

Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District

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Dear Hampden Wilbraham Faculty and Staff,

On Wednesday, I had the opportunity to meet with our town administrators and members of the local boards of health in order to strategize around consistent processes and procedures associated with COVID-19. Although, at the time of this writing, we have no presumptive positive cases in our school district, we are thinking proactively about how best to minimize the potential exposure to COVID-19 in our community. The World Health Organization has now classified this as a global pandemic and today the Massachusetts Department of Public Health said that the risk of contracting COVID-19 is rising. Governor Baker has issued a state of emergency for Massachusetts and I want to remain vigilant in our activity to deal with this ever changing situation.

With this in mind, and with the support of our Member Town public health officials, all field trips and school events (i.e. concerts, plays and performances, curriculum showcase events, etc.) will be postponed until further notice. Community events that take place in our schools (local youth sports, civic organizations, etc.) will also be postponed until further notice. This does not include before- and after-school childcare programs run by the YMCA. This decision was made with the health and welfare of the entire community in mind and is aligned with the precautionary measures recommended by Governor Baker and health officials to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

On Friday morning, a conference call with the Massachusetts Department of Education, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and school superintendents will take place. I will relay any additional guidance that will be offered to our communities as we all attempt to deal with the global health crisis at the local level.

I will continue to monitor and assess this situation very closely and will share information with the community as quickly as possible. I want to thank you for your understanding and support during this uniquely challenging time.

While in your schools, if you become aware of a potential health risk, we ask that you bring that concern to your building principal who will follow set protocol with the school nurse and district personnel. The safety of our staff and students is our utmost district priority.

Friday March 13th Professional Learning Day

Our day will be running from 8:00 to 2:30 with the majority of staff reporting to their respective buildings. For those attending the workshop on anxiety, that will run from 8:00-11:00 in the IRC at Minnechaug. Paraprofessionals electing to attend the day will report to Green Meadows with the exception of Stony Hill staff who will participate in learning at Stony Hill. Detailed information on morning learning has been given out by building principals.

As a district, our goal for the time Friday afternoon is to be proactive and prepare to support students' continuity of learning in the event of a closing of a school or district. This learning does not take the place of teacher-led learning in the classroom, but our hope is that this will support students in maintaining the skills that they have gained so far in their education.

The work done on this day will be valuable not only in the event of a school closing during the school year, but also as a potential support for continuous learning over the summer. We will be working in grade level or department collaborative groups to identify key areas of previous student learning that can be maintained through individual practice, online interactions, and family engagement activities. The work will be developmentally appropriate and aligned to students' needs within elementary, middle and high populations with staff and administration working collaboratively on this vision. This work will include social emotional supports for students and families created by district counseling staff.

We will reserve time towards the end of the session to make notes on resources and time needed in a next steps planner, as we do not expect this to be fully completed in our limited time together on Friday. We are grateful for your professionalism and commitment to supporting student learning both at school and at home.

Lastly, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me directly. Please take care of yourself and each other.

Sincerely,

Albert G. Ganem, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools