One final weekly message (even though I said last week would be the last). Why? Well, because we had a bunch more kudos arrive. Also, because I wanted to share with you some of the results of our community needs survey relative to the COVID-19 pandemic as it relates to our work.

A total of 6,308 families, representing about 27%, completed the survey, which was open for a week beginning in late April. As I shared with all of you upon our return to distance learning in late March, our priorities shifted to be 1) care and comfort of our families and students, 2) communication, and 3) learning. We all know that a child cannot learn if their basic needs are not met. This survey shows us that 95% percent of families say their basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, and mental health support were met during the school closings.

Some of the highlights of what families also told us:

- 20% of families say they are relying on the school district for food, while 79% of families say they are food secure.
- 13% of families say they are concerned about their housing situation, 86% say they are slightly or not at all concerned.
- 34% of families say they are concerned about their child’s social or emotional well-being, while 66% are either slightly concerned or not at all concerned.
- 13% of families are concerned about child care, while 88% are either slightly concerned or not at all concerned.
- 43% of families indicated they were satisfied with distance learning while buildings were closed, with another 34% being somewhat satisfied, 16% slightly satisfied, and 8% being not satisfied at all.

When digging into learning occurring at home, 9% of families say their child was participating almost all of the day, 29% said most of the day, 46% said some of the day, 15% indicated their child participated a little bit of the day, and 2% said their child engaged almost none of the day.

We knew going into distance learning that technology and internet access would be obstacles. While we moved to 1:1 technology in grades 5-12 in 2019-2020, we knew we had gaps in technology availability and quickly moved to address that issue. By the time of the survey, 97% of families indicated their child had access to a tablet, a Chromebook, or a home computer.

For internet access, 94% of families indicated their child had access to the internet. Three percent said they had access, but only through a smartphone, and 3% said they have no reliable access to the internet. We have been working diligently to solve that problem by ordering 100 mobile hotspots that we have prioritized our distribution to homeless students, and we have also entered into an agreement with Comcast so that the district is providing the Internet Essentials program with no barriers for low income families.
Many parents asked for additional support if we must continue in distance learning. Further, 59% of families say they would appreciate parent information sessions on how to support their child during distance learning, specifically around the topics of:

- Academic Content (48%)
- Mental Health and Well Being (25%)
- Technology (12%)
- Community Resources (6%)

As we plan for the coming school year (and I mean we as in all of us, not like those times your parents would say “we” need to do this when they meant “you” need to do this), let us reflect on what our families told us.

Again, thank you so much for all your efforts during a very tough time. We have a lot of work to do this summer. If you have not applied to teach summer school, there is still time!

All my best,

Tony

KUDOS

Kudos to Lynn Wahl and John Seisser, Teachers at Kenyon Woods Middle School, from Lisa Olsem, Principal at Kenyon Woods Middle School
Thank you to two very special teachers who will be retiring this year, Lynn Wahl and John Seisser. I know this is not how you wanted to spend your last semester teaching, but you rose to the challenge magnificently! These two teachers represent 70+ years of teaching between the two of them. If you think about it, each teacher averages 150 students a year, multiply that by 70 years, and you have 10,500 students who were positively impacted by these teachers. When you talk about dedicating your life to helping students, these two teachers exemplify that idea. Your teachings will forever be treasured; your contribution in our lives can never be measured! Happy retirement, Mrs. Wahl and Mr. Seisser.

Kudos to Crissa Almughrabi, Kindergarten Teacher at Nature Ridge Elementary School, from an Anonymous Parent
I just want to let everyone at the district know that Ms. Almughrabi did an amazing job with the Dual Language kindergarten class. Every video she posted for the students was upbeat and motivating. She also made sure to leave voice-message feedback for my child for more assignments than expected. She maintained a normal routine from the classroom to the living room. I watched as my English-speaking daughter understood Spanish instructions as if still in the classroom. The mannerisms that Crissa showed in the classroom translated well to the living room and made my daughter super comfortable with the whole situation. I’m sending this
message because I really want the Principal, Assistant Principal, and Superintendent to know that Crissa Almughrabi did an amazing job this school year.

**Kudos to Jaclyn Nail, Honors Geometry Teacher at Elgin High School, from the Bryan Family**
We can't thank you enough for your dedication, support, and for keeping your students engaged. Our son is successful because of wonderful teachers like you.

**Kudos to all the Staff who Volunteered at Eastview Middle School on May 26 from Donald Donner, Principal at Eastview Middle School**
Student personal item pick-up for Eastview was a huge success thanks to all of the wonderful staff who volunteered to help. No parents waited more than a few minutes, most less than a minute, and 90 percent of the students' items were returned. A super fantastic day thanks to our amazing staff!!

**Kudos to Katherine Femal, Library Media Specialist at Eastview Middle School, from Donald Donner, Principal at Eastview Middle School**
Great job on the 8th grade Recognition Video. Her hard work pulling everything together made for a special video that we hope the students and parents could enjoy.

**Kudos to Fox Meadow Elementary BOB Coaches Amy Stewart and Kathleen Speck from Michelle Zappia Eickmeier, Parent at Fox Meadow Elementary School**
Thank you to both of these amazing teachers who have worked so many hours with Fox Meadow's 4th-6th graders on the Battle of the Books team! With your support and encouragement, these students had an amazing season and earned a gigantic trophy for their 2nd place finish. Elinor has loved her time with you!

**Kudos to the 6th Grade Recognition Team from Sjoukje Brown, Principal at Fox Meadow Elementary School**
Thank you to Mrs. Nicole Skrzypchak, Mr. Todd Persenico, Mrs. Heather Anderson, Mr. Robert Arnold, Mrs. Kelle Brieger, and Mrs. Bonnie Grafer, All Teachers; Ms. Laurie McCann, Assistant Principal; Mrs. Jennifer O'Neal, Secretary; Mrs. Jill Kacer, Clerical Assistant; and Mrs. Beth Sullivan, Principal’s Secretary; for all the help in putting together a wonderful 6th grade recognition video and for helping send all students' certificates to them. You are the best!

**Kudos to Meeting Participants from Sjoukje Brown, Principal at Fox Meadow Elementary School**
Thank you to Noe Velazquez, Principal at Lords Park Elementary; Kerri Salins, Teacher at Lords Park Elementary; Cathy Green, Social Worker at Lords Park Elementary; Savannah Nelsen, Therapist at Timber Trails Elementary; Tricia Najera, Teacher at Lords Park Elementary School; Audrie Shields, Social Worker at Coleman Elementary; and Laurie McCann, Assistant Principal at Fox Meadow Elementary, for the meeting on May 27. Great job team!
Kudos to Mr. Jim Berger at Liberty Elementary School and Mr. Albert Navarro at Kenyon Woods Middle School from Mr. and Mrs. Atienza

We’re parents of U-46 students and we wish to commend the teachers of both Liberty Elementary School and Kenyon Woods Middle School for all their effort and support of our sons and to all their students. Most especially to these following teachers. Mr. Albert Navarro of Kenyon Woods took his time and personally thanked and congratulated our son Joshua Atienza (8th Grade) in his participation and completing his tasks in his history class. Also, the most surprising and touching gesture to us was from Mr. Jim Berger of Liberty Elementary who also personally congratulated our son Aaron Atienza (6th Grade) even though he was not his student anymore. Mr. Berger was Aaron’s teacher in 5th Grade.

Our sons and all U-46 students are lucky to have such dedicated teachers like them who definitely have a positive impact in their education and future. During this challenging time we’re facing, we’re so grateful for these simple but touching gestures. Many thanks to the Liberty and Kenyon Woods teachers and staff.

Note: The following two items correct the school where Andreea Grigorie-Gal teaches. It was incorrect in last week’s Kudos.

Kudos to Nelida Uribe, Teacher at Larkin High School, from Andreea Grigorie-Gal,
Teacher at Central School Programs
Dear Nelida! Congratulations on your retirement, you are an amazing teacher and friend!

Kudos to Carme Henrich, Teacher at Larkin High School, from Andreea Grigorie-Gal,
Teacher at Central School Programs
For her Years of Service as a Teacher at LHS and her upcoming retirement. You are an amazing friend and teacher! Thank you for all your love and support — enjoy your retirement! You will be greatly missed!