

I want to start my letter off today by thanking everyone that has sent kind thoughts, wishes and support over the past 2 weeks. It has been a time of sadness for my family, but all the support and care that has been shown was uplifting. As I have said to many, we all experience life's rites of passage. We become a part of clubs that we don't necessarily want to join, but everyone has to go through it at some point. There are still many things to sort out over the next few weeks, but I wanted you to know that I have passed on all the well wishes to my dad and seven siblings. Special thanks to our Exec Board, negotiations team and Curt for picking up the ball, so that I could concentrate on my family during this time.

With all of that said, back to business within the district. Our negotiations team met this week and have mapped out a strategy to present our financial package request to the district. We have taken into account the increase from the state, money in our district reserve account, money that was sent to the district from the CARES act, the increase in insurance costs, our survey and all the extra work that is being done because of the lack of subs and paras, etc. We meet with the district on Monday to present and things will move from there.

This week's issues come for the REA listening posts:

There were questions regarding the use of sick leave. Our district has been pushing that sick leave is used in ½ day or whole day increments since it was added to the contract 2 or 3 rounds ago. If there are buildings asking staff to use sick leave by the hour for appointments, I would like to know.

The role of the Instructional Coach - It was brought up that in some buildings, instructional coaches are sometimes being used in an evaluative role. That is not what the role of an instructional coach. They are there to help teachers resource materials, guide practice, model a teaching technique and/or offer alternative methods of handling different situations within the classroom. The minute that role turns evaluative and they are reporting the principal, it becomes an administrative position. At that point, trust levels most likely will drop and coaches will be underutilized. If you feel that is what is happening in your building, I would urge you to talk with your coach or reach out to me. I will address it with Heather Willman and Peter Dodds.

Cabinet - I don't know how they are reaching out to buildings at this current time. That is a safe question to ask the admin in your building. I can bring it forward to the cabinet as well.

SPED questions - There were questions around which grid was to be followed if SPED students were quarantined, how secondary SPED staff were to do reading PD and if they would be compensated if outside of the school day, and para collaboration time with teachers. I addressed those questions at HR this morning and will be getting a response from Karla Bollesen. One other question was consideration of childcare needs for staff who attend IEP meetings. We know that is a professional obligation, but more communication needs to be given to staff, so that arrangements can be made for childcare. A teacher can

ask to be excused once their portion of a meeting is done, but the parent has to be consulted on that issue prior to the meeting taking place.

COVID Boosters – if you are connected with education, you are eligible for the booster shot. Many people are getting their booster at HyVee, Walgreen etc.

*The U of M is conducting a survey on school conditions. EdMN will be using the survey to talk with legislators and state leaders regarding the support needed for public schools. You can take the survey as an educator and/or as a parent. It would be great if we would let everyone know at the state level what things are happening in our schools. The survey closes on November 24th. Here is the link from the President's Insider for this week.

[Minnesota Safe Learning Survey: October 2021](#)



Happy Halloween!

Dan

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