

MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



We empower all learners to *thrive*.

March 12, 2020

To All in the MURSD Community:

I am writing this evening to provide another update on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation that continues to be at the forefront of so many aspects of our daily life. It is a situation that is evolving seemingly every hour, so everything remains very fluid.

First, I am cognizant that there are some districts across the state that have made the decision to shut down for a period of time and others that have decided to close for a day for “deep cleaning.” Again, at this moment the advice of our local Boards of Health is to remain open, as there are no presumptive cases of the virus in our communities. Unfortunately, there have been some instances of rumors and misinformation which have been propagated in the community and at the high school. The health and safety of our students, parents, staff, and community is our top priority. We will continue to work with our public health officials to get their most up-to-date guidance and to take the necessary steps to support everyone’s health.

Our custodial staff will continue to be vigilant about sanitizing “high contact” areas throughout the building, including doorknobs, railings, switches, desks, etc. Additionally, our bus company, Tellstone & Son, is also taking precautions in sanitizing all contact areas on all buses.

Tomorrow all superintendents across the state have a 8:30 am conference call with officials from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary & Secondary Education Jeff Riley. I am certain that further guidance will be shared and I will be sure to share with all of you what further information is offered.

Should the MURSD have to close down for a period of time, please be aware that Commissioner Riley has stated that all school districts would be held to only making up to day 185 in the school calendar (regardless for how many days missed). For the MURSD, day 185 is June 22. However, please realize that we have an approved ASL

Day (Alternative Structured Learning) plan, which could enable some online and remote learning opportunities should we have cancellations. However, decisions on any school cancellations are still yet to be determined.

I am also cognizant of the heightened anxiety that may exist among our students and community members. Below are some resources with information and tips to help manage these anxieties.

[Tips for Managing Anxiety Related to the Coronavirus](#)

[Talking to Children About COVID-19: A Parent Resource](#)

I will send out another update tomorrow with additional information from the DPH, the Department of Education, and our local Boards of Health. The district remains committed to ensuring everyone's safety and keeping all of our families in loop.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joseph Maruszczak
Superintendent of Schools

March 11, 2020

To All in the MURSD Community-

Today MURSD Nursing coordinator Leslie McInnis and I had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Mendon & Upton Boards of Health to further coordinate the Regional School District's policies and practices in light of the expanding Coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic. As the Boards of Health contain the appropriate expertise, the MURSD is in constant and close communication with them for the latest guidance.

First, I would like to reiterate the precautionary measures that are paramount in combatting the spread of this virus. Frequent hand washing with soap and water (20 seconds or more) remains the best measure. The custodians in our four schools will continue to be vigilant about frequent sanitizing of "high touch" areas throughout the schools, including doorknobs, railings, switches, handrails, tables, and desks. They typically spend more time disinfecting these areas during the cold and flu season and will continue to be fastidious in their cleaning. Additional precautions that may be taken may be found at [this link on the CDC website](#). And as always, if your child is sick, please do not send him/her to school.

Second, Governor Charlie Baker declared a State of Emergency in the Commonwealth yesterday, citing the escalation of presumptive cases across the state. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) is recommending the practice of "social distance," i.e., the avoidance of mass events where many people will be gathered in close proximity. Additionally, there should be an effort to limit travel. Hence, the guidance has been put forward to eliminate all out of state field trips until further notice. The MURSD will be adhering to this guidance. Additionally, we will be following the recommendation to eliminate events where there is planned crowd of 250 people or more. Thus, until further notice, events such as the vertical Miscoe/Nipmuc Chorus & Band Concerts this evening and next week will be cancelled. We need to have a high degree of sensitivity about the number of students and residents (particularly the elderly) that may be present at such events.

Should there be any need to close the schools due to an outbreak in our towns or even a small number of presumptive cases, we will be following the guidance of our Boards of Health. I will continue to communicate with you the latest guidance that the MURSD receives.

I am certain that for some, this epidemic provokes a great deal of anxiety. However, please remember that at present time, in the 74 communities that comprise Worcester County, there is a grand total of one presumptive case. The DPH and health professionals consistently remind us that the current strain of flu is far more prevalent than the novel COVID-19 virus. However, we will remain vigilant in the MURSD to comply with local and state guidance to keep our students and staff safe during this crisis.

I will be in touch shortly with additional information; as conditions change so do recommendations.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joseph Maruszczak
Superintendent of Schools