**COVID-19 Coronavirus 03.06.2020 Weekly Update**

School Leaders,

Providing you timely and accurate information in order to keep your school community safe is our primary goal as more information about Novel Coronavirus (also called COVID-19) emerges. Though the risk at this time remains low in Boston, all of us in the Boston Public Schools are concerned about the growing presence of the COVID-19 in and around our community.

Here is the first of the weekly updates that we have promised so that you have all of the updates and support that you need. Thank you for your leadership during this time as we work together to keep our students and safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Tammy Pust, Senior Advisor

**Resources**

**BPS Coronavirus Website**

<https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/coronavirus>

Last night, BPS launched a website outlining key questions families may have, prevention tips, and tips for educators. Our goal is to keep you as informed as possible and make sure you have the tools and resources you need in order to both talk with your students, staff, and families and keep your school community safe and healthy. We will be updating the website weekly.

**BPS Coronavirus Email**

If parents or community members are asking questions about coronavirus that cannot be answered on the BPS Coronavirus Website, please have them email [coronavirus@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:coronavirus@bostonpublicschools.org) and they will receive an answer within 48 hours.

**Call Notes from Yesterday’s Call**

Yesterday, we hosted a call to talk through BPS protocols. [**Here**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LE1rkuWQ5u6r4fXujAnsw984gw08MGITQJHx09RmK1E/edit?ts=5e613c54) you can find notes, with details, from yesterday’s call. [**Here**](https://fccdl.in/0AIJNVtATW) you can find a recording of yesterday’s call (PW: 0305).

**Clarifications**

**How COVID-19 Spreads**

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. COVID-19 spreads through close contact with someone who is infected (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more).

Because COVID-19 spreads through contact, it is essential that your school sanitizes surfaces regularly, that hands are washed properly, and that coughs and sneezes are covered.

**Travel Ban v. Travel Restrictions**

In our call, we discussed: (A) the cancellation of all BPS-sponsored international travel; and (B) the travel restrictions issued by the CDC/BPHC. There is a lot of confusion about the two.

1. All BPS-sponsored international travel is cancelled through the end of the school year. That applies to anything outside the US. (Puerto Rico is not considered outside the US for this purpose).
2. Travel is currently restricted by the CDC/BPHC - and so by BPS as well - to the following countries (defined as Levels 2 and 3) by the CDC): China, Iran, South Korea, Italy and Japan. (Hong Kong is not listed as a Level 2 or 3 country by the CDC at this time, and we are not restricting travel to Hong Kong at this time.) Keep up to date on which countries go on or off this list at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

If BPS students have traveled to any of these CDC-listed countries recently, they need to stay home and self-isolate for at least 14 days. To be clear: they can come back to BPS after they’ve been back in the country for 14 days.

If within the 14 days they get sick, they are to stay home because they are sick - just like anyone else who is sick is expected to stay home.

**Frequently Asked Questions: New or Updated**

**Staff Traveling during Spring Break**

As per the directive from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) announced yesterday, travel to level 2 and level 3 countries [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>] should be avoided. As of March 6, 2020, the following countries are listed: China, Italy, Iran, South Korea and Japan. If BPS staff travel to any of those countries during April break or at any other time, they must self isolate at home upon their return for at least 14 days. Updated OHC direction will be sent out soon detailing the process for required reporting of such travel by BPS staff.

**BPS Facilities Cleaning**

Over February break, all BPS schools received a cleaning. Vacation week cleaning included washing every classroom floor, vacuuming, targeted rug cleaning, corridor washing and wax/buff, all bathrooms received a deep cleaning. In addition, “high touch” areas like door knobs, push bars, and light switches received disinfecting.

**Schools in need of additional cleaning due to illness:** Any details of illnesses within a school should be reported to the school nurse, who then will pass along the relevant details to the BPS Health Service's office. Health Services staff will then follow the existing protocol by communicating with the Infectious Disease Unit from BPHC to determine if any targeted cleaning is necessary. If that determination is made, BPS Facilities Environmental team will carry out BPHC cleaning recommendations as requested by Health Services . BPS Facilities are typically on site starting the cleaning in less than 8 hours.

**Ordering Masks & Nurse Supplies**

Health Services will continue to survey nurses for the number of masks currently in schools. There are a limited number of masks in Health Services that we will distribute to schools that do not have any masks. Unfortunately due to a national shortage some of the supplies are on backorder. We are currently working with WB Mason and will place the order for additional masks and gowns once they are stocked. Health Services is collaborating with the Department of Public Health to also request additional supply through the DPH Office of Emergency Preparedness. We will communicate any updates regarding supplies as we receive them.

**BPS Community Concerns**

**Tynan**

On March 6, 2020, the web-based *CaughtinSouthie* publication reported a situation involving a Boston Lacrosse League event at the Tynan. We have been in contact with the organizers, and were assured that the person addressed in the media report was an adult coach, not a student. The coach apparently works at Biogen, which has had its own exposure reported in the media. At this time, there is no indication that any BPS students or staff were put at risk because of this incident.

**Quincy**

On Wednesday, 3/4, a student at the Quincy Elementary who had recently returned from traveling to Italy reported with a fever. The Quincy Elementary staff responded appropriately to the situation and we would like to thank them for their quick action. The student and a sibling (who also had traveled) were sent home and the family is monitoring them there. No exposure to COVID-19 has been confirmed. Reports that “there was a COVID-19 case at the Quincy” are not accurate.