

Somerset Public Schools

Somerset Berkley Regional School District

All Students Achieving Excellence

February 28, 2020

Dear Families,

Concerns about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) continue to grow with increasing media attention each day on the outbreak of this virus and its impact on travel, the economy, and other aspects of daily life. As reported by Governor Baker's office earlier this week, at this time, Massachusetts has one confirmed case of COVID-19 and the risk to Massachusetts residents remains low. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also reports that the immediate risk to the general public remains low while, at the same time, the risk for the influenza virus is high. The vast majority of reported cases of COVID-19 are in China but confirmed cases of this respiratory virus associated with travel from Wuhan, China are being reported in a growing number of countries around the world, including the United States. In today's connected world, with a large number of families traveling abroad during school vacation weeks and more members of our community traveling internationally for business, the potential for infectious disease is always of concern.

Many of the precautions that help prevent colds and the flu can help protect against other respiratory viruses. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) recommends the following general precautions that we can all take to remain as healthy as possible:

- Practice good hand hygiene. Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Use Alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- When coughing and sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. You can also cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you are sick.

Earlier this week, I met with the school districts' nurse leader, the director of buildings and grounds, and the director of business and finance to ensure we have ample health supplies and disinfectants. Our schools' custodial staff are attentively sanitizing our schools, including cleaning hard surfaces (desks, tables, etc.), and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, faucets, and railings. Soap dispensers and hand-sanitizing dispensers will be checked frequently and filled when needed.

There are many very informative resources available those of you who are interested in learning more about COVID-19. Among these are from the following:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Massachusetts Department of Health](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)

The Somerset Public Schools and Somerset Berkley Regional School District remain deeply committed to student and staff wellness. We will continue to share pertinent information with you, as necessary, about this evolving situation.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Schoonover