March 4, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I know you are all reading and hearing about the Coronavirus outbreaks across the world and now we are starting to see the first of these cases in NYS. I would like you to know that school districts are receiving information and frequent updates from the Department of Health and our BOCES Safety Office related to this virus. I would just like to highlight a few things about the Coronavirus:

1. This remains a very fluid situation. The Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control and the World Health Organization continue to learn more about this by the hour.

2. The thought right now is that this can be transmitted in much the same way as we transmit colds and the flu from person to person. So proper preventative steps should be followed – like washing your hands thoroughly and often, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, avoid contact with sick people, stay home and away from crowds if you aren’t feeling well, cover your mouth when sneezing and coughing and clean and disinfect surfaces and objects often.

3. Many of the symptoms of this virus like a cough and fever are not unlike the symptoms of colds and flu. In fact, many people may have a mild case of this virus and not even know it.

4. Many of the fatalities that have occurred are in people with compromised immune systems.

5. The symptoms in children seem to be more mild than in adults, however anyone can carry and pass this along, and symptoms may vary between individuals.

Here in the schools please know that we will stress proper hygiene to everyone, we will monitor our attendance, we will continue to clean and disinfect classrooms, common areas and busses. I will continue to be briefed regularly by The County and State Health Departments, CDC and SED. We will monitor new findings and trends and react accordingly. There have been two individuals in Oneida County tested for Coronavirus and those tests have been negative; however, it may be inevitable that others are tested and may test positive. Regardless, we will be vigilant about monitoring the situation and take the precautionary measures as warranted.

The District will review our plans and create new plans as necessary to deal with these issues with the hope that we may never need to use them. Certainly, we will be in constant communication with the Departments of Health and SED, and as we receive new information or as we solidify plans we will be certain to share them with you. Please take a moment to speak with your children to reinforce proper hygiene practices and to share factual information about the virus in an age appropriate manner.
I will end by saying that all the organizations dealing with this have urged us not to panic and to use the proper precautions. This is probably not unlike some of the other pandemics we have experienced, most recently the H1N1 virus or swine flu in 2009. The difference is that this one caught us by surprise therefore it wasn’t as well researched. But we have the best minds in the world studying all aspects of this virus and they continue to learn more and more each day.

For more information, I would encourage you to visit the websites of the NYSDOH, CDC, SED for regular updates.

NYS Department of Health Updated - 3/3/2020


CDC Interim Guidance for Administrators for K-12 Schools


If the school can be of any assistance please don’t hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Ronald Wheelock

Superintendent of Schools