



HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MAY 6, 2020

Good evening. If I may, madame president, I would like to direct my report tonite to three audiences - our staff on the occasion of teacher appreciation week, our students on their heroic efforts since March 17th and the members of the Class of 2020 as they approach their final weeks as our students.

To our staff, this is truly a Teacher Appreciation Week like no other. When we started this journey with remote learning, you may recall that I wrote about how we were working together to flatten the curve all the while climbing a steep learning curve focused on how to take our skills as educators, our knowledge of content and the love of our students into a remote learning environment. Watching you climb that curve has at times left me so inspired. Your commitment to our students, their families and to one another continues to shine!

Our staff members will remember that we started the year considering a greeting used by the Zulu people of South Africa, Sawubona, which means 'I see you.' Who knew that this year would take us to a place where our desire to say that in person to our students would be as strong as it is right now. It hurts to not be able to say this while looking directly into their eyes as is the Zulu practice, but you have quickly figured out ways to say this to your students and through this you have uttered the response, "Sikhona," which means 'I am here.'

I could not be prouder of your efforts or more honored to work alongside you. To all, I extend my sincerest appreciation.

To our students, you are unsung heroes. No one has had to do what you have done. So much has been taken away from you - sports, your friends, performances, dances, going to school, making choices, field trips, assemblies and cafeteria food (well maybe you're not missing that too much). You have gotten up every day and endeavored to be the best students you can be - showing us a level of grit that no Holmdel students have ever had to. I am so incredibly proud of you.

Finally, to our Senior Class - the Class of 2020 - First, I want to congratulate you on the decisions you have made about where your futures are going to lead you - I am so excited for



HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

you and your families! At the same time, I can't begin to imagine the hurt, confusion and frustration you must be grappling with right now. You didn't deserve this abrupt end to your high school career and it's truly not fair. We are all sharing in your grief over these circumstances - as much as we are sharing in your excitement about the plans you have made for the future.

Please know that we are committed to finding the best possible and safest way to celebrate your accomplishments. While we anxiously await to learn the fate of Governor Murphy's Executive Order 107 banning gatherings, which has been extended to June 5th - we are planning for several different alternatives to recognize you. We appreciate your ideas and your patience.

With Monday's communication about the closure of our schools for the remainder of the year, our team has already taken steps to strategize on next steps and will be communicating these to our community as soon as our plans for such things as retrieving items quarantined in our buildings and a host of other matters.

Thank you all for your continued perseverance, patience, empathy and creativity