

ONTEORA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOICEVILLE, NEW YORK 12412

Victoria McLaren
Superintendent of Schools

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March 5, 2020

Dear Onteora Families,

Although we have no suspected or confirmed cases in our schools, I wanted to send an update regarding the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). First, I'd like to reassure you that we are constantly monitoring the progress of this disease. As I'm sure you are aware, this is a rapidly changing and fluid situation.

Our Medical Director, Suellen Elmendorf FNP, and I attended a county-wide meeting yesterday with the Ulster County Department of Health (UCDOH) that included school leaders, hospital leaders, and local governmental leaders. The UCDOH is actively engaged in the monitoring of this situation and is maintaining communication with all of us.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 within our community, we will be immediately notified and we will work with the UCDOH and our local leaders to respond appropriately. Should the need arise, these leaders will help guide us through any decisions regarding the cancellation of events or the closing of school.

At this time, in order to limit the risks to our students, we are going to limit our field trips for the month of March to those that are close to home. We will continue to monitor and review the situation throughout the month and make further determinations as the situation develops. We do not want to preemptively cancel field trips later in the school year at this time.

I want to stress that if your child is feeling ill, please do not send them to school. I would like to request that everyone review the importance of proper hand and respiratory hygiene with their children. One of the most important things we can all do to limit the spread of COVID-19 is to wash hands with soap for at least 20 seconds:

- Before eating;
- After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing;
- After using the restroom;
- Before handling food;
- After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated; and
- After using shared equipment like computers or phones

It is also important to stress proper respiratory hygiene by covering coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow, and disposing of soiled tissues immediately after use.

At the building level, our staff is working diligently to clean and disinfect our buildings every day and every night. We are also ensuring that our school vehicles, whether they are District owned or owned by our contractor, First Student, are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected twice per day. We have also hung signs in all bathrooms as a reminder of good hand washing practices.

We currently have three unused snow days that we are scheduled to "give back." The first give-back day would be added to spring break. I am going to recommend to the Board of Education that we do not add

this day to spring break. In the event of a confirmation of COVID-19 in our community, we will likely close school for a day or two to work with the New York State Education Department and the Ulster County Department of Health in order to determine our next steps in responding to the situation.

We will keep you updated on any new information that we receive moving forward. Please know that the health and safety of our students and our school community is of paramount importance to our entire District, and we will do everything we can to support our students and families in light of this situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victoria McLaren". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Victoria McLaren
Superintendent of Schools