To all members –

                Hope this letter finds you all well.  As you may know the Governor made the decision that we will be continuing Distance Learning throughout the rest of the year.  Along with that, May 1 and May 4 have been set aside, on a state level, to do planning to complete the year.  Since that decision was made yesterday, the district has been having discussions about how this will look for us.

                Information will be coming to you about how the days will be structured.  In a discussion I had this morning, I mentioned that the Governor’s news conference called them planning days and that Supt. Munoz called them professional learning days.  Most of our staff interprets those terms differently, so I will be active in trying to clarify what is going to be expected.  We still will not be able to congregate in large groups, so I am sure on-line will still be the norm.   Continue to read all the updates that come from the district.  I know you are bombarded with email and I am adding to it, but the information has to get out there.

                The EdMN local presidents had a tele-meeting with President Denise Specht last night.  Some of the concerns that I am hearing from members came through loud and clear across the state. One of the main themes is that staff, students and families are feeling overwhelmed.  One story was about the number of teachers a family of 4 has to be in communication with during the week.  They actually had to make 41 different contacts to complete assignments and get information and that was with 2 computers.  The message from Pres. Specht was that we have to be mindful of how much work we are assigning to students during this time – not only for our students, but for ourselves.  That tied in with the question about grading.  EdMN is working with Commissioner Ricker and MDE to help define what grading will look like this spring.  Once that is complete, districts will be given the information.

                Two issues came to me from Human Resources this morning:  First, social media is causing problems.  You may be posting in private, but people are sharing comments with HR.  They will address issues as needed with those individuals, but I am here to remind you to take care in posting and realize whatever you say becomes public.  Second, there was a statement in Supt. Munoz’s letter about being available to return to buildings promptly if need be.  Don’t worry; staff would be given plenty of notice to prepare you to return.  They realize that you can’t drop out of your teaching times on a moment’s notice to suddenly drive back to your buildings.

                We held our Executive Board meeting on Wednesday.  Not being technically savvy myself, I was surprised it went as smoothly as it did!  We will be hosting a virtual Faculty Representative meeting on May 6th.  Your Faculty Reps will receive an invite from Kathy Erie in our office.  My hope is that it works well and I can hear what is happening in the different buildings.  For instance, I know from my neighborhood families that Bishop Staff did a drive through last week!  The kids and parents really appreciated it!  Then I saw on the news last night that the staff at Jefferson did a neighborhood parade as well.  It was really cool to watch as everyone looked so excited.  I was a little nervous when I saw Holly Rietkerk wasn’t using her seatbelt…..way to do safe driving Chuck!!

                Keep up the great work you are all doing!  Know that every day that you are doing your work; Angel and I are doing ours by making sure issues are addressed, members are listened to and resources are found that help get the job done.  Thank you to the many people that have either called or emailed this past week.

Thanks for your work!

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