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Dear District 6 students and families:

I sincerely hope you had a fun and restful Spring Break. We are excited to have our students back in school, ready to finish the semester strong. It is a busy time of the year with assessments, concerts, projects and finally, graduation. I hope the rest of the school year is productive and pleasant for everyone!

I want to communicate two important changes we will implement in the 2017-18 school year. As you know, Greeley-Evans School District 6 failed to pass a ballot measure last November that would have brought approximately \$12 million into our district annually for seven years. That, coupled with a projected cut in state funding has us looking to reallocate dollars in the 2017-18 budget. It will be lean, but our goal is to keep resources where they are making a difference for our students.

Bus Transportation

In this reallocation effort, we have made the decision to restructure our bus transportation for the 2017-18 school year. We will be increasing the required walk distance for all students, which means some students who are now transported by District 6 buses will no longer qualify for that service. In addition, we are restructuring our high school transportation to a greater degree, and will no longer be providing neighborhood school bus pick-up sites for our older students. High school transportation will be limited to predetermined stops for students living outside the walk boundary.

This will not impact students who qualify for individual transportation through Special Education services.

Here are the new walking distances that we will now enforce:

- **Elementary Schools:** 1.5 miles, up from 1.25 previously
- **Middle Schools:** 2 miles, up from 1.5 previously
- **High Schools:** 3 miles, up from 2.5 miles previously

These walk distances are similar to most districts in the Front Range.

Our Transportation Department is working on developing new routes based on the new walking distances. We will have all the new routes in place by August 1, 2017, and parents will be able to log onto our website to see if their child qualifies for District 6 transportation based on their home address and the school they attend. Safe walking routes will be reviewed as final decisions are made about transportation. Student safety is a priority in these decisions.

I know this is a change and that it will impact many of our families. It is necessary because we do not have the resources to fully staff drivers in our Transportation Department. For most of the year, we have had up to 16 bus driver positions open. This plan allows the district to eliminate 14 bus routes, which is more in line with the amount of drivers we have been able to employ. It also allows us to take some of our oldest, most expensive-to-maintain buses off the road. All of this results in a cost savings to the District.

We will continue to communicate with our families as we know more about who will be affected by this change.

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Start and Dismissal Times

I am very excited about another change that our shift in transportation will help us make next year. Having worked with district leaders and building principals, District 6 will change the start times for all levels next year, creating a later start time for our high school students. Research supports a later start time for older students who biologically need more sleep and have later sleep cycles than younger students. This research shows improvement in attendance and behavior in schools that implement a later start time for high school students.

The reduction in high school transportation allows for a shift in start times at all levels, better meeting the needs of all our students. High schools will start no earlier than 8 a.m. District 6 administration is working to finalize transportation options for high school students before finalizing start and dismissal times for high schools. Here are the new start and dismissal times that will begin in August 2017 for all schools:

- **Elementary Schools, McAuliffe K-8 and Winograd K-8:** 7:50 a.m. to 3:10 p.m.
- **Middle Schools:** 8:30 a.m. to 3:55 p.m.
- **High Schools:** To Be Determined (Start time no earlier than 8 a.m.)

Three schools have slightly different start times due to traffic issues and transportation. They are:

- **Chappelow K-8:** 8:10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- **Romero K-8:** 8:25 a.m. - 3:45 p.m. (4-8 Campus); 8:35 a.m. - 3:55 p.m. (K-3 Campus).
This is not a change from the current start and dismissal times.
- **Early College Academy:** 7:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

I realize a change to school start and dismissal times can be a significant shift for families, but I believe it will be positive for our students. In addition to allowing the later start time for high school students, it will create an earlier release time for our middle school students so they won't be walking home in the dark. Our younger students, who tend to be up earlier in the morning, can get to school to begin learning and get home earlier. And, we believe it will improve our transportation service by allowing more time for our drivers to pick up and deliver students.

These changes will help us shift resources to ensure that our students have the most highly qualified teachers and staff serving them every day. It will help us maintain programs like blended learning, AVID, concurrent enrollment in colleges and our Career Pathways. Unfortunately, it also means fewer services for some of our families. For this I am deeply sorry.

I am hopeful that we will be able to secure more resources for District 6 through a future ballot measure. I am committed to providing the best educational opportunities for all our students. I am committed to meeting the goals in our strategic plan, Innovation2020. I pledge to continue to create efficiencies and use our resources effectively to meet the needs of our students. We need the support of our families and our community to ensure that happens.

As we roll out these changes next year, we will continue to communicate with you. If you have questions or concerns, please work with the administration at your school. I am confident we can work together to make these changes as smooth and non-disruptive to our students and families as possible. Our students are resilient, and I am certain they will adapt quickly to these changes.

Thank you for your continued support and for trusting us to educate your children.

Kindest Regards,



Deirdre Pilch, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools