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March 4, 2020

Dear Families;

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with important information related to COVID-19 and the MRUSD response. First, please know that we take our guidance from the VT Agency of Education and the VT Department of Health. These two State divisions work closely together. Collectively, they prioritize the health and safety of Vermont children and citizens statewide. We have been assured that the State of Vermont is being attentive to the COVID-19 and is prepared to respond to protect Vermonters.

The VT Agency of Education and VT Department of Health are coordinating their efforts to alert VT schools about specific preparedness and response guidelines to follow. They will continue to provide us with regular updates and/or new information as it becomes available. As information is shared with us, we in turn, will share it with you. To date, they have shared the following information:

- There are no confirmed cases of people with COVID-19 in Vermont as of March 4, 2020.
- At this point, Vermont residents are much more likely to become sick with a cold or the flu than to be exposed to COVID-19.
- All Vermont residents should be vigilant in taking the precautionary measures that help prevent the spread of cold and flu viruses as they can also keep an illness like COVID-19 from spreading, this includes:
 - Frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Stay home and/or keep your children home when they are sick - this is more important than ever.
 - Cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve or a tissue. Throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

In addition, they have provided school guidance as it relates to the following areas:

- Classrooms: for teachers to review hand washing techniques with students; discourage students from close, physical contact with peers, and from sharing food.
- School Cleaning and Disinfection: to follow routine cleaning procedures. Please know that the MRUSD uses high quality disinfectants to clean all areas of the schools. The MRUSD Facilities Department is outstanding and is committed to ensuring all buildings are properly cleaned and safe for our students and staff.
- Academic and Family Travel: this includes encouraging families and staff to consult the [Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel website](#) for geographic areas with widespread transmission and the CDC's official COVID-19 warnings and alerts related to

nonessential travel along with Frequently Asked Questions and Answers sections on [Canceling or Postponing Travel, Air or Cruise Travel and Returning from Travel](#) .

- o Responding to a Potential COVID-19 Case: this is only for a student, staff member or volunteer who reports symptoms and has traveled to one of the affected locations (as of March 1: China, Iran, Italy, Japan or South Korea) in the 14 days before symptom onset or who has had recent close contact with someone under investigation by public health authorities for COVID-19.

As you may know, there have been a range of media reports on COVID-19. Some of them are sensational and very alarming while others are factual and informative; discerning the difference can be a challenge. We encourage you to monitor your media intake, utilize reputable sources, and to assure your children that school is a safe and healthy environment. There has also been media coverage on the prospect of widespread school closures in the United States. At this time, we are being informed that this is not a necessary measure in Vermont. However, there is always a chance that, in the future, we will be asked to close school for a period of time with very little notice. Given this possibility, we recommend that you put plans in place for your family if this were to occur.

If you have questions on the virus, the [Vermont Department of Health's COVID-19 website](#) is an up-to-the-minute source of information on the response to COVID-19 in Vermont and should be your first stop to stay informed on immediate news and guidance, or dial 2-1-1 for more information. Additional resources include:

- [CDC 1 Pager Fact Sheet](#)
- [Stop the Spread of Germs](#)
- [Information for Travel](#)

We understand that managing uncertainty is challenging. Please know that we will be working closely with the Vermont Department of Health to monitor illness in our schools and educate our students to keep our school community healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Dirth". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Kevin Dirth
Superintendent of Schools