

October 20, 2020

RE: Recent Rise in COVID-19 Cases in Community and Implications for Schools

Dear West Michigan School Community:

As superintendents representing Kent, Ottawa and Muskegon Counties, we first want to acknowledge your extraordinary patience during these difficult times. Your understanding during this pandemic has been critical in keeping our schools safe.

Unfortunately, the collective hard work of schools alone is not sufficient in controlling community spread of the coronavirus. Public health experts report [significant increases in positive cases](#) across our state and region in recent weeks. Health officials cite that the rise in cases is largely due to a lack of safe practices -- mainly distancing and mask wearing -- in social settings and community gatherings. If cases continue to trend upwards, County Health Departments warn schools may be forced to implement additional restrictions to prevent continued infections. Restrictions may include cancellation, or other mitigation efforts, of extracurricular activities like athletics, band, choir and drama.

As a worst case scenario, schools may be asked to shift to a distance learning instructional model either periodically or for an extended period of time until cases decline.

And while safety remains our number one priority, we also acknowledge the important role schools serve for our broader community. Schools are vital in meeting the academic, social, emotional and physical wellbeing of students and families. We must do everything we can to keep schools safe and open.

To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and to keep schools open, we ask that all social and community gatherings continue to adhere to safe mitigation protocols. We've worked too hard over the last several months to reverse course now.

Together, we **can** slow the spread of COVID-19.

On behalf of the students and communities we serve, we thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



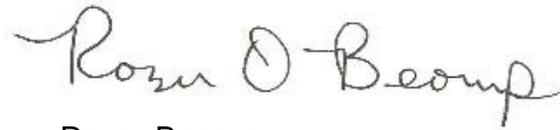
Tom TenBrink  
Superintendent  
Jenison Public Schools



Ron Caniff  
Superintendent  
Kent ISD



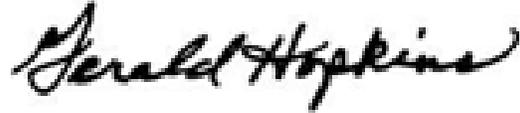
Dr. Kevin Macina  
Superintendent  
Byron Center Public Schools



Roger Bearup  
Superintendent  
Grandville Public Schools



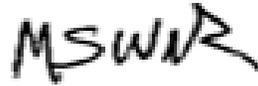
David Washburn  
Superintendent  
Comstock Park Public Schools



Gerald Hopkins  
Superintendent  
Kenowa Hills Public Schools



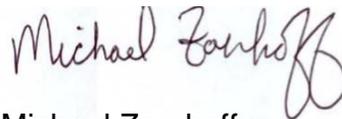
Dr. Heidi Kattula  
Superintendent  
East Grand Rapids Public Schools



Mike Weiler  
Superintendent  
Kent City Community Schools



Daniel Behm  
Superintendent  
Forest Hills Public Schools



Michael Zoerhoff  
Superintendent  
Kentwood Public Schools



Kevin Polston  
Superintendent  
Godfrey-Lee Public Schools



Dr. Mike Shibler  
Superintendent  
Rockford Public Schools



Bill Fetterhoff  
Superintendent  
Godwin Heights Public Schools



Nate Fowler  
Superintendent  
Lowell Area Public Schools



Samuel Wright  
Superintendent  
Kelloggsville Public Schools



Craig Hoekstra  
Superintendent  
Wyoming Public Schools



Dr. John Severson  
Superintendent  
Muskegon Area ISD



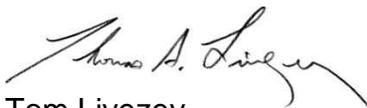
Bob Szymoniak  
Superintendent  
Fruitport Community Schools



Dr. Curt Babcock  
Superintendent  
North Muskegon Public Schools



Dr. Adam Bayne  
Superintendent  
Holton Public Schools



Tom Livezey  
Superintendent  
Oakridge Public Schools



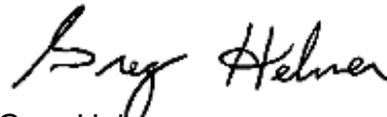
Bill O'Brien  
Superintendent  
Mona Shores Public Schools



Jeff Johnson  
Superintendent  
Montague Area Public Schools



Jim Nielsen  
Superintendent  
Orchard View Public Schools



Greg Helmer  
Superintendent  
Ravenna Public Schools



Steve Edwards  
Superintendent  
Reeths-Puffer Public Schools



Dr. Dedrick Martin  
Superintendent  
Caledonia Community Schools



Dr. Garth Cooper  
Superintendent  
Allendale Public Schools



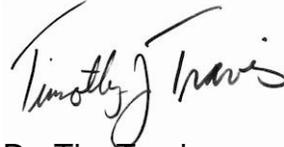
Peter Haines  
Superintendent  
Ottawa Area ISD



Dr. Doug VanderJagt  
Superintendent  
Hudsonville Public Schools



Matt Spencer  
Superintendent  
Coopersville Area Public Schools



Dr. Tim Travis  
Superintendent  
Saugatuck Public Schools



Andy Ingall  
Superintendent  
Grand Haven Area Public Schools



Dennis Furton  
Superintendent  
Spring Lake Public Schools



David Tebo  
Superintendent  
Hamilton Community Schools



Tom Martin  
Superintendent  
West Ottawa Public Schools



Dr. Brian Davis  
Superintendent  
Holland Public Schools



Cal DeKuiper  
Superintendent  
Zeeland Public Schools



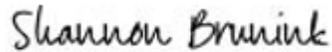
Thomas DeJonge  
Superintendent  
Grand Rapids Christian Schools



Dr. Scott Korpak  
Superintendent  
Northview Public Schools



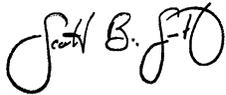
Pete Bush  
Superintendent  
Sparta Area Public Schools



Shannon Brunink  
Head of School  
Black River Public Schools



Dave Faber  
Superintendent  
Diocese of Grand Rapids Catholic  
Schools



Scott Smith  
Superintendent  
Cedar Spring Public Schools



Dr. Jerry McDowell  
Superintendent  
Whitehall Public Schools



Dan Takens  
Superintendent  
Thornapple Kellogg Schools