March 13, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

COVID 19 is a fluid situation, with guidance and information changing daily, and in some cases hourly. By the time you read this information, it too may include inaccuracies within the message as a result of the rapidly changing landscape of information and direction received. The Westhill Central School District is closely monitoring the status with the County and State Health Departments, the CDC, and executive orders from Governor Cuomo.

Here is a synopsis of the planning underway throughout the Westhill District.

**Education and Communication**
- The District is maintaining direct, two-way communication with the State and County Departments of Health regarding COVID-19 status and individual cases.
- School nurses and the Superintendent attended special training offered by Onondaga County.
- District leadership continues to receive up-to-date information and will be sharing critical pieces with staff.
- The District has created a website for sharing updates about COVID-19. [https://blackboard.ocmboces.org/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=7751_1&content_id=778077_1](https://blackboard.ocmboces.org/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=7751_1&content_id=778077_1)

**Potential School Closure:** At this point, no decision has been made in regards to closing the Westhill CSD. Planning has been underway, however, to prepare for that possibility.

- The District will follow the direction of State and County Health Departments in deciding if schools need to be closed. If the Onondaga County Health Department confirms a case of COVID-19 in a school building, that building will initially be shut down for a minimum of 24-hours while an investigation is conducted to determine if an extended closure period is required. The Health Department will decide if additional buildings should be closed for an extended period of time and when a closed building can reopen.
- **Families should plan for the possibility of students being out of school for extended periods.** Necessary childcare arrangements should be made in the event that buildings are required to close.
- Similar to school districts and universities across the State and Nation, we are exploring “continued learning” options in the event of a prolonged school closure. Teachers and administrators are evaluating the best means of providing materials and instruction should the need arise. Please note, this type of instruction will not be the same as in person, school building instruction and will focus on work students can complete in a home environment. On-line platforms and paper learning packets will be the most common method of delivering information to students. Devices for students can be made available as needed. If your child has a device, we ask that they utilize it, so we may ensure that those students without one are able to access the same learning information.
Prevention, Cleaning and Disinfection

- Students and staff are being encouraged to stay home when they feel sick.
- Educational materials about proper hand washing and staying healthy have been distributed to building leaders and teaching staff.
- Bus drivers are disinfecting their buses in between trips.
- All classrooms and high contact areas are disinfected daily.
- Additional staff has been brought in to supplement existing cleaning procedures.

Travel, Trips, and Events

- The District is assessing ALL school-based trips and activities, following State and Local advisories regarding cancelation if necessary. Trip leaders will be advised as determinations are made. This includes large gatherings scheduled.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a website dedicated to providing up-to-date resources for travelers: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html.
- The District is recommending that travelers to affected areas follow self-quarantine guidelines. Suggested guidelines can be found online at: https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/documents/self-quarantine-covid.pdf.

The CDC and Onondaga County Health Department continue to remind us of the following preventative measures:

1. Washing your hands with soap and water multiple times a day is a best practice to prevent the spread of germs and viruses. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
3. Stay home if you are sick or think you are coming down with something.
4. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, coat/jacket or elbow and wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
5. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Thank you for your continued patience and understanding as we work through these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Casey Barduhn
Superintendent of Schools