



Little Falls Community Schools

CREATING OUR FUTURE... ONE STUDENT AT A TIME.

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Little Falls Community Schools Students, Families, and Community:

I am taking the opportunity to write to you to share information concerning the coronavirus and the current status of Little Falls Community Schools in regards to COVID-19.

Certainly the situation in our state and nation continues to evolve day-to-day. At the core of any decision we make as a district, the health and welfare of our students, families, staff, and community members is at the forefront. We are in constant contact with the Minnesota Department of Health, the Minnesota Department of Education, and the Minnesota Legislature. We rely upon daily updates from the Center for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, and the Federal Government to guide our planning and preparation.

In our district, many daily cleaning measures have been ramped up. Custodians and staff are focused on consistently wiping and cleaning high-contact spaces. Buses and vans used by the district are undergoing a much more intense level of daily cleaning. Two weeks ago, the district secured orders for cases of sanitizer and hand-dispensers which (beginning March 16) will be set up at key building entrance points and at cafeterias throughout the district. We began pre-packaging salads and sandwiches to eliminate contact with serving utensils. Staff members consistently remind students and adults to practice simple but effective health practices:

- **Practice frequent hand hygiene:** This includes washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based sanitizer. Always wash hands after blowing nose, sneezing, or coughing.
- **Cover your cough:** Cough or sneeze into the elbow...then wash hands as mentioned above.
- **Stay home if ill:** Do not expose others to illness. Stay home with a fever greater than 100°F, and remain at home for 24 hours after the fever is gone without the use of fever reducing medications such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Our concern for our students is genuine and authentic. To that end, the information below is provided:

- According to the Minnesota Department of Health, most children are not at a high risk related to COVID-19
- Children with underlying medical concerns and their families should plan differently
 - Contact their medical provider
 - Communicate with building principal and health-services staff

On Friday, March 13, the Minnesota Department of Health provided a webinar in which education leaders from around the state participated. During this webinar, MDH...with collaboration from the Minnesota Department of Education...advocated for school systems to enact "social distancing" measures. This means that schools are being challenged by state agencies to minimize the amount of "large group" contact in the school setting. The recommendation presents many logistical issues for our schools, which we will be working on over the weekend. Social distancing would impact assemblies, lyceums, dances, field trips, and district-sponsored travel, as well as normal day-to-day operation of our schools, to name just a few.

Please note...the additional recommendations and information provided by MDH and MDE listed below was as of Friday morning, March 13, at 8:00 AM; as we have seen recently, recommendations can change hour-by-hour as the coronavirus situation evolves:

- As of March 13 at 8:00 AM, there are fourteen (14) confirmed cases in Minnesota, none of which involve any students or staff in schools in the state. All of the current cases at this time are travel-related.
- School closures in Minnesota are not recommended at this time. Current evidence provided by MDH does not show that closing schools is an effective strategy in limiting the spread of COVID-19.
- School closures would have widespread educational and social implications.
- Future interventions may include things like temporary school closures, postponing large community gatherings, or working with employers to have more of the workforce work from home.
- No domestic travel restrictions are in place at this time.

We will continue to seek and take guidance from health, education, and governmental agencies and organizations. As we have seen over the past few days, things are changing rapidly. As a school district, we will continue to keep our stakeholders aware of decisions and recommendations related to coronavirus at Little Falls Community Schools.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with your questions and concerns.

Thank you,



Stephen Jones
Superintendent
Little Falls Community Schools