March 6, 2020

Dear Canton Public School Parents and Caretakers:

As the concerns of the Coronavirus, or what has now been officially named COVID-19, continue to dominate the news and our conversations, I want to assure you that the Canton Public School district is closely monitoring the situation. To keep informed of any new developments and latest health recommendations, we have been in regular communication with the Farmington Valley Health District and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH).

Our nurses closely monitor student and staff absences in their respective schools, particularly during flu season. This helps us spot trends in certain classrooms and school across the District so we can take immediate steps to help minimize the spread of illness. We will continue this absence monitoring process while COVID-19 remains a potential issue.

Aggressive cleaning procedures have been occurring in our schools over the last several weeks and will continue while COVID-19 remains a potential issue. The importance of handwashing is also being stressed throughout our classrooms in the District.

Please remember that Connecticut does not have any confirmed cases of the Coronavirus. For the general American public, the risk is believed to be low at this time. However, the Connecticut Department of Public Health has stated that flu activity is currently affecting large areas within Connecticut. Both COVID-19 and the flu are infectious respiratory illnesses and cause fever, cough, body aches and fatigue, and can result in pneumonia. Both can be spread from person to person by sneezing, coughing or talking. The best recommendation is to follow everyday actions to prevent spread of respiratory illnesses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, before eating and especially after going to the restroom, sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.
- If you are unable to wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your 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 throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or disinfectant wipes.

Our Mission

The Canton Public Schools unite with families and the community to provide challenging educational experiences and opportunities that develop the intellectual, physical, social and emotional potential of our students.

Our mission is to prepare productive, tolerant and responsible citizens with the character and independence to embrace and contribute to the world.
If you would like additional information on the corona and influenza viruses, below are links you may find helpful:

https://www.cdc.gov/flu/

We realize that there is concern about travel overseas due to COVID-19. The District is currently reviewing all planned international and domestic field trips. We have two overseas trips planned – one to Italy and Greece and one to Spain. Due to the Level 3/4 Travel Advisory recommending against non-essential travel, we are canceling the Italy/Greece trip for this upcoming April and are currently reviewing alternate options. We have not canceled any other trips at this time. We are closely monitoring the advisories issued, both for domestic and international travel.

If you are planning travel with your family, please refer to the following link: https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel. This website is regularly updated with current information. Please inform us if you are planning a family trip, including your destination. If your child or family members have any symptoms of illness upon return from a trip, please keep your child at home and contact your family physician. Upon return to school, please bring your child to the school nurse.

As we continue to take necessary precautions to safeguard the health of our students and staff, please know that should the unlikely event of high absenteeism occur, the Canton Public Schools is working on a plan to maintain the continuity of teaching and learning.

Sincerely,

Kevin D. Case
Superintendent of School