

June 8, 2020

As the school year comes to a close and with our last official day and graduation on June 18th, it is important to acknowledge the fact that the last three months have been very challenging for our school district. Our last minute school district closure, which began on March 16<sup>th</sup> and will remain in effect for the remainder of the school year, has been difficult for us all in so many ways – emotionally, mentally and physically. However, it is without hesitation and with absolute certainty that I can say that the administration and I have been successful in providing our students with not only academic support, but also the social-emotional support that they so desperately need during this very challenging time. As a tight-knit educational community, all students, staff and administrators have been there for one another – providing each other with ears to listen, shoulders to cry on, friends to lean on and so much more. These selfless displays of empathy, compassion and humility are true testaments of one of our school District's core values: the belief in the importance of community.

We have worked together as a team...*all of us*, and I could not be more grateful for everyone who has contributed and continues to contribute to our shared success. I continue to extend my heartfelt appreciation to thank each and every one of you who are there to help one another get through each and every day. I thank our custodians who have tirelessly been working to clean and maintain the buildings and grounds – while at the same time helping us all with anything that we ask – have tirelessly been on the frontline. I also thank the secretaries for being a helping hand to our administrative team and building staff. I thank our administrative team, the members of which have literally been working around the clock to ensure that the teachers have everything they need for themselves and their students, as well as helping to plan and implement all initiatives during this time. I thank our certified staff members (teachers, nurses, guidance counselors, behaviorist,

CST, BA, Asst. BA), who have been key to our connectivity to our parents and students and continue to ensure that the children are provided with everything that they need. I thank our support staff, who have been there to provide helping hands to our teachers, students and parents whenever asked. I thank our food services staff, who have continued to provide our children with vital, well-balanced meals in order to ensure that they remain nourished in order to be ready to learn. I thank our parents, who have been extremely patient and supportive as we worked through all of the little bumps that came our way.

The Woodland Park community certainly recognizes and appreciates all of the efforts that our school employees have undertaken over the past three months. In fact, some of our parents extended their thanks by providing lunch to our custodians to acknowledge how hard they are working. Our parents also have shared motivational signs which we have seen posted on cars during laptop and personal belongings pick-up days. I thank our students, who have been working hard each and every day with a smiling face and inquisitive mind. I thank our BOE members, who have been right alongside us in providing everything and anything needed for the benefit of the children are tremendously appreciated. For example, they purchased signs in honor of the eighth grade graduates which were placed in front of Memorial School. I thank our local library, which continues to partner with us to provide additional academic services for those students in need. I thank our Mayor and Council, Police, First Aid Squad, Fire Department and DPW for all of their continued support throughout the community and especially for working with us in order to provide our 8th grade students with what is going to be a spectacular graduation ceremony.

All in all, we have all shown our gratitude to one another in our own special way, which makes times like these a little easier to get through. The words “thank you” do not even begin to represent

the gratefulness that is in my heart. This is truly an amazing community, I work with such dedicated individuals and I could not be more proud to be a part of this team.

Your Partner in Education,

Michele R. Pillari, Ed.D.