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COVID-19 Update, March 12, 2020

1 message

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Thu, Mar 12, 2020 at 5:26 PM

Hello, Raider families. As you are likely aware, updates and changes to plans as a result of COVID-19 are occurring rapidly, and I wanted to send a couple updates out to our families today as well. Please continue to check out the IDPH website--<https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus>--or Facebook page for up-to-date news and direction, and if you do believe you're becoming ill, please call your health care provider ahead of time before traveling to the clinic so that they can give you some direction about intake processes, depending upon your illness or condition. I'm sure the following list of updates--some bigger and some smaller--doesn't include all we're doing at school, but we wanted to share some of that with you as part of today's update.

- A few of you have asked about tonight's concert. We reached out to our partners at Iowa County Public Health about canceling events like the high school music concert, and were informed that IDPH is not recommending canceling such events at the time of our inquiry. With that said, I was assured that if that recommendation changes, school officials would be notified immediately. Official correspondence from the Iowa Department of Public Health and today's guidance from the Iowa Department of Education request that before school days or events are canceled, that IDPH be consulted. We plan to continue to consult with our public health experts as part of decisions we make related to COVID-19.
- What are we doing at school to help with this situation? Thanks to Head of Maintenance Phil Trimpe and his custodial team for working to sanitize hand railings, chair backs, and arm rests in the auditorium between Tuesday's concert and tonight's concert. That sanitizing will occur after tonight's concert and prior to the weekend.
- We'll have hand sanitizer outside the auditorium tonight if you'd like to use some before or after the concert.
- We're trying to limit the number of door handles students and staff need to touch during the day on doors that are required to be closed.
- We're working to more regularly sanitize school bus seats.
- While we haven't been given a directive to expect school cancellations, we have a small team at both buildings starting to take into account considerations we'd need to remember if we would be directed to close for any number of days. Again, we'll partner with health experts and people knowledgeable about the virus and its impact on our communities to make those decisions.
- You may have heard that Kirkwood Community College is planning to move most of its courses to an online format until at least April 10. That MAY impact whether or not our students can continue to meet at the Iowa County Center, but I know Ms. O'Connor is working on potential new locations at the jr./sr. high school for our students. We have yet to hear if the Iowa County Center will have restrictions on the number of students who can be present in their building.
- We're continuing to purchase sanitizing wipes to provide to classrooms, and added some additional sanitizing tools to the weight room. Mr. Trimpe is also working with staff on the most effective use of those sanitizing chemicals.
- We've approved all overtime for custodial staff that is related to sanitizing processes in our school buildings.
- We've adjusted the allowable "paid family illness leave" for staff members.
- We've put up flyers in each building reminding students, staff, and visitors about general precautions that can be taken to prevent the spread of illnesses like influenza or COVID-19: Hand washing is crucial, and hand sanitizer is great if you can't wash your hands. If you sneeze or cough, please cover your mouth and nose with your elbow. Do your best to avoid touching your face with your hands. If you are ill, please stay at home.
- Staff members are reviewing hand-washing videos with students.

I know this is a stressful time for families, and school closures impact work and health and schedules, and most of all, you entrust us to provide a safe place for your child to learn or your family member to work. We want to keep that trust. Some of you have sent me some suggestions about next steps, and in some cases, we've been able to enact those suggestions. Thanks for the care you take in preserving the safety of all Williamsburg Raiders students, staff, and visitors. We do appreciate that concern very much. I'll send another update as the situation warrants, and thanks, again, for your cautious concern and wishes for well-being.

Chad Garber

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