

UPDATED INFORMATION FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT REGARDING COVID-19

March 6, 2020

Dear Members of the Garfield School Community,

As concerns about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) continue to rise due to the confirmation of the virus in New Jersey, the Garfield District is working closely with various agencies, including the Garfield Health Department, the NJ Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the NJ Department of Education. We are also partnering with school districts across Bergen County in order to share best practices to be prepared to take the necessary actions to protect our school community.

Since the virus has been confirmed in New Jersey, the Department of Education has issued guidance last evening that districts should prepare for school closure if it is necessary. **NJDOH guidance identifies school closure as a potential strategy to limit transmission within a community. In the event a Board of Education is provided a written directive by either the New Jersey Department of Health or the health officer of the jurisdiction to institute a public health-related closure of a school or schools in the district, the Board of Education may utilize home instruction to provide instructional services to enrolled students.** Although we do not have any known cases of COVID-19 in our schools at the current time, there is no way to predict what may occur and we must be prepared.

The Garfield District has been preparing lessons for home instruction, which will include paper based assignments for the students in grades K-4 as well as electronic assignments for those students who have access to the chrome book devices that have been distributed by the District. It is understood that not all students have internet access at home and more information will be provided if school or district closure becomes necessary.

Preventative measures that have been put in place thus far include:

- Good hygiene practices are being reinforced with our students. These include washing hands for at least 20 seconds, using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content, covering coughs and sneezes into your sleeve, avoiding touch to the eyes, nose and mouth.
- More intensive cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces such as handrails, desks, doorknobs, keyboards, faucet handles, phones, etc.
- Monitoring students and staff for symptoms and sending them home when sick.
- Keeping students who are exhibiting flu like symptoms separate from the students until picked up.

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- **Monitoring absenteeism in each school with the intention to alert local health officials about large increases in student and staff absenteeism.**
- **Monitoring students who have returned from visits to other countries.**

Currently, the CDC recommends avoiding nonessential travel to China, Iran, Italy, and South Korea. These countries are considered Warning Level 3 due to a higher risk of getting COVID-19. Please let the principal and school nurse know if your child has traveled or if you are planning to travel to any location in the near future.

We have attached the most recently updated (March 4, 2020) New Jersey Department of Health COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care and K-12 Schools. Please review attached document and refer to web links provided in the document for more specific information about related topics.

I thank you for your anticipated cooperation and support as we work through this health crisis and do everything possible to keep our school community safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Anna Sciacca

Superintendent of Schools