March 28, 2020

Dear Parents and Community Members,

Earlier this afternoon, Saturday, March 28, 2020, the Cherry Hill School District was notified by a Barton Elementary School staff member, that the staff member tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) and is currently recovering at home. The Camden County Department of Health is in the process of notifying people with whom this person was in direct contact while contagious.

Please have compassionate thoughts and pray for the staff member who is recovering from this difficult diagnosis. Because of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations, we cannot discuss any more details about this staff member.

Friday, March 13, 2020 was the last day we held school in the district and the staff member was present in school that day. After we closed, Governor Murphy issued an executive order to close all schools indefinitely. While the staff member was hospitalized for a time this past week, the doctors determined that it was safe to continue convalescing at home. We have not received any reports of other staff members or students experiencing illnesses with symptoms resembling those of coronavirus/COVID-19.

COVID-19 is thought to be spread via person-to-person contact through contaminated air droplets from coughing and sneezing by an infected person. As with controlling the spread of other viruses, we urge everyone to take the following preventive measures:

- Wash your hands regularly, especially after using the restroom and before preparing or consuming food. Using soap and hot water, wash for about 20 seconds. Be sure to also wash your fingertips.
- Avoid coughing or sneezing into your hands or in the air. Always try to cough or sneeze into a tissue, then throw the tissue away. If you don’t have a tissue, cough/sneeze into your arm.
- As much as you can, avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

The symptoms of coronavirus are similar to the regular seasonal influenza and include fever, coughing, and shortness of breath. Some people with coronavirus have reported additional symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat, nausea, lethargy, lack of appetite, vomiting, and diarrhea. In some situations, the virus can develop into pneumonia.

Individuals who need medical care should call their medical provider to report their illness prior to seeking care at a clinic, physician’s office, or hospital. Parents of students exhibiting flu-like symptoms and staff exhibiting flu-like symptoms are asked to contact the Camden County Health Department.

We are closely monitoring this situation and will provide you with updates as we know more. I have confidence that you will join me in remaining calm, continuing to practice social distancing/compassionate spacing, and monitoring your own and your family members’ health as we all navigate this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joseph Meloche
Superintendent