

Facing the Uncertain

In the past few weeks, we have all seen unprecedented happenings at the national, state, and local levels. Restrictions on daily activities, including state-wide school closings have affected us all. In these rapidly-changing situations, leadership is challenging and difficult. It is often unclear how to respond or make decisions in the best interest of our children and their families.

Where do you start when you find yourself on a road that has never been traveled? It is important to know your responsibilities in the situation and review your overarching goals for your district. We are blessed with experts to guide us with facts and data as we make decisions. Locally, health department officials and emergency management personnel have communicated with and advised school superintendents on what response is needed and appropriate. By working together, decisions were made based on the group's collective wisdom, which benefited all stakeholders.

There is overwhelming information from many sources filling all of our inboxes today. Dover's leadership team has worked to take in this information, review district goals, and reprioritize resources and action. Our team, just like those in districts across the state, met frequently to discuss changing information and adjust the district's response plan, if needed. Many conversations started with the latest information from the experts and then quickly turned to how to best apply this information to our district's needs.

Communication is always important, but especially needed in times of uncertainty. There is a delicate balance between saying something too soon or based on incorrect information and reassuring parents that you are working to find a solution. District leaders have spent many hours reading updates from the CDC, Ohio Department of Health, Governor DeWine's office and others. Press conferences, written updates, and local teleconferences are all important sources of information. As we absorb all of this information, we work to communicate what is important to our families using email, text, phone calls, district website, and social media.

In the midst of designing and executing plans to navigate this most recent health crisis, many people in our community have reached out to offer their support. Volunteers have offered to help ensure our students have access to daily meals. They will work with school personnel to provide those meals for our families. Community agencies have developed lists of services available to families in need. Please go to our website, www.dovertornadoes.com, to find the latest updates on these services and other information regarding school closure.

There will always be challenges in life, but I believe in the positives that shine through during times of adversity. While the education of our children is important, the health and safety of our children and community is our first priority. Together we will continue to meet the needs of our students during this unprecedented time of school closure. We have a plan, we will work the plan, and we will adapt the plan, if necessary.