



Colleen Burns Jermain, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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March 12, 2020

Dear Newport Families,

I wanted to give you an update on where the school district is as we address the evolving events of COVID-19 and assure you the Newport Public Schools is and has been over the past three weeks actively working on a preparedness plan which involves many components. First and foremost all schools are following guidelines on cleaning all surfaces, posting signs on the importance of hand washing, reminding everyone of appropriate cough etiquette, taking care of oneself, staying home if one is feeling ill or sick, reminding little ones of the importance of using lots of warm water and soap when washing their hands, and not to share drinks and food. We are restocking our closets and supporting our staff and nurses with the appropriate supplies. Thank you to the PTOs and all that have voluntarily dropped off hand sanitizer and other items.

Another component of our preparedness plan is consideration of online learning should we need to close school for a period of time and updating our data. You will be receiving a robo call sometime today alerting you of this effort. The district would benefit from your input regarding your home technology capabilities so we can identify future needs to support your children. The survey will be posted later today, March 12th on the websites, Newport app, and other social media. Please take the time to fill this out. It is very important in our efforts of ensuring all our students have access to technology learning in case we do need to close for a period of time. The survey link is: <https://forms.gle/7uJ4YfyZsZnj6LiE8>

The school district has also been actively participating in weekly, or more if necessary, conference calls with the Department of Health to stay informed in the evolving events. We also have been in meetings and planning with the City of Newport for some time now if we do need to close and have available meals for our students and their families.

The Newport School Department will be cancelling all school sponsored events effective immediately for the time being based on the Department of Health recommendations of holding events with large crowds, whether inside or outside. Your building principals will also be sending out announcements to reinforce this for you.

As the days go forward, we want you to know that we will continue to send you the latest information as we receive it. If we are alerted to any school members or students with symptoms or exposure to the COVID-19 we will notify you of this and the appropriate actions we will take.

The most important factor in all this is that we all work together, take care of our own health, stay calm and share the necessary information we have if we do have concerns and questions, and reach out to the Department of Health hotline (401-222-8022), this office (401-619-5376) or your school principal or nurse if you need any further guidance. For additional information the DOH website is www.health.ri.gov.

We know from last year during our gas outage how great we are when we work together. I am confident we will do the same as this situation unfolds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Burns Jermain', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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