February 14, 2020

Dear Bellevue School District Learning Community:

This message updates you on the coronavirus (COVID-19).

In previous communications, the Bellevue School District provided important information about the virus and recommended precautions. We remain committed to keeping our learning community informed because your health and well-being are a top concern.

It is also important to use this event as an opportunity to learn and grow as a community of learners. When our community faces a health issue, natural disaster, or other emergency, we have a meaningful opportunity to reflect on how we interact with each other.

We encourage everyone in our learning community to treat each other with compassion, respect, and openness. This is especially true when dealing with an issue like the coronavirus. As we interact with one another, we need to avoid undue suspicion, emotion, and fear. We must focus on the situation at hand, absent judgment and stereotyping.

In this regard, we ask our learning community to follow this guidance from a recent blog posted by the Washington State Department of Health:

*All people should feel safe and supported in their communities, especially if they are in need of health care resources. When it comes to infectious disease, country of origin does not mean that people with an association to that area are ill or contagious. In any case, hostility and shame are inappropriate public responses to illness, and only adversely impact public health’s ability to identify and assist people who may be in need of care.*

The Washington State Department of Health is the lead agency in public health crisis situations in our state. It provides school districts, including the Bellevue School District, with direction on how to manage public health responses. Currently the Department’s guidance to schools remains unchanged for travelers returning from China:

*“The Washington State Department of Health’s guidance continues to only recommend that travelers stay home, away from others, and monitor their health for 14 days. The new guidance only recommends staying home for travelers arriving in the U.S. AFTER February 2, 2020 at 2 p.m. Family members or other close contacts of these travelers who are asymptomatic can continue with their daily routines.”*

Here are two helpful links to monitor guidance from the Washington State Department of Health and the Bellevue School District:

- [https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus/Schools](https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus/Schools)
- [https://bsd405.org/coronavirus](https://bsd405.org/coronavirus)
Any changes in guidance will be immediately communicated to our families.

As a learning community, let's remain informed and respectful.