March 6, 2020

Dear Taunton Families,

The situation involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to evolve. Even though much has not changed since last week, we believe it is important to provide proactive, consistent, and accurate information. We have heard from families who are seeking guidance on precautions and we have heard from those who are expressing concerns. We understand that we all have a social responsibility in situations like this. We take this responsibility seriously. We want to stress that as of today, we have no confirmed cases or, highly suspicious cases within our school community.

The District has been monitoring and implementing all recommendations which have been issued by Taunton’s Board of Health and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). In addition, we have also accessed MDPH’s Epidemiology 24-hour hotline when questions have arisen in specific situations. As a result, we are confident that any potential questions of exposure have been and will continue to be fully reviewed by the medical professionals who are responsible for overseeing and providing guidance for all coronavirus concerns in the state.

At Wednesday’s School Committee meeting, I outlined the actions that the District has taken to ensure the continuity of educational services in light of the coronavirus concerns that have arisen in the nation. Those steps included: Continual monitoring of MDPH and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) guidance as well as the Superintendents’ ListServ (communication feed) and news media outlets; communicating with parents, guardians, staff and the community previously about coronavirus information through my letter issued and distributed last week; issuing to all District custodial staff and ensuring ongoing compliance with cleaning/sanitizing guidelines using the Electrostatic Sanitizing System (ESS) that kills 99.9% of bacteria, germs and viruses; contacting H&L Bloom to ensure continual sanitization of our buses and vans earlier this week; meeting with District leadership team members to strategize for a potential closure of school and to discuss domestic and international travel abroad; and requesting our Nurse Manager monitor referrals to our Nurses’ offices to detect any increase in office visits with respiratory complaints and to be in contact with pediatric health care providers within our community. To date, we have not seen any increases in nurse office referrals or visits or been made aware of any pediatric health care visits due to any concerns with non-typical respiratory related issues.

I consider the health and safety of our students and staff and the sanitization of our buildings to be the highest priority. I will continue to undertake all appropriate steps needed and recommended by our state leaders and agencies; implement best practices and monitor all potential risks or situations that may arise with any potential connection to the coronavirus. I will also continue to share new information with you as it becomes available. If you have any specific questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (508) 821-1201. Additionally, updated information, and the latest guidance from DPH on the coronavirus can also be found at www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus while daily updates and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

Respectfully,

John J. Cabral
Superintendent of Schools