

# Viewpoint

## Our goal to get it right

By KEITH ANDERSON  
APG/ECM Columnist

Like you, I do not like inaccurate or biased reporting. For more than 30 years, objectivity and truthful reporting have been the underpinnings of all the successful journalists I have worked with. It is not always easy, but critically necessary.

So to see the public's general distrust of mainstream media is not only discouraging, it is painful. None of us want media to be viewed in this way because we need journalists to look out for our best interests in many areas of society. Whether you consider community journalism part of that "media" umbrella is almost irrelevant, as all media seem to be lumped together in this new environment of distrust, accusations and societal divisions.

Our role as a news organization is not to create divisions, but to provide accurate, fair, objective information. It is a daily commitment. But as consumers, we all make choices about what we read and believe. The question we should all ask when we consume news is whether we are looking only for news that confirms our current beliefs and positions or are we looking to be genuinely informed? That's an important distinction because seeking news that will only reaffirm our current understanding of the world or that solidifies our beliefs will naturally lead us to a comfortable, but tunneled point of view. And it also makes us more susceptible to nefarious players that are looking to weaponize us in a larger effort to manipulate issues, influence elections, and create chaos and distrust in our communities.

A recent Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report

shows how Russian operatives working for Internet Research Agency, based in St. Petersburg, Russia, not only deliberately interfered with the 2016 election, but used socially divisive online ads and posts to influence U.S. voters. They likely touched each of us in 2016 and again in 2020 if social media is any part of your life. The rule to protect yourself? If you can't verify it, don't share it, even if it came from Grandma.



Keith Anderson

We become weapons when we are influenced by those posts and further advance the problem when we share them with colleagues, friends and family. It is not unlike the coronavirus - every person that comes in contact with it has the potential to cripple a community.

And the list of bad actors only grows longer with each passing day. Russia, China and Iran are all looking to destabilize democracy and will use each of us, via social media, to achieve that goal, according to the FBI and Justice Department. Facebook and Twitter play a daily game of whack a mole deactivating fake accounts that create disarray in the U.S.

So as a knowledgeable news consumer, it is imperative to make sure we are exposing ourselves first to reliable, truthful news sources, specifically including sources that may not always present the news we want to hear or read. How do we know when we have found them? They will fairly present both sides of an argument, void of personal opinion, and allow us to interpret

(Continued on Page 5A)

**"Our democracy will always be under attack. The difference now is whether each of us will be an unknowing bullet or whether we will work together for the good of our communities and nation."**

## Pierz School Board, please re-open our schools

By CHRISTINE BAKKE  
Guest Columnist

I am writing to you (Pierz School Board) as a plea to re-open schools as soon as possible. I work in health care, specifically nursing homes, so I am well-versed in the issues related to this pandemic and the greater impact it is having on our society. I have facilities that have faced significant workforce issues as well as traumatic outbreaks of COVID-19. So please, know that I am fully aware of what I am asking you.

You have all been voted on to the School Board as representatives of the community. Your job is first and foremost to make decisions in the best interests of the students. You work for the students — they are the primary recipients of the service provided by the school. The teachers, parents, taxpayers, etc. are not the primary recipients and you should not make decisions on what these groups are asking you to do. The number one job, and only job as far as I am concerned, is to educate children.

So I ask you, how are the children doing? Are we successfully educating them? What is the percent of students failing now compared to when they are in classroom? What

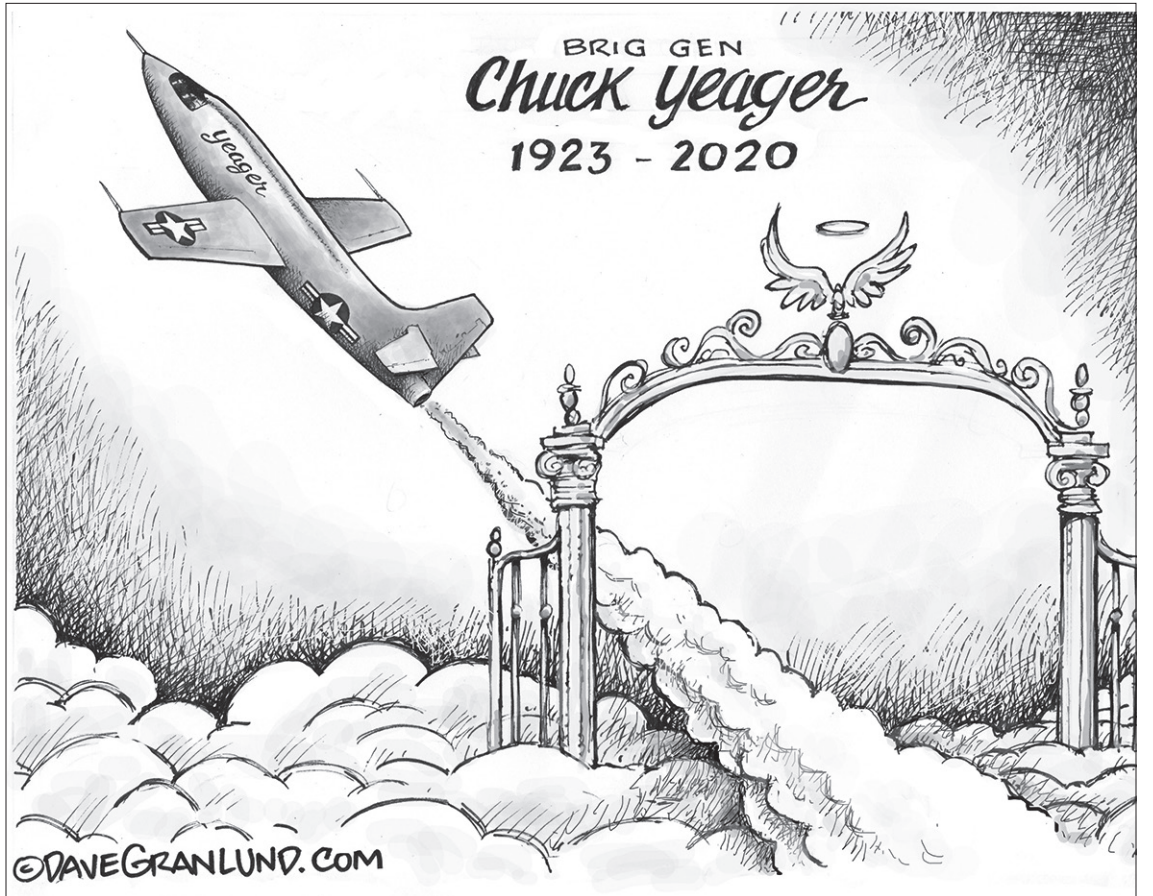
is the percent of students showing up on Google classroom compared to when you have in-person class? What is the percent of missing assignments now compared to when students are in class? How much time are the children spending getting an education when they are at home? Can parents truly manage this successfully given their other responsibilities?

You need to make data-based decisions and not those based on emotions. Children under the age of 18 are the least impacted by this virus. Keeping them out of school is damaging to their mental health, their social skills development and their overall intellect. We are not adequately preparing them for college and are only reinforcing social isolation, which this generation already has a significant problem with.

I understand the teachers are older and a wider age range. However, people in health care go to work every single day, wearing masks, and believe it or not, we don't get COVID. We wash our hands and sanitize our environment. This is what the teachers need to do, and you have the capability to do, that successfully. The majority of people who

(Continued on Page 5A)

**"Keeping them out of school is damaging to their mental health, their social skills development and their overall intellect."**



## Persistence, courage help students win big battles

### Youth who lost a job due to COVID-19: Apply by Dec. 25

**Nathan on Education**

by Joe Nathan



Here's good news for Minnesota students and families in an update of several topics discussed earlier this year.

First, on Dec. 1, the Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled that Minnesota high school students ARE eligible for federal unemployment insurance if they lost their jobs because of COVID-19. Minnesota high school students, Youthprise (a statewide nonprofit) and others had been telling Department of Employment and Economic Development and legislators this for months. DEED disagreed.

The court overruled DEED.

Referring to DEED's unemployment law judge (ULJ) and a high school student (the "relator"), judges unanimously concluded: "Based on our careful review of the parties submissions and arguments, and the relevant legal authorities, we hold that the ULJ erred by determining that relator is not a 'covered individual' under section 2102(a)(3) of the CARES Act. We therefore reverse the ULJ's decision determining relator ineligible for PUA (Pandemic Unemployment Assistance) benefits."

The decision is here: [www.bit.ly/37C0xRF](http://www.bit.ly/37C0xRF). Jen Gates of DEED responded on Dec. 3: "DEED has reviewed yesterday's order from the Minnesota Court of Appeals. We are awaiting the final opinion from the court."

So will DEED Commissioner Steve Grove finally send money to students? Or will he stall? What will Gov. Tim Walz do to ensure students receive funds the court agrees they earned?

**"I'm happy this ruling means young people can now get the unemployment they need and deserve to support their families."**

— Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison

Wokie Weah, Youthprise president, told me: "This case is an example of what young people can achieve when adults recognize and support their leadership. Many partners played a huge role in this success. We would like to offer special thanks to the Attorney General as well as Greg Merz from Lathrop GPM for his exceptional pro bono legal support."

Attorney General Keith Ellison wrote: "I'm happy this ruling means young people can now get the unemployment they need and deserve to support their families. The court's ruling will make it easier for all Minnesotans to afford their lives and live with dignity and respect."

There's more good news. Cole and Hayat Muse attended district public schools. Co-student leaders Walter Cortina and Lincoln Bacal attended charters. They modeled what many Minnesotans voted for:

constructive, collaborative action.

As other 2020 columns of mine explained, educators, community members and students also are working together to help dramatically reduce the number of families and youngsters experiencing homelessness. But a November draft report from several state agencies describes what more than 30 Minnesotans (including me) see as serious shortcomings in Minnesota's efforts. For example, why did Minnesota aim to construct 45 rental housing units this year for those experiencing homelessness but complete none? We've asked for a response. I'll write more about this in the future.

Another 2020 column described the dramatic growth of chartered public school enrollment — in suburban, greater Minnesota and urban communities. Some readers asked if that growth had continued during the pandemic. I checked with a sample of 102 Minnesota charters this fall and learned that enrollment, overall, increased by about 2,400 students. A new report explains why some Minnesota high school students chose chartered or alternative public schools. (The report is here: [www.bit.ly/3g6XHb7](http://www.bit.ly/3g6XHb7).) A future column will discuss this.

Chartering offers more opportunities for Minnesota students, families and educators. Some of Minnesota's strongest charters were created or led by former district educators, such as Dennis Carlson, formerly the Anoka-Hennepin district superintendent. Commissioner of Education Mary Cathryn Ricker wisely has promoted learning among district and charter public school educators.

COVID-19 produced hardships, frustration and tragedy. But many Minnesotans have concluded that, as Cole Stevens wrote, "The time to act is now!" Fortunately, he and many Minnesotans are persistent, collaborative and courageous.

Joe Nathan, formerly a Minnesota public school educator and PTA president, directs the Center for School Change. Reactions welcome at [Joe@centerforschoolchange.org](mailto:Joe@centerforschoolchange.org).

### Letters to the Editor

#### Get ready for a great awakening

To the Editor:

Massive election fraud, statistical anomalies, defying the laws of mathematics. Cyber warfare by entities foreign and domestic. Voting machine ballots, run through internet, manipulated in foreign countries: servers confiscated from CIA in Frankfurt. Many ballot counters, traitors to America.

Freedom of speech gone: all narratives controlled; main stream

media. Google, Facebook, YouTube heavily censors anyone who speaks facts.

People with conscience, looking for honesty and integrity in elections Without faith in voting, Republic lost forever. This is it, no future if we allow this election to go unchallenged; all veterans who died defending, Republic, will have died in vain.

Next five weeks will determine future of America. Illegal lock downs, COVID lies, forced vaccinations, all a plan to implement New World Order.

Jan. 20, 2021, dawning of New Age; all that is hidden will be revealed, Federal Reserve, Gates, Fauci, Big Pharma, child sex trafficking, adrenochrome, pedophilia, Vatican. Military tribunals.

Mind-altering news coming. All corruption revealed.

Patriots, around the world rising up, willing to die for freedom. WWG1WGA.

Spiritual battle taking place for the soul of man. I will not be a slave to these tyrants. What say you?

The journey continues. — Daniel Bednark, Harding

### Online Poll

How do you feel about the county commissioners voting to increase their pay?

- I feel this year, when so many county businesses and employees are suffering due to COVID, they should have voted against an increase.
- It's their right.
- Not sure, but I wish I could vote for a pay increase for myself or a loved one, even a small one.
- My feelings are not listed here.

Cast your vote online at [www.mcrecord.com](http://www.mcrecord.com)



### Last week's poll results

Will you get a vaccine once they become available to you?  
43.8% - Yes, but only if the people that need it the most go first.  
20.8% - Of course. I'd do anything to get back to normal.  
20.8% - No. I am worried about the side effects.  
14.6% - No. I don't think that I need it.

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The Record welcomes letters. The Morrison County Record invites readers to contribute letters to the editor. E-mail letters are preferred to [mcr@mcrecord.com](mailto:mcr@mcrecord.com). Letters should be no more than 200 words and Thank You should be no more than 75 words in length. Letters containing libelous material, or those intended as advertising will be refused. All letters must include a signature, address and a daytime telephone number. Deadline for letters is Wednesday at 5 p.m. Letter writers are limited to one letter every 5 weeks.

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# Viewpoint

## Letter to the Editor

### United States may never recover

To the Editor:

Dictator/Governor Tim Walz is "COVID-19 partnering" with the cunning, long-corruped Minnesota Department of Health, presently under Commissioner Jan Malcolm, who, prior to COVID-19, failed massively at protecting Minnesota's nursing home residents.

Commissioner Malcolm has now long presided over Minnesota's overall population, her COVID-19 directives responsible for ruinous damage to Minnesota's economy and people's lives.

Malcolm's inability or unwillingness to properly assess the horrific consequences of her COVID-19 directives bespeaks incomprehensible incompetency or worse.

Malcolm appears unconcerned with the accuracies of various COVID-19 tests (example, Antigen test) or providing uninflated, legitimate COVID-19 death/case counts, simultaneously obscuring the 99.5% recover rate and old age/infirmity as the primary driver of COVID-19 deaths.

Minnesotans are "hostages" for an upcoming "warp speed," "fast tracked," "emergency use," new-concept "RNA"

COVID-19 vaccine.

Minnesota's health care workers and nursing home residents will be the first "guinea pigs" for this new "RNA concept" — never before used in any previous vaccines.

A Mayo Clinic vaccine expert predicted today's COVID-19 precautions (masks, etc.) will long remain after the two-dose vaccine's introduction — until its effectiveness is assessed.

Will America ever fully reopen or even survive as a democracy?

Ask Minnesota's "roll over and play dead" leaders. — **Donna Christianson, St. Cloud**

### Goal to get it right

(Continued from Page 4A)

objectively. And when they get it wrong, they acknowledge and correct it.

Most community journalists are focused on presenting the facts, not persuading readers in one direction or the other. To not be a champion of the facts is a credibility issue and ultimately a death sentence for any journalist. In the communities we cover, credibility is the currency. If we don't have it, we lose access to community leaders and others who are necessary for us to do our jobs, but we also lose your respect and trust.

Are there times when reporters have the opportunity to "load" an interview in a way that presents one individual or issue in a bet-

ter light than the opposing individual or issue? Yes, and that temptation likely becomes more pronounced when dealing with politicians and leaders who try to fool the populace and do not have good intentions for anyone other than themselves. But if journalists do their job right, they will remain objective, if for no other reason than to maintain credibility with readers, but also because nefarious players like this eventually step in their mess and don't need additional help from a journalist to speed up the process.

Will we always get it right and always have all the facts? No. Journalism is not an exact science. But the pursuit of truth, facts and accuracy is the promise we make each time we go to work. We consider readers part of our larger family

and like any family, we'll do everything in our ability to protect you with honest reporting and, hopefully, earn your respect. This is true whether we are covering crime, school boards, city councils or elected officials at the state level.

Our democracy will always be under attack. The difference now is whether each of us will be an unknowing bullet or whether we will work together for the good of our communities and nation.

As journalists, we are not trying to be popular. But we are trying to get it right. That is our permanent promise to all of our readers.

*Keith Anderson is director of news for APG of East Central Minnesota*

## Thank you letter

To the Editor:

Thank you, Raquel Lundberg and Tomas Zimmerman, for six years of volunteer service and leadership as a member of the Board of Director for the Little Falls and Convention and Visitors Bureau. Their contributions have increased revenue for the local economy through restaurant, lodging and community initiatives, which support the tourism industry in Little Falls. Thank you for your drive, perseverance and support. The LFCVB supports the community through marketing, advertising and destination development opportunities. — **Kristina VonBerge, executive director, Little Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau**

## Open Pierz schools

(Continued from Page 4A)

contract this virus get it out in the community and not at work, and they get it because they are not taking the proper precautions.

As of Dec. 28, the vaccine will start to be given in nursing homes in Minnesota and likely sooner in hospitals based on the FDA decision today. We now have two different IV solutions that are being administered to people who are positive for COVID and this is reducing their symptoms and saving lives. We are seeing substantial statewide reductions in the daily number of new cases and Morrison County is significantly lower in the rate of cases per 10,000 today than we were when the decision was made to move to hybrid.

I am not telling you to not listen to your staff or

any other group weighing in on this topic. You are voted in by taxpayers and have a responsibility to the parents. The teachers are critical to the success of our children.


However, if I made decisions in my business solely on what my staff wanted, they would drive us out of business. The decision to open the school should not be made by the teachers. You have been voted into this position to make the decision. The teachers and support staff are responsible for implementing your decisions and should be given the opportunity to help determine how to implement the decision.

Thank you for listening and I am praying you will reopen next Thursday.

*Christine Bakke is a resident in the Pierz School District.*

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## HOLIDAY DEADLINES

*Because of of the Christmas Holiday, the deadlines for the December 27, 2020 issue are as follows:*

Inserts	Noon, Friday, Dec. 18
News Submissions	5pm, Tuesday, Dec. 22
Legals	11am, Wednesday, Dec. 23
Display Ads	2pm, Wednesday, Dec. 23
Classified Ads including Too Late to Classify	4pm, Wednesday, Dec. 23

**The Record office will Close at Noon Thursday, Dec. 24 and will be Closed Friday, Dec. 25**

*Because of of the New Year's Holiday, the deadlines for the January 3, 2021 issue are as follows:*

Inserts	Noon, Wednesday, Dec. 24
News Submissions	5pm, Tuesday, Dec. 29
Legals	11am, Wednesday, Dec. 30
Display Ads	2pm, Wednesday, Dec. 30
Classified Ads including Too Late to Classify	4pm, Wednesday, Dec. 30

**The Record office will Close at Noon Thursday, Dec. 31 and will be Closed Friday, Jan. 1, 2021**

## Happy Holidays!



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