**Sample Op-Ed/Column**

I want to thank parents, teachers, staff and taxpayers for your continued support of the children of our community. I’m writing to describe how our school district has responded to the public health emergency and the challenges posed by school closures.

First, we have provided meals to children since this pandemic began. **[Add specific details of your district’s efforts. Describe other non-educational services provided by your district, such as donating supplies or opening schools to blood drives and other causes.]**

Second, we have worked to move learning online. We know that not all families have access to the internet or a device to access it, and we’re doing everything we can to make sure to provide that access. **[What has your district done in this area? Describe steps your district has taken to support online learning, such as issuing devices, setting up mobile hotspots or using a learning management platform.]**

We’ve been working to increase our teachers’ ability to instruct at a distance. **[Add what you have done to assist teachers and staff in the use of software designed to move learning online.]**

A few figures may help explain our district’s shift to digital learning: **[Include any data points about online learning that illustrate your efforts, such as the number of video conferences or lessons delivered online.]**

**[If you have a brief story about exceptional online learning or classroom experience, include it. A story can have more emotional impact than numbers alone.]**

We recognize that at-home learning has added a new level of stress and responsibility for parents. Parents and other caretakers are adjusting to working from home or loss of work altogether while becoming the key support for their children’s daily learning. To help families to continue to guide and support their children with at-home learning, we’ve worked to strengthen communication and better support the adults working with children at home.

**[Include positive feedback from parents and families where appropriate.]**

Of course, some learning does not easily move online. We’ve taken steps to ensure our students earning industry certifications will complete them.

We also have students taking college courses while in high school, and we’ve coordinated with those colleges to ensure our students’ education continues.

These changes required our district to move swiftly into new territory, often with incomplete or imperfect information. Our guidepost in making these decisions was always seeking to do what’s best for our students.

We continue to plan for what education will look like this fall. Just as we cannot predict the state of our public health, we can’t say for sure how school might change. But we continue to make contingency plans that prioritize students’ health and learning and the health of our staff and the public.

Finally, we want to share a brief note about our finances. Though it’s easy to assume that we saved money by closing buildings this spring, the opposite is true. We are seeing additional costs in delivering food, upgrading technology, providing services to children with special needs and much more.

We understand that schools will be asked to play a part in resolving the looming state budget shortfall. But we ask that the public and lawmakers be aware of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and how our district has responded.

**[Your name]**