

March 10, 2020

Dear SBRSD Families,

The health and safety of our students, faculty, staff and families is our first priority. In light of the rapidly changing situation and the on-going discussions about the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), I want to communicate what we have learned to date, the District's Safety measures that are in place, and some informational resources available for the school community.

As a District, we are closely monitoring the situation and taking guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). As of last week, both agencies were classifying the Coronavirus risk to Massachusetts residents as low. We are continuing to work through the steps of our plan as outlined in last week's News & Notes from the Superintendent which can be found on our website at <https://www.sbrsd.org/superintendents-blog>. Also, SBRSD is reviewing our emergency planning guides and communicating with leaders from local agencies and departments.

We encourage families to increase their focus on preventative steps such as hand washing especially before and after public events. Other preventative measures such as avoiding touching your eyes, mouth, and nose, and washing and disinfecting door handles and other commonly touched areas are found on the website provided by the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm>. Guidance provided in a recent CDC newsletter said that sick people should stay at home until they are fever-free for 24 hours and until other disease-spreading behaviors such as coughing, sneezing, runny nose, etc. are under control.

While at this time we do not anticipate the need to close schools due to the virus, it is important to know that we are actively planning for this scenario. We are reviewing our technology inventory and preparing to have open distance learning opportunities in the event it would be necessary to do so. The details of this plan will be shared with our school community if we decide at any point this action should be taken.

We respectfully ask that you inform the school nurse before your family travels out of the country or to any locations with known cases of the virus. Your communication will open up a conversation between the school nurse and your family regarding your travel plans and any follow-up needed with your primary care physician. We will require that students who have traveled to affected areas remain at home for monitoring before returning to school. If you have travel plans, please review the travel information available on the CDC website; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

Concern over COVID-19 can heighten anxiety for children and families. We encourage parents and staff to use the resources listed below when talking with children about it. It's so important for children to know that adults at home and at school are taking care of their health and safety, and that school and health officials are working especially hard to make sure as few people as possible get sick. Encourage children to reach out to a trusted adult if they have concerns.

As we move through the coming days and weeks, we will continue to learn more about the virus and receive guidance on how best to deal with it. SBRSD is committed to the safety and well-being of our entire school community, and we will keep you updated as information becomes available. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns. Also, residents may contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's 24-hour emergency hotline at 617-983-6800.

Sincerely,

Beth Regulbuto, M.Ed., SFO

Superintendent of Schools

Informational resources are available and updated daily:

<https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>

How to Talk to Children about the Coronavirus:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-to-talk-to-children-about-the-coronavirus-2020030719111>

Talking to Teen/Tweens about Coronavirus:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/02/well/family/coronavirus-teenagers-anxiety.html>

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

[Updating Resources on COVID-19 for Massachusetts K-12 Education \(MA DESE\)](#)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>

<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>