

Good Evening,

Now that Maine has a confirmed case of COVID-19/Coronavirus in Maine from Androscoggin County and Governor Mills has communicated the steps to take for social distancing, I want to update our students, parents, and staff members on the School Department's continued efforts. Please remember things are changing rapidly and I will continue to date communications to clarify from one communication to another.

Following the advice of Governor Mills to limit large crowd gatherings for the next 30 days to delay an outbreak and minimize the spread of COVID-19/Coronavirus, the Bangor School Department is cancelling a number of non-essential events from now until April 17th. Principals will be sending cancellation notices of the specific events cancelled to families.

At this point in time, Governor Mills is not recommending closing K-12 schools. Therefore, Bangor schools will continue to be in session and regular after school activities will be held. The School Department will continue to monitor the most recent information/advisories and update parents, students, and staff as we learn more.

I want to remind our community of the following:

What is Coronavirus?

Coronavirus is a respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and which has now been detected in locations throughout the world, including the United States and Maine. The virus is named "SARS-CoV-2" and the disease it causes is named "coronavirus disease 2019" (abbreviated "COVID-19").

What does the disease look like in humans?

Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 include fever and/or cough and difficulty breathing. Sore throat is also reported in some patients. If you have these symptoms and did not recently travel to an area where there is an outbreak or did not have contact with someone with 2019 Novel Coronavirus, it is likely to be a cold or the flu. You should contact your medical provider or 211 if you have questions.

What is the best way to prevent the spread of the disease?

If you are sick you should stay home, cover your coughs and sneezes, and wash your hands regularly. If your child has a fever, please keep them home until at least 24-hours after the fever has subsided without the use of fever-reducing medicines, such as acetaminophen. This standard is expected of Bangor School Department staff as well.

What if there is an outbreak in our community?

If there is a local outbreak, we must be prepared to close schools for an undetermined period of time. The decision to close school will be made in consultation with Patty Hamilton, Director of Public Health, Maine Department of Education (MDOE), and the Maine CDC. If schools are closed, and in order to allow for continued learning and

completion of the school year in a reasonable timeframe, we will consider options made available to us by the MDOE. This may include take home packets, extended-day make-up time, and other options approved by MDOE. These are options that have been discussed at the leadership level within the schools and we will determine the most appropriate options for our schools, students, and staff as we learn more.

Maine CDC is working with U.S. CDC to monitor the situation, provide healthcare providers with the latest information, and stay up-to-date on any potential cases they may see. There are ongoing investigations to learn more. This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available. For more information on the situation, visit [U.S. CDC's COVID-19 situation summary webpage.](#)"

The best thing we can continue to do is remind everyone to stay home if sick, cover up any coughs or sneezes, wash hands regularly, and contact your doctor with any concerns or questions. Some parents are calling asking about their individual children's situation and whether they should stay home. The Bangor School Department cannot provide medical advice and I urge you to call your pediatrician in order to make decisions. Please know a documented medical provider note would be considered excusable absences.

If you have questions, please call your school principal.

Sincerely,

Betsy Webb, Ed.D.