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There will never be another year like it, and the Interlake Teachers' Association would like to thank all who contributed to keeping schools as fixtures of learning and places of community.

To say this year has been challenging is an understatement. Exhausting, frightening, career-altering, frustrating and lonely. But as we look to days beyond Covid-19, new words sway the narrative: grateful, adaptive, innovative, persistent and hopeful.

Trustees; We acknowledge your fight for more funding, support for safety, equipment, technology, professional development, well-being and commitment to the people-part of the story. While some divisions cut, you kept all employees working and hired more. This kept classes small and spaced, students supported and buildings safe and open. Students continued to have a place to belong and connect in one of the only ways left available to them. **THANK YOU** for focusing on our classes and their needs; whether the learning was in-class, outdoors or remote.

Senior and school-level administration, student services and board office staff; We acknowledge your dedication to keeping the ship far more than just afloat. From clarifying provincial policy and public-health orders, providing a steady flow of information, safety equipment, substitutes, contact tracing, and remote learning options. All of this while continuing normal programming, budgeting, training, and business as usual. We are grateful for your commitment and advocacy.

THANK YOU bus drivers, transportation, maintenance and journey persons; We know your workplaces had to pivot as much as life in classrooms. From installing signs, cleaning, disinfecting, transforming classrooms, gyms, lunchrooms and outdoor spaces, to altering bus routes, constant cleaning, mask-reminding, and ensuring students could safely come to us each day.

Custodians and administration assistants; Everyone knows the first people you acquaint yourself with in a new school are the custodian and the secretary, as it is no secret they run the place! We are grateful for your diligence, attention to detail, sanitizing, adjusting to fluid rules, moving furniture, finding supplies, substitutes and space for us to be able to continue our work without distraction. **THANK YOU** for supporting and connecting with our students the way you do.

THANK YOU, librarians, educational assistants and support staff; No job descriptions varied as much as yours. You were asked to instruct small and large groups, mentor, create and adapt programming within Covid-19 constraints and provide invaluable connections for our most vulnerable students. We are fortunate to have you as integral and compassionate members of our team.

Parents, caregivers and Interlake communities; We appreciate your unwavering support of our work with your young people. You may have been hesitant, concerned for your child's safety, worried what they would miss and how they would catch up. But you sent them anyway, and they learned so much more than curriculum. **THANK YOU** for trusting us with your most valuable possessions, knowing that we cherish them and their talents as much as you do. Whether learning inside, outdoors or online, you were there to help them with learning tasks and face their Teams meeting and technology fears. Your calls, emails and virtual meetings with us ensured we could provide consistent support.

THANK YOU, local businesses, for partnering to provide lunches for our members. Red Star, Rockwood Motor Inn, and Chicken Chef offered discounts, opened early and on days off. Many schools accessed local community restaurants as well, so thanks to all Interlake businesses for your support of teachers.

To our students; We are grateful to have partners so dedicated, brave, confident, creative, caring and loyal on this journey. You may have been scared, but you tried new things. You may have missed lessons, but you worked hard when you could. Sure, we reminded you 100 times, but you washed hands, social-distanced, stayed safe and helped remind each other along the way. You didn't make too much fun of us when we forgot to unmute, and we look forward to seeing your faces once again soon, and not behind masks nor as initials on a screen.

Graduates; **THANK YOU** for bringing us along during this, your final year. We acknowledge the sacrifices, changes and growing up you had to do. This may not be the grad you dreamed of, but know your schools have done everything they can to make it unique for you. Best of luck in what lies ahead for each of you.

Lastly, to our colleagues, the principals, teachers, substitutes and clinicians of the ITA; There was no clear path so you made one; there were no answer keys for Covid, so you wrote them; there were lessons that wouldn't work this year so you created new ones; there were colleagues who needed support so you listened; and there were lots of reasons to give up, but you didn't. Your students, peers and the Interlake will be forever grateful.

To all; rest, recharge and stay safe.