



Dr. Teri Staloch, Superintendent
Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools
Prior Lake American/Savage Pacer
Column run date: April 18, 2020

The world and our PLSAS community has changed incredibly since I wrote my last column. COVID-19 has caused us all to live, work and adapt to a new way of doing things. I know everyone in our community has had to do things differently lately and our school district is no exception. With all that has changed I know some things remain the same, including the way our community supports and cares for one another. For this I am very grateful.

Our entire school community has worked together to change the way we deliver education and provide support to students as well as meet the needs of families.

Our teachers, certified and support staff have been implementing Distance Learning for the last three weeks, taking the traditional classroom teaching model and completely transforming it by delivering online and interactive instruction from their home while remaining focused on connections and relationships with their students.

Our Child Nutrition Services staff have been preparing an average of 3,500 meals per day for students so that they are well fed and prepared to learn.

Our bus drivers have switched from delivering children to school to delivering meals to students' neighborhoods.

Our maintenance staff are providing support to every department and district operation as well as ensuring our schools are deep cleaned, sanitized and safe.

Our Kids' Company staff from Community Education along with some of our paraprofessionals and certified staff have been providing child care so that our emergency workers can in turn continue to help those in need in our community.

Our technology department along with principals and school staff deployed 1,300 iPads to 6th and 7th-grade students and offered an iPad opt-in process to elementary families, resulting in the distribution of more than 1,600 tablets. Our technology staff also found a way to provide internet access to families in need.

Our human resources, business office and office staff across the district have continued to provide support to staff and the district.

Our communications team ensures that staff, families and the community continues to have up-to-date information as well as a glimpse into the many ways PLSAS staff are providing education, connections and services.

The School Board is providing support, trust and governance for staff to do their new jobs effectively.

None of this would be possible without the support of our parents and guardians who are playing a vital role in their student's learning. Thank you for supporting your student at home and for your continued engagement.

I am also grateful to community members who have provided help and support. We have received donated cloth masks for staff who are working in our buildings and Prior Lake Rotarians helped deliver technology to students so all could participate fully in Distance Learning. Reaching Our Community's Kids (ROCK) has also supported students and families with meals and basic needs.

All over the community there are chalk drawings and signs offering messages of hope and kindness along with the assurance that one day we will all be together again. Every day I hear stories of amazing connections and at a time of uncertainty and hurt in the world, each of these acts matter.

During this time of uncertainty and change, I could not be more proud of our staff, students, families and community for rising to the challenges we are facing, and for rediscovering that which unites us: our shared commitment to our district mission to help all learners reach their full potential as contributing and productive members of our ever-changing global community.

While this is not normal school and this is not normal life, I am grateful that our staff and community are focusing on connections with students and families to bring some normalcy during a very unique time. Thank you all for your support. We are here for all of you and we will get through this together. #WeArePLSAS #RelationshipsMatter