago, when the District compared its levy against all other school districts in the state, it ranked 318th out of 421 school districts. In 2019 the state average for K-12 districts mill rate was \$9.37, and thus even with the passage of new school referendum two years ago the District remains well below the state average.

Following the approval of the 2020 levy, the Board will utilize the next several months to formulate an operating referendum. Initially, the District would have prepared for this referendum in November of 2020, but with the global pandemic impacting our local economy the Board opted to utilize district fund balance for one year, delaying pursuing this option until the spring of 2021. In turn, the impact of the passage of an operating referendum would not take place until December of 2021 and hopefully during this time both the ag-based and tourism sectors of our local economy improves and stabilizes. Over the next several months, the board of education will take up discussion on this topic, and a finite plan will be formulated that is aligned with the District's strategic plan.

In closing, despite living in a COVID world, our students and staff are striving to reach our vision statement through pursuing academic and individual excellence for a stronger community! We always recognize there will always be challenges to get better. We thank you for the opportunity to serve our communities' children, for they are both our highest priority and it is our privilege to do so!

Sincerely,

Terrance R. Slack

