

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.

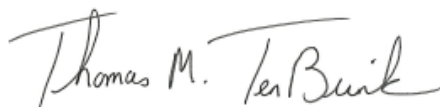
And while safety remains our number one priority, we also acknowledge the important role schools serve for our broader community. Schools are vital in meeting the academic, social, emotional and physical wellbeing of students and families. We must do everything we can to keep schools safe and open.

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



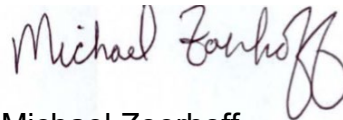
Dr. Heidi Kattula
Superintendent
East Grand Rapids Public Schools



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



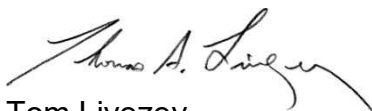
Bob Szymoniak
Superintendent
Fruitport Community Schools



Dr. Curt Babcock
Superintendent
North Muskegon Public Schools



Dr. Adam Bayne
Superintendent
Holton Public Schools



Tom Livezey
Superintendent
Oakridge Public Schools



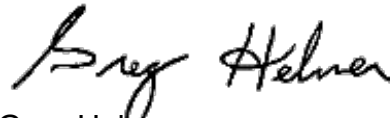
Bill O'Brien
Superintendent
Mona Shores Public Schools



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



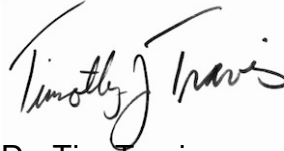
Peter Haines
Superintendent
Ottawa Area ISD



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



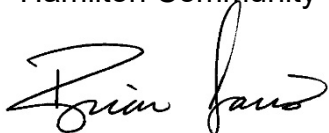
Dennis Furton
Superintendent
Spring Lake Public Schools



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



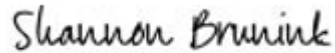
Thomas DeJonge
Superintendent
Grand Rapids Christian Schools



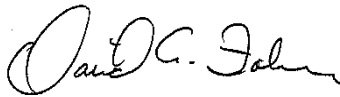
Dr. Scott Korpak
Superintendent
Northview Public Schools



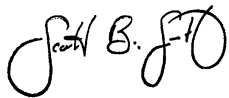
Pete Bush
Superintendent
Sparta Area Public Schools



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