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Dear School Community,

What a difference a day can make!

As you are probably aware, a lot of new information about Coronavirus was shared yesterday: the World Health Organization labeled this as a global pandemic, Germany's leader Angela Merkel stated that 60-70% of the population could become infected, the NBA suspended its season, many colleges and universities will not have students return after spring break, and preliminary studies have shown that the virus can live up to 2 days on plastic and stainless steel (and 3 hours in the air).

I have done my best to stay informed and consult with local public health officials. Given the status of the current situation, we have taken additional measures since my last communication. We are taking the situation very seriously.

I am providing information about other questions you might have below:

Events

We are essentially suspending our participation in all outside student and public events. This also includes events we had planned to host. For example, we are canceling the following: the Gymnastics meet the high school was scheduled to host at the end of March, our public performances of James and The Giant Peach, upcoming home and away Wrestling meets, the planned Family Technology night, the Pinewood Derby at the Elementary School, etc. You will hear directly from the specific school about all upcoming planned events. In essence, the only thing events/activities we are not canceling is our own after-school programming and upcoming parent/teacher conferences at CRES.

Spring Sports

Right now, our plan is to proceed with the spring sports season, knowing we may be in a place in a week or month where we cancel games and can only practice. We don't even know if we will be in school! If we are in school, even if we don't travel to competitions, we believe it is healthy for students to play sports and be active.

MEA Testing (grades 3 – 8)

Maine continues to work under the assumption that we will be able to begin state MEA testing later in March as planned. There is a testing window during which schools are expected to do the testing. Should Maine schools be impacted with COVID-19, there is the possibility of extending the assessment window to provide additional time to administer the assessments.

SAT Testing (grade 11)

The SAT is currently still scheduled for April 14. The College Board is in weekly communication with Maine and other SAT user states to determine the current status of schools relative to COVID-19. Should a significant number of states be impacted by COVID-19, the College Board is currently determining an alternate date for SAT administration. This would continue to be a single-day

administration of the SAT. The Department of Education has asked their vendors to provide as much lead time as possible regarding potential or confirmed changes to the schedule, and they will communicate these to us as soon as they hear.

Staff Travel

We are suspending all participation in conferences and workshops. Only in-state meetings with fewer than 25 people gathered will be permissible until further notice.

Potential for School Closure

We don't know if we will face this situation, but we are planning for it just in case, and most of what I said previously still pertains. We would plan to provide lunch (and breakfast) and we would use remote electronic learning at grades levels where it is feasible to continue school (most likely 5 – 12). We are still working on figuring out the best approach for grades K-4. We would not enter into a school closing lightly and recognize it would be an incredibly difficult decision. We know that closing school would be incredibly disruptive to our community, both socially and economically. We also know it may be the only option for the health of the community. All of those needs are important, and we hope that the community will trust our decision-making process, together with public health officials, if we are faced with that question. More detailed plans will be forthcoming regarding student and staff expectations in the event of a school closing.

Personal Travel

I was scheduled to visit my son in Virginia this weekend and pulled the plug today on that trip out of consideration for the larger community. I urge everyone to reconsider travel plans. Airports and airplanes are breeding grounds for contagions and traveling exposes us to far greater numbers of people from a much wider geographic area.

Thank you for your patience and the work you will do as we manage this extraordinary and evolving situation. Our community is strong, caring, and resilient. Working together, as we always do, will allow us to meet this challenge and ensure the health and safety of our community.

Sincerely,



Maria Libby