



William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent

March 11, 2020

To Our School District of Philadelphia Families,

The coronavirus situation is evolving quickly. As we learn more, I am writing to provide updates about what we know, and the steps we are taking to minimize the risk in our schools and offices.

At this time, the School District of Philadelphia does NOT have any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 (coronavirus) in its schools or offices. However, with yesterday's announcement of the first confirmed case in the City of Philadelphia and others in nearby counties, we are escalating our districtwide response. Here are the important steps we are taking based on guidance from the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH):

- **preventive hygiene practices** - the most important things we can all continue to do are:
 - wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds regularly
 - use your elbow or a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, then wash your hands afterward
 - avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
 - stay home if you are sick

We will be providing every school with posters highlighting these important practices and ask that you reinforce these practices at home.

- **travel-related self-reporting and self-isolation** - parents and guardians of students returning from coronavirus Level 2 or higher countries (you can find the list [here](#)) are asked to complete this [Self-Reporting Form](#) and inform school staff of the student's status. Students and staff returning from Level 2 or higher countries must self-isolate for 14 days before returning to school or work, even if they are not exhibiting symptoms associated with the coronavirus. If returning travelers from affected countries develop fever, cough, or trouble breathing, they should call their medical provider and report their symptoms and travel history. For students following the 14-day self-isolation, an absence code will be used to categorize the absence as excused.

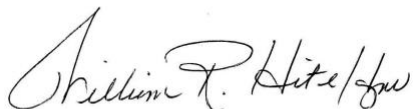
(Please note: Attendance will not impact applications of current third, fourth, and seventh-graders applying for middle or high school for the 2021–2022 school year.)

- **school-sponsored international trips** - all school-sponsored international trips to coronavirus Level 2 and 3 countries will be cancelled.
- **hand sanitizer and wipes** - all District schools have received a supply of hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes. Hand sanitizer is being placed in hallways, entryways, the nurse's office, cafeterias, and gymnasiums. Please encourage your child(ren) to use these stations throughout the school day.
- **cleaning practices** - all schools now have a roving general cleaner on-site at 8 a.m. each day to wipe down all high-touch surfaces such as door handles, door knobs, water fountains, student desks and handrails, and support bathroom cleanliness. This is in addition to each school's regular cleaning staff, who are on site until about 8 p.m., providing ongoing cleaning throughout the school.
- **cleaning of school buses** - wipedowns of seats, railings and interior window bumper cushions on every school bus will occur after morning and afternoon routes each day.
- **instruction and learning:** While there are currently no plans to close schools due to the coronavirus, District staff are actively exploring options to support instruction and learning should the need arise.

Please know that the actions we are taking — guided by the advice of the PDPH as well as other city, state and U.S. public health agencies — are focused on ensuring the health and safety of our entire school community, as we collectively work to respond to the challenges created by COVID-19.

We realize there may be an increasing level of anxiety about the coronavirus. Staying informed is key. I encourage you to visit www.philasd.org/coronavirus often, as a trusted resource for the latest information on this evolving situation. We have also added new resources to help you talk to your child(ren) about the coronavirus.

Thank you for your support and partnership during this sensitive time.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William R. Hite Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

William R. Hite Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent
The School District of Philadelphia