



PLATTSBURGH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Jay Lebrun

Superintendent of Schools

49 Broad Street
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

Ph: (518) 957-6002

jay@plattscsd.org

www.plattscsd.org

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Dear Plattsburgh CSD Parents:

As you know, media coverage of the coronavirus is widespread, and both the global and national situations are rapidly evolving. The intent of this letter is to provide parents with general information about the coronavirus, and with some specific details about the district's ongoing, longstanding efforts in addressing the spread of viruses. Two useful links are: CDC (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html) and NYSDOH (www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/).

Brief summary

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in many different species of animals. The particular virus which is currently receiving media attention is a novel coronavirus known as COVID-19. This particular coronavirus can feature symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. While the outbreak is believed to have an animal source, most cases are now likely to be spread from person to person by droplets, when coughing or sneezing. As of the writing of this letter, it is our understanding that there are not yet confirmed cases in New York State. Again, this is a new and evolving situation, and health authorities continue to carefully monitor how this virus spreads.

Prevention

As with other respiratory viruses, there are simple steps which can help stop the spread of COVID-19:

- Frequent hand-washing with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then discard it in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched objects/surfaces

Response

Our school district's custodians are exceptional, and already utilize strong practices for preventing the spread of viruses. Strategies which have proven useful during past virus outbreaks (SARS, H1N1) remain in-place, and include the frequent disinfection of surfaces such as desktops, tabletops, doorknobs, lightswitches, locker handles, faucet handles, etc.. Our district utilizes a host of products and devices, including vital oxide disinfectant and electrostatic sprayers. These practices have been successful in minimizing the spread of influenza and other viruses, and an aggressive approach to surface disinfection will continue.

MISSION

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Further, beyond the quality academic instruction which they deliver, our faculty and staff also work with students on matters of personal and community hygiene. Students should expect frequent reminders about washing their hands, respectfully coughing/sneezing, etc..

Ultimately, nobody knows how extensive this outbreak will be, or if/how our region will be affected. In general, virus responses are directed by the NYS and/or Clinton County Departments of Health, but we may also receive direction from the State Education Department, the CDC, the Governor, or other levels of higher office. We will continue to monitor this matter closely, and will react as appropriate. At this point, there are no changes in our district-wide attendance policy. Excused student absences need to be supported by a doctor's note, and excused absences with a duration greater than ten days will invoke the district's homebound instruction policy. Naturally, discussions about the use of technology, and about the impact of this virus on co-curricular activities, on traditional education, on transportation, etc. have begun, and any decisions will be made in consultation with local and state health officials.

For now, our best advice is to practice responsible prevention to the spread of this virus, to keep students who are ill home from school, and to consult your primary medical caregiver if any of the symptoms associated with the COVID-19 virus present. Together, we will successfully navigate this matter, as we have done with pandemics of years past. More information will be shared with parents as this situation evolves, and we look forward to your partnership as we all manage this fluid situation.

With thanks,

Jay Lebrun
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