March 12, 2020

Cornell Families and Guardians:

The Cornell School District has continued to monitor the progression of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) the past few weeks. Events of the past few days have shown the impact of this virus, as we have seen higher education institutions moving away from face-to-face classes and moving to online instruction, athletic events being either cancelled or played without spectators, and social events that attract large crowds being cancelled.

The Cornell School District continues to follow the guidelines issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As of March 11, there have been no reported cases of the virus in the Pittsburgh region, but it would be appropriate at this time to start making plans if that changes.

The Cornell School District has begun crafting plans for students to complete work at home if the District were to close in the future. There are different ways that students could complete work, either through electronic measures such as emailing assignments, pushing assignments and announcements through the Class Dojo app or the Remind App, utilizing learning management systems such as Google Classrooms (which our students are familiar with) and posting assignments on the district website. The other measures would be more traditional methods such as reading and writing assignments given in hard packets. These options will be finalized in the coming days, but I ask that you and your family start preparing as well. Please start exploring your options in terms of childcare if the District does eventually have to close. Preparation is key, and we hope any disruption is minimal and doesn’t last long.

Lastly, the District continues to clean and disinfect classrooms and high frequent touch points daily and nightly. We will continue to have our students wash their hands, or use hand sanitizers regularly, and discuss proper hygiene habits such as coughing into elbows and avoiding touching the facial area. Our transportation company, STA, is also utilizing regular disinfectant practices to address the virus issue. We are hopeful we don’t have to put these plans into action, but we’ll continue to listen to the recommendations of local, state, and national health organizations. We will share any updates as we receive them. Thank you!

Dr. Aaron Thomas
Superintendent