Alcona Community Schools

Excellence Today... Success Tomorrow

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December 23rd, 2020

2020 has been a year filled with challenges and changes. I do not think many of us could fathom schools being closed on March 12 for the remainder of the 19-20 school year and the ensuing months that followed. While the spring and summer were in constant flux with preparing for an uncertain fall, positives emerged:

- Saff immediately mobilized from school or home to support students and learning during the spring and fall.
- Bought enough Chromebooks for all students during the spring to prepare for all styles of face to face and remote learning possibilities
- Collected data and purchased the internet for any families that needed it in the event we learned remotely
- Support staff painted and cleaned the district in a safe manner during the spring, summer, and fall.
- Teaching staff adjusted and embraced new duties and teaching methods to support students by integrating personalized learning and technology tools.
- Support staff have stepped to the plate by cleaning and sanitizing the district daily after students leave
- The district offered a free summer school learning program for kindergarten through fifth grade.
- We completed a complete overhaul of the school's HVAC system, including ionization units, to improve air quality for all working or learning at Alcona Schools.
- Continued removal of carpet from the elementary building in six classrooms.
- We added wireless units for parking lot free internet access through several grants.
- The district served over 100,000 meals from the spring through August
- Held face to face learning without a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 until November

Small communities like ours have responded to the pandemic by bringing them closer together than ever. Our staff connected to support each other and the students. We also feel that the different forms of communication added since March have strengthened the connection between the district and families. I also realize that not every detail was perfect and that we have continued to learn and try to improve all while being as responsive to student, family, and staff needs. I'm grateful more than ever to be a Tiger, especially during what has been a historically challenging 2020.

Remote Learning

After many discussions with local health officials, the district(preschool through 8th grade) will learn remotely for the week of January 4th through the 8th. We will return to face to face learning on January 11th for preschool through 8th grade. Learning Labs will be available on campus during the remote learning week for students who need support and internet access, and potential for special education. More details to come next week.

January Calendar

- School Resumes Remote Learning - January 4th through the 8th

- Face to Face Learning Resumes - January 11th
- End of 1st Semester - January 29th

Assistant Food Service & Athletic Director
The district is thrilled to welcome Chad Cole back to Alcona Schools as our new athletic director and assistant food service director. Chad will send additional information in the coming weeks with a more formal introduction.

Athletics
The Michigan High School Athletic Association has restarted fall state championship tournaments after the new year. The goal is to allow winter sports to begin practice in January. Details are still emerging.

Athletic Event Streaming
The district partnered with Alpena Alcona Area Credit Union on camera systems for the gym and outdoor stadium to stream events. More details to come in the next few weeks!

Sinking Fund 2020
We were able to finally wrap up our HVAC controls project as our sinking fund initiative. The district was able to update technology and controls on our systems district-wide to help the system run more efficiently and effectively. We were also able to add ionization units to almost all units to improve the air quality for all who learn and work in the district, which was timely as we deal with COVID-19.

Sinking Fund 2021
Bids will go out soon for the 2021 sinking fund to replace the middle/high school windows that were part of the original construction of the building. The sinking fund has now replaced roofs, LED lighting, HVAC controls, and now windows, saving money and reallocating financial resources to students.

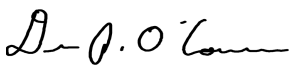
Giving Tuesday
Thank you to all those that were willing to donate to our endowment fund and our property and nature trail system. We were able to raise another $900 toward continued learning opportunities and access for students!

High School Students - 2nd Semester
The district plans for high school students to return to face to face school in February to start the second semester. More details to come in the next few weeks.

Substitutes
The district is still looking for substitutes in all areas. If interested, go to pcmiservices.com.

I wish you all a safe and restful break. We are all looking forward to 2021! Please contact me with any further questions that you may have.

Sincerely,



Daniel J. O'Connor
Alcona Community Schools
Superintendent