

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Merrimack Families~

I am writing to provide our community with an update on the COVID-19 virus and the district's response to it.

Over the next few days, and certainly over the coming months, the Merrimack School District will host many community events. For example, we will be hosting the Merrimack FIRST EXPO on Thursday, March 12th, a number of parent-teacher conferences throughout the school district over the next few weeks, as well as a variety of sporting events, to name just a few of the many events and activities that occur so often in our district. As of today, the district has received no guidance from any state health or education official suggesting these or other district hosted events should be canceled. Therefore, they will go on as planned. However, we recognize that you will make your own decisions about attendance at these events in the best interests of your family, and we encourage you to do so based on the best information available to you. We stand ready to support you as best we can consistent with our primary mission of providing an excellent education to students in our community in a safe and healthy environment.

Today, our district leadership team met again to review safety protocols concerning upcoming field trips, maintenance of public areas in our schools, food service and other matters related to school operations. We reviewed all current CDC recommendations and ensured that our protocols in all areas are aligned with current guidelines. We will continue to review and update these and other protocols and practices in light of evolving circumstances and consistent with guidance from state health and education officials. In addition, the town, police, fire and schools have formed a community task force to ensure a strong and coordinated response to COVID-19 should it one day impact our community. All members of the task force are dedicated to working together on behalf of our community and each maintains contact with all relevant authorities to ensure we have current and accurate information to share with our constituents.

As you know, one district employee, and one contracted service provider, both assigned to the high school, traveled during February break to one of the four Level 3 countries identified by the CDC. As soon as we received guidance that such travelers should self-quarantine these staff members were notified and have been in self-quarantine ever since. I am pleased to report to you that as of this afternoon, both individuals are well and remain symptom free. They will remain in self-quarantine for a period of two weeks from the time of their removal from the classroom, which exceeds CDC guidelines. Certainly, if either of these individuals experience any change in their health status, we will provide that information to the Merrimack community.

Tomorrow, we will introduce a new page on our district websites dedicated to COVID-19 information. As educators, our intention is to use our communication tools to share relevant, important and, most importantly, factual information about COVID-19 and the district's response to it. This new page on our website will serve as the location for current information and we encourage you to refer to it frequently to answer questions you may have about COVID-19. If there are important and relevant updates concerning this virus, you will find those updates on the district site. If you find no updates, you can assume there have been none to share since the last post. We assure you that any and all updated information will quickly be uploaded to our district COVID-19 page.

The school district will continue to follow all guidelines and recommendations from state health and education officials and the CDC regarding its response to COVID-19. These reliable sources are working diligently to provide the best information they can, and we will continue to follow their guidance as it relates to school and school district operations.

This virus certainly poses a challenge to many people both within and outside our community, and for many different reasons. But I am certain that together we will continue to provide for both the educational and safety needs of all our students and staff.

Thank you.

Mark McLaughlin
Superintendent