

March 10, 2020

Dear B-ESD Families and Staff,

We are closely monitoring the COVID-19 developments so that important decisions can be made rapidly in the best interest of our community. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to make decisions to keep not just our own families safe, but also our community's most vulnerable members.

Please keep sick students at home. Students with a fever over 100°F, a new productive cough (with lots of mucous) or other respiratory symptoms will be sent home. Skagit Health District may contact these families for further testing.

We want to continue to emphasize preventative measures recommended by the CDC:

- **Voluntary Home Isolation:** Stay home when you are sick with new respiratory symptoms. Call your family doctor for symptoms that do not start to get better after 5–7 days.
- **Respiratory Etiquette:** Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow when possible. Otherwise, cover with a tissue, then throw it in the trash can. Follow hand hygiene guidelines.
- **Hand Hygiene:** Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 60%-95% alcohol.
- **Hygiene for objects and surfaces:** Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces and objects including cell phones

Please take the time to review the information on our district website:

<https://www.be.wednet.edu/district-office/health-resources>. If you have concerns about symptoms that you or your child are experiencing, reach out to your health care provider. The Washington State Department of Health has also set up a call center for the public. We encourage you to use the number if you have questions or concerns. That number is 1-800-525-0127 and press #.

Updates and resources are accessible through the Skagit County Health Department website at <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/HealthDiseases/coronavirus.htm> and through the Washington State Department of Health at <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>.

Below are answers to some of our frequently asked questions:

## **Under what circumstances would Burlington-Edison School District close a school's doors because of COVID-19?**

Burlington-Edison schools will remain open unless otherwise advised by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and/or the Skagit County Health Department. It is important to provide continued instruction and, for some students, meals, unless an infection prevents us from doing so. Most students are healthy and are not at risk for complications from COVID-19. Medically vulnerable and people older than 60 are most at risk from COVID-19.

We understand that each family situation is different and some may have vulnerable family members they want to protect from possible exposure. Your family is the ultimate decision maker about what steps to take to keep your family safe.

## **Is the school district imposing any travel restrictions?**

As we move forward in following the Skagit Health Department's suggestions in mitigating the possible spread of coronavirus, families may hear about individual field trips or events being rescheduled or canceled. At this time, we are **NOT** doing a blanket cancellation of field trips. We will be evaluating planned events, field trips and sporting events to determine how to proceed on a weekly basis. If an event is canceled, your student's teacher, club advisor or coach will communicate that decision via their regular method (email, flier, etc.).

## **Is the school district restricting facility use by outside groups?**

The district may restrict or cancel events that would bring in a large number of people from outside Burlington. The district will notify the organizers of these events on a case-by-case basis. We also may need to temporarily increase our fees for cleaning/sanitization as we are needing to do a deeper cleaning after most events. These decisions are ongoing and will be made on a weekly and sometimes daily basis.

## **Will sports be canceled?**

At this time, District-wide spring sports' practices are continuing.

Some school districts have already announced game postponements or cancellations as a way of containing the spread of COVID-19. Burlington-Edison School District will continue to follow the guidance of both the Skagit Health Department and the WIAA. We encourage families to remind their student athletes about good hygiene practices. They should be encouraged to regularly wash their hands for 20 seconds. They can also bring hand sanitizer to practices. Please send water bottles with your student athlete — do *NOT* share water bottles. We also are encouraging athletes to avoid high fives, handshakes, etc., to limit the spread of any illness. Please encourage student athletes to stay home if they have a fever, cough or shortness of breath.

Families in attendance should practice social distancing (standing 6 ft from one another), good hand-washing etiquette, and stay home if they are sick. And, of course, following the CDC recommendations that those older than 60 take extra precautions by avoiding crowds.

## **What protocols are in place for students or staff who travel internationally?**

Any student or staff member traveling to a high-risk country will be asked to self-impose a 14-day quarantine prior to returning to school. The CDC has additional information here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>.

### **How will the district communicate updates?**

Families will continue to receive emails with information. We also will continue to communicate through our website ([www.be.wednet.edu](http://www.be.wednet.edu)) and our social media channels. The health and safety of our community is a shared responsibility and one that we take seriously. Plan for childcare at home if your child gets sick or school is closed. If you have children with asthma or other medical conditions that put them at higher risk for an infection, talk to your health care provider now about a plan to protect them.

### **What are some of the things the district is doing to keep students, staff and by extension, the Burlington community safe?**

At this time, our district is being proactive in our efforts to keep our families safe:

- Custodial staff have already increased cleaning of contact surfaces, including doors, light switches, and counters.
- Custodial staff are also using Evaclean and an electrostatic machine that is a food and hospital grade disinfectant on touchable surfaces that typical wipe downs might miss twice a week at each school. They will also be used to disinfect school buses three days each week.
- Hand sanitizer is available in as many classrooms as possible, depending on availability.
- Updates are being posted on the district's website at [www.be.wednet.edu](http://www.be.wednet.edu).

### **How can families help?**

- If your student is sick (fever over 100° F, cough, shortness of breath, vomiting, diarrhea), please keep them home until they have been symptom free for 72 hours. Call your doctor if you are concerned about your student's symptoms.
- Families who are keeping students home sick from school should call their student's school attendance offices to excuse the absence.
- Normal school procedures apply for students to make up school work from absences. See student handbooks for more information.
- Alcohol-based (over 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer may be sent to school with students.
- Do not attend extracurricular events when sick.

### **What should I do if my child is medically vulnerable?**

Please consult your provider about your child's specific medical concerns. As with any flu season, also keep watch on community and school communications to monitor disease progression in the population. The district will do our best to keep our schools clean, and encourage good infection prevention behaviors: frequent handwashing, refrain from touching the face, cover coughs and sneezes, disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

We will continue to post updates to our district website and through our social media channels as they become available. In the event of a school closure, we will communicate broadly through all platforms. Thank you for your continued support in keeping our schools healthy!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurel W. Browning". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

Laurel W. Browning  
Superintendent, Burlington-Edison School District

Additional information and resources are available at:

- [Skagit County Department of Health](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control Quick Facts \(English\) / What you Need to Know About COVID-19 \(English\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control Quick Facts \(Español\) / Lo que necesita saber sobre la enfermedad del coronavirus 2019\(COVID-19\) \(Español\)](#)