

Happy New Year!

If you are like you me, you may not be feeling much different than you did in 2020. I want to assure you that things will get better as we move forward into the spring. Vaccinations are on the horizon and we are better at our jobs than we were when this all started. I would encourage you all to take a look at the press release that our president, Denise Specht, has put forth. She has taken the time, in the President's Insider, to address the some of the recent updates to the Safe Learning Plan, questions about districts doing saliva testing, testing dates and the governor's loosening of restrictions regarding COVID. This is a great resource for information about what EdMN is doing to support our members.

As you know, the Board had a lengthy meeting on Tuesday, January, 5<sup>th</sup>. They discussed a lot of issues, but mainly it revolved around the district's re-opening plan. If you haven't looked at the notes that Heather Nessler has sent out, please do. We have staff divided on what should be done, but the course of action has been set in motion by their decision. I was glad that they aren't totally convinced that starting in person should happen as soon as the plan called for by the district. They have asked for more information for their upcoming board meetings regarding community spread and some input from the staff. There will be 2 surveys coming out for staff in the near future.

One survey is going to inquire whether staff want to receive the COVID vaccination. In speaking with our COVID task force, Mayo Clinic did the same type of survey so that they could request and prepare the correct amount of vaccine for their employees. When this survey comes, please make sure you fill it out and send it back. This is going to be an important step for our district as which adjust our learning models. I also learned that we could be vaccinated though the County or through Mayo Clinic. It was exciting to hear that Mayo has become proficient enough to do approximately 2,000 inoculations in a day! The district is drafting a priority list of how vaccinations will be given because most likely vaccinations will happen in batches. Please remember that being vaccinated is voluntary.

The Second survey is going to be a teacher survey. We discussed this last night in Meet and Confer and so work has to be done on it before they send it out to the staff. When it comes, please consider answering that as well. I believe that is some of the information that they will share with the board for the February 2<sup>nd</sup> board meeting. I would give you more information, but it has to be reworked after we met and discussed its content and questions.

There are tons of changes and tons of questions that go with it. One of the items I want to make a correction on is the wearing of face shields. Following EdMN's advice and the direction of the district, all staff will be wearing masks and face shields unless there is a medical reason not to do so. I am trying to find answers and pump out information when I get accurate information to pass along. I thank all the people that have been handling questions within their buildings and in their work groups. This helps me as I describe it to HR or suggest who to talk with about the issue. Shout out to our Meet and Confer team.....they are doing a great job advocating for you. They are not afraid to ask the hard questions and expect the district to offer solutions or reasons why something is the way it is. This is another important avenue for making changes in our district!

Yes, things will get better. I have learned to lean on our members for support and I know that every day you are out there making a difference for our students and their families. I am trying a mindfulness trick this month of listing 5 positive things, interactions or people every evening. This helps me ward off some of my anxiety over the "what next" situations. Give it a whirl and see if it helps you out! Hang in there and keep talking with one another.

Thanks,

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