



# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CLEAR LAKE

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Ryan Monson, Member

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JULY 29, 2020

Dear Clear Lake Community Members & District Employees,

As we approach the final weeks of summer, I would like to share with you a small piece of the Clear Lake School District story from the last couple of months. The school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic brought many difficulties and challenges. It has been the most rapidly evolving situation that I have ever encountered in my professional career. That being said, I have never been more impressed or more proud of the entire Clear Lake School District staff, the entire student body, the parents of our students, School Board members, and the community as a whole. Your collective response to this pandemic has been nothing short of exceptional.

On March 17th, the Clear Lake School District closed the schools in the district and mobilized an offsite packet/online distance learning strategy to continue to educate the 614 students in the district. Our teaching staff, with the assistance of our support staff, developed a distance learning approach in response to the COVID-19 closure and implemented that plan within three days of the state-wide closure all while continuing to teach students in their classrooms and attend to their social-emotional needs during this jarring transition.

Our Food Service and Transportation departments along with the entire support staff also responded to the challenge of providing meals to our students in an extraordinary fashion. The Clear Lake School District provided two meals daily for nearly 315 children in our school district. These meals were prepared and packaged by our dedicated Food Service Staff and Support Staff and delivered by our remarkable Transportation Staff every week. Each week our district served approximately 2,500 meals and committed to providing these meals through June 30<sup>th</sup>. As a district, we served over approximately 32,500 meals. This all took place in conjunction with our outstanding Custodial Staff sanitizing and cleaning all areas being used to ensure that everyone remained safe and healthy during this pandemic.

This unprecedented journey (and yes, that word is overused, but so fitting) is an experience that has changed us forever. This situation proved to be extremely challenging, causing our administrative team to quickly develop and implement plans only to be forced to develop and implement new plans as the landscape rapidly evolved. Our staff has grown tremendously in their ability to make this learning environment a two-way interaction while continually fostering engagement. The collective ability to use and engage students with technology has forced our district to take an enormous step forward, and our staff and our district will be better as a result. Staff members at all levels were meeting virtually with students, ran live lectures, provided instruction through online platforms, facilitated virtual study halls, engaged students in multiple virtual platforms all while ensuring that every student's mental health and well-being were at the forefront during this unfortunate situation. To facilitate distance learning for the many families that lack internet or technology resources in our rural district, our staff also created and distributed thousands of packets of educational materials to families.

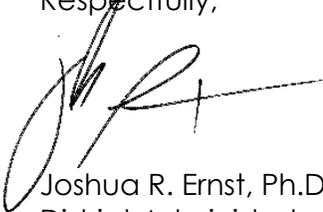
Our students also rose to the occasion and showed tremendous resiliency throughout this entire situation. They worked hard and stayed connected during the remainder of the school year. Our parents were positive and took on the difficult role as the overseer to their child/children's

education with great courage. The School Board was supportive and flexible during the most trying days, which allowed me to do my job as best as I possibly could. The community showed support to our students and staff in so many ways including signs of encouragement, emails, letters, and more.

Countless hours of planning have gone into preparing the District for the 2020-2021 school year in order to have students and staff reentering the buildings. I am thankful to have such committed a staff and a supportive community. I am also proud to be the leader of this exceptional school district and I am confident that we will successfully navigate the 2020-2021 school year together.

The Clear Lake story is a success story! I just wanted to share how impressed I have been with this community throughout these challenging days. Thank you for your patience, resilience, and trust. I value every single one of you and your contributions during this time. THANK YOU & GO WARRIORS!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Ernst', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Joshua R. Ernst, Ph.D.  
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#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Clear Lake School District prepares students, in an active partnership with families and the community, to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens.