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Dear families and staff,

As February comes to a close, we have seen increasing coverage in the news of the evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) situation around the world. We have also received questions from staff and families regarding the potential impact to Mount Baker and our schools, so I thought it would be helpful to share a quick update to provide some resources and hopefully help relieve potential concerns.

First, I want to thank the health services staff who are invaluable in helping our schools run smoothly and keeping students' health a daily priority. Our district offices, including Health Services and School Safety & Operations staff, coordinate with our health department partners and other agencies to keep us prepared and ready to respond to any situations that may impact our schools and families.

Secondly, I want to recognize that state and federal agencies consider the immediate risk to the general public in Washington and the United States to be low. There are no cases in Whatcom County presently and there is no evidence that COVID-19 is spreading in our state. As with any emerging communicable disease, there is potential for the situation to evolve and change and we continue to stay in close communication with health experts to be prepared should that happen.

You can find more information at Washington State Department of Health.

Finally, please remember that the risks of viruses like COVID-19 are not connected with race, ethnicity or nationality. Perpetuating stigmas is not only inappropriate but does nothing to help the situation; sharing accurate information will. Everyday precautions like diligent hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, remaining home if feeling ill, and staying up to date with immunizations are always important measures in keeping our community healthy. We have not had any major health-related impacts to our schools, but I feel assured knowing our staff, families, and community agencies are all informed and partnering together to keep our kids happy and healthy.

Sincerely,

Mary Sewright, Superintendent

MOUNT BAKER SCHOOL DISTRICT