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Memorandum

To: Eden Prairie School Board

From: Dr. Josh Swanson

Date: August 6, 2020

Regarding: EP Online

EP Online was approved as a Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Supplemental online provider in May 2018. Since that time, approximately 20 courses have been built and my annual goals and conversation with the board has included the vision of becoming an approved Minnesota Department of Education Comprehensive provider. When COVID-19 forced us to transition to distance learning, I directed the team to use this opportunity to explore what an application and accelerated approval process may look like, so we could serve our students and families who may want an online choice during the pandemic. The team began a process to ensure a design was innovative, feasible, had access to high quality resources, would meet the state requirements, and had an instructional delivery model that could meet the needs of students and families. We also wanted to make sure that this was not just a replication of a brick and mortar setting.

I would like to acknowledge the leadership and work by Dr. Stanley, Dr. Diaz, Mrs. Ament, Dr. Bemboom, and Dr. Kremer to create an application and model that we believe will be approved by MDE in the very near future. This will allow us to provide an EP Online experience to our families and families across the state after the Governor's executive order requiring all districts offer distance learning expires.

After that expiration, students will be enrolled in EP Online as a separate school. Creating a separate school requires board approval under Executive Limitation 2.7.10. We anticipate needing to enroll students in EP Online at some point inside of the 2020-21 school year. At the next board meeting, we will be requesting your approval to add EP Online as a school, in which we can enroll students. Careful thought has gone into selection of resources to support our curriculum, assessment design, financial flexibility that can scale, professional development, course alignment and expectations. The model aligns with our current high standards and academic policies and leverages the strategies we know build relationships, which we are known for. The online courses will be taught by our Eden Prairie teachers, be interactive, and help our students build not only the content and academic knowledge required by the standards, but also the 21st century skills and citizenship skills to contribute positively to society.

EP Online will leverage: the strong technology backbone and background that we have, the online tools we have available, and our relationships across the State through cooperatives and virtual services to be able to provide support to students at a distance. The establishment of this school will open incredible future opportunities for students in our district and across the state with the creative possibilities that it could support. We look forward to presenting more information and answering questions you may have prior to asking you to take action in the near future.