

March 3, 2020

To the Depew School-Community,

As the global outbreak of COVID-19 evolves, the most important thing for our district to do now is plan and prepare. Over the last few days, school districts received guidance from the Centers for Disease Control. I'm writing today to share with you that while our district does not have any confirmed cases of COVID-19, we are monitoring this situation, reviewing our plans and following guidance from trusted sources, such as the [Centers for Disease Control](#) and the [Erie County Department of Health](#).

The CDC continues to encourage common-sense strategies for preventing the spread of communicable diseases. I'm asking for your assistance to reinforce health prevention measures in school and at home in the following ways:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Parents are asked to keep children home who exhibit cold and flu-like symptoms. [Guidelines for when to keep a child home.](#)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Review [hand-washing tips](#). Wash hands often with anti-bacterial soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

As a school district, we are reviewing our emergency operations plans which already include many of the preventive strategies listed above to reduce the spread of a wide variety of infectious diseases, including flu. If a student or staff member shows respiratory symptoms, we follow our current practices for handling respiratory illnesses, subject to any additional guidance from appropriate agencies.

In our buildings, I am asking staff to implement preventive measures that include reviewing hand-washing protocols with students, discouraging sharing food in class, providing anti-bacterial soap and/or hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol in classrooms and bathrooms, re-evaluating perfect attendance awards, and conducting daily deep cleaning and sanitation for high touch surfaces by our facilities staff.

If the district becomes aware that a student or staff is diagnosed with COVID-19, we will work with local health officials to determine our next steps. According to the CDC, schools are not expected to work in isolation as it relates to cancellations or closures.

As spring break approaches in April, families are also encouraged to follow the [CDC's information for travel](#).

Information changes quickly on this topic and we have placed more [Coronavirus resources](#) from the CDC and Erie County on our website. New York has established a Novel Coronavirus Hotline, which can provide additional information. Call 1-888-364-3065 with questions or concerns about travel and symptoms.

As always, the health and safety of our students and staff is our highest priority, and we will remain vigilant in our efforts to help prevent the spread of this illness.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey R. Rabey Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Depew Union Free School District