

March 25, 2020

Greetings Elementary School District 159 Family,

This message is to provide you with updated information about the coronavirus, COVID-19. As of today, a staff member at Colin Powell Middle School recently tested positive for Coronavirus (COVID-19). This is the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in ESD159. The employee remains in isolation at a local hospital. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) will release additional information as it becomes available.

The IDPH is not recommending any changes to the steps the district is already taking to prevent the spread of the virus. We are closely monitoring the evolving situation and in regular communication with state and local health department officials. We will rely on public health guidance/recommendations to make the best decisions for the health of students, staff and families.

While this is an isolated case, the Illinois Department of Health official states there is no confirmed outbreak in our community. Staff and students have been gone since the mandatory school closure order and remains at low risk. However, please monitor yourself for signs and symptoms. Call a healthcare provider if you develop any symptoms.

The best ways to reduce the risk of getting this or any viral respiratory infection include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces
- Stay at home away from others especially if you are sick
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands
- Be aware of cold or flu-like symptoms (elevated temperature, fever, cough, shortness of breath).

Also remember we must clean and disinfect all surfaces and items throughout your homes. Like the coronaviruses that cause the common cold and seasonal influenza, the novel coronavirus that brings on Covid-19 is vulnerable to such standard interventions as soap, water, bleach, UV light, and alcohol-based cleaners. (CDC 2020)

We are committed to transparency and will alert you immediately if we are informed by IDPH of any new confirmed COVID-19 cases among our students and/or staff.

Dr. Mable Alfred  
Superintendent of Schools  
Elementary School District 159