

Today I want to start by thanking everyone that I have seen in the buildings over the last few days! It has been so wonderful seeing staff and students alike. I have truly missed being in the classrooms and buildings, but I didn't realize how much until I was really back in them. I will continue to go out to buildings everyday so that I can see what is happening. One thing I have learned from being captive in my home for so long is that I can work from pretty much anywhere as long as I have Wi-Fi! If there are things or events or issues you want me to know about don't be afraid to stop me in the halls or send an email.

One of the great events I happened on this week was when Governor Walz visited with the Kindergarten students at Jefferson. He and Dr. Heather Mueller, Mn Education Commissioner, stopped by and learned how to use the playground safely and respectfully. Jefferson admin, Heather Klavetter and Dana DeWitz did a great job with the demonstration and explanations. The governor held a press conference after the students got to play on the playground and show what they know. Superintendent Pekel and Representative Tina Liebling were there and spoke as well. Check out the local stations for coverage of the event!

Speaking of our Superintendent, have you met him? He and I have met already one on one and had several other opportunities to talk. We have already set up monthly meetings for the rest of the year to be able to discuss large and small matters. In my limited time with him, Dr. Pekel seems to be optimistic and very open. He is very cognizant of some changes that need to be made and is talking with many people inside and outside the district to determine a course of action. If you get a chance, attend a board meeting and you will get a better sense of him. When he is out in a building, take the time to introduce yourself. He is very much a people person and is eager to get to know the buildings and the people in them.

We had our first Faculty Rep meeting last night. Thank you to all who have taken on this commitment on behalf of your staff. This is a big job and by looking at the group, I am very confident that you all will be represented very well. One of the big items of discussion last night was about negotiations. I have made a list of most of the items we have been talking with the district about since we had our first meeting in June. The items are a mix of district and REA initiated issues. As we get further into negotiations, you will get more detail on how the issues are going. Currently, we have only worked on language issues and have not gotten to the financial portion. The team that is assembled: Emily Lynch, Carrie Sparks, Chuck Rietkerk, Kristi Sanders, Erin Schwartz, Kate Hanley, Troy Kowalski, Jake Johnson, myself and Angel, have been working diligently over the summer. Our next team meeting is the 16th which will prepare us for the meeting on the 23rd. You can continue to look for updates on our website reamn.com. A special thanks to the negotiations team for working over the summer to help move us closer to a settlement.

That is enough information for this week. You will see my weekly letter returning now that everyone is up and running and reading their email again. I want to reiterate what a great time I have had over the past weeks visiting buildings and that will continue until I have been everywhere! If you have something specific at your building and want me there sooner rather than later send an email to me and let's see what we can do.

Thanks!

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