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**Sent:** Thursday, April 16, 2020 7:44 AM  
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**Subject:** Meeting follow up

Good morning Jim

Thank you again for the opportunity to address Board member questions last night. I recorded the unanswered questions and we will work to get responses back to the Board as quickly as possible

There was one discussion point from last evening I wanted to take some time today to address further. I would ask that you share this with the other Board members as well.

There was a question about the amount of instruction students are receiving each day and my response was 3 ½ to 4 hours. Based on a subsequent comment I believe that may have been interpreted as the number of hours teachers are working each day. Ms. Vitale picked up on that more quickly than I did and responded with a clear defense of the teachers' hard works. I want to add some further context.

Every teacher has been challenged to grow in their instructional practice and to learn new skills. Many of those skills are technology related but as we discussed last night, you cannot provide assessments in distance learning as you can in the classroom. A 15-minute discussion point now requires an hour to prepare a video lesson as teachers must gather resources which are accessible to students, embed images and text and write out a script. Another example: think of a teacher, in a classroom, who gives a few math problems for students to work on and then circulates the classroom looking over shoulders to see that the students understand the skill and concept. It takes only a few minutes. Today, the teacher must put those same questions into a Google document, send it out to the students and then collect the answers back and review each in turn. Nothing a teacher does naturally is accessible to them in the virtual world. If you go into any of our classrooms you will see boxes of learning materials, none of that is available now.

In addition to the instructional preparation teachers are continually engaged with parents and students through emails and phone calls. There is as great a need to support caregivers as there is to support students. Routine questions now take longer to process. Teachers are greatly concerned if they do not hear from students and are reaching out at all times of the day, and into the evening, to make contact.

We are not yet where we need to be. The teachers see this and are continuing to work towards the right balance. Veteran practitioners of distance learning speak clearly of setting an expectation that you will accomplish half of the learning that occurs in a traditional classroom. No one has taken that comment on faith and we are continually having to adjust our expectations for self and students. Please let me clarify that we are discussing learning expectations, not covering the curriculum expectations. We still have a great deal to learn.

I have set an expectation with the community that while instruction may take place over 3 ½ to 4 hours the expectation for teacher accessibility should follow the established daily schedule and hours by level. I am not aware of a teacher who is following this expectation. Teachers are working many hours beyond the contractual day. They are devoted to their students and they are committed to learning and implementing instruction that advances the curriculum but recognizes the stress that many families are feeling. My guidance as their leader has been to make sure they take breaks and get away from their screens, that they spend time on their own well-being and the well-being of their families.

I want to make sure that the members of the Board, and the community, understands the level of effort and commitment our teachers are exerting. To think that life is easier now for teachers, for students, and for parents, is a terrible disservice. Our community has a lot to be proud of during these challenging times. The commitment and dedication of our instructional staff needs to be recognized as a point of pride by all our community members.

Thank you, and please take care,

Mike

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