



# PLATTSBURGH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Plattsburgh CSD Parents:

This message is the next in a series of communications regarding the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Even though there may be little new information emerging between such communications, I intend to continue to disseminate information... hoping that this will be useful for review, to apprise people who missed earlier messages, or just to demonstrate our ongoing preparedness efforts.

### **New information**

As was widely forecast, the COVID-19 virus continues to spread, and reportable infections continue to approach our area. As of the moment of preparation of this letter, we have not received notification of COVID-19 infections in Clinton County, NY, though self-quarantine decisions have apparently prompted the closing, today, of a small number of Vermont schools.

As you are likely aware, on March 8, 2020, Governor Cuomo declared a State of Emergency for the State of New York. This declaration was made in light of confirmed cases in Westchester, Nassau, Rockland and Saratoga Counties, as well as in New York City. Interestingly, this declaration entails no specific immediate impact for school districts, but rather, will assist the State in expediting its emergency preparedness activities. Some useful information is appended to this declaration, which is available here:

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-202-declaring-disaster-emergency-state-new-york>

### **Activity Cancellations**

Very little regarding school programming has changed since my last correspondence. As of this moment, our district has not yet cancelled any activities/events. However, some decisions have been made by program organizers, with the best current example being the cancellation of the NYS Science Olympiad competition. Whether the locus of the cancellation decision rests with the district or with some other governing organization, it is possible that many more such events may be discontinued. As a district, we check regularly with these governing entities about the status of these events, and we will share any updates which we receive with affected students and families immediately. So, while only the Science Olympiad

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event has thus far been formally cancelled, any and all other such events (from interscholastic athletics to foreign travel to concerts, etc.) may also be subject to cancellation – perhaps with little advance notice.

### **Family Contact Information**

Last week, a mass-communication telephone call was made to test our district's system, and our Principals have been tasked with ensuring that our email and phone contact lists are current and complete. To this end, please work with your child's teacher or school office to ensure that we have your best contact information. If and as more specific information and developments become known, we want to be able to share such with you as quickly and efficiently as possible.

### **Possible School Cancellations**

Very little is currently known about the impact of a possible extended school closure. School districts in NYS are subject to a minimum-180 day calendar. Responsibility for waiving this requirement rests with the NYS Commissioner of Education. **There is no current necessity to close school**, but if such becomes appropriate, it is unclear if this 180 day requirement would be waived, if some form of online dissemination of instruction would be deemed acceptable in lieu, if the school year would have to be extended, if Regents' exams would be rescheduled, etc.. These questions, naturally, are of great interest to everyone, and we will share updates as they become available.

### **Current Protocol**

At present, our primary strategy remains to prevent the spread of this virus through aggressive cleaning and best hygiene practices. You have likely heard reports from your child(ren) about frequent opportunities for handwashing, and about constant sanitizing activity from our custodial staff. As before, I encourage you to reinforce these hygiene practices (most notably handwashing) with your children. Additionally, a section dealing with COVID-19 has been added to our website ([www.plattscsd.org](http://www.plattscsd.org)), and information is being regularly added to this space. I encourage you to visit this site (accessible through a banner at the top of our main website page) often.

We will continue to update you regularly, and encourage you to contact our schools if you have any questions. This situation remains fluid, and changes/updates are a certainty.

With thanks,



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