



SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff, and Community Members,

Recently, I took part in a conference call with Governor Lamont and his advisory team, the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management, First Selectmen, Mayors, Police and Fire Chiefs, State and Town Officials in addition to Superintendents throughout Connecticut regarding the State's response to COVID-19 (coronavirus) and the State's guidance regarding best practices. The Governor and his Team emphasized that we have moved past containment and are now working to mitigate exposure through community contact. This will require a certain amount of social distancing and isolation in combination with other prevention techniques. Decisions have been made regarding some school events and we be evaluating other events as new information emerges. The Governor continues to emphasize that we learn new information hourly that will have an impact on some activities within our schools and communities. It is most unfortunate but at this time it cannot be avoided. The Governor and his team stated a "strong recommendation" that all "non-academic events be held without crowds."

Earlier this afternoon the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic, "a worldwide spread of a new disease." Yesterday, Governor Lamont issued a Declaration of Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergency. The Governor has planned another Press Conference for 3:00 PM this afternoon. Yesterday the CIAC officially cancelled all remaining winter tournament games.

Tomorrow afternoon, the Commissioner of Education is facilitating a Conference Call for all Connecticut School Superintendents concerning updated information, guidance, recommendations, and possible directives regarding field trips, activities, attendance requirements, distance learning, student absences, etc. In addition, I am convening a meeting with our Safety and Security Team later in the day to review all of our procedures, protocols, and upcoming events. Our Regional Health Director and our First Selectman are scheduled to be with us at this important meeting. In addition, I will be meeting with area Superintendents on Friday at LEARN to share information and discuss the many issues facing all of us at this challenging time.

Two decisions were made today by the administration in conjunction with school advisors. ***Frozen Jr.*** is cancelled for now; hopefully the fruits of our students and staff labors will be able to be showcased in the future. ***The Student-Staff Basketball Game*** scheduled for tomorrow is cancelled until further notice.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of following the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on vigorous and frequent handwashing as well as following their essential recommendations.

- Frequent and thorough handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol is recommended.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Clean frequently-touched objects and surfaces with a disinfectant product.
- Avoid sharing of drinking cups, food and other personal items.
- Stay at home if you feel ill to minimize the transmission of illness and disease.

Salem School District's Mission Statement

"Salem inspires learning, creativity, critical thinking, personal integrity, and citizenship."

- It is important that you communicate with your child's teacher if they are out with an illness.

Ensuring the safety of our students, staff and families is our priority. I will continue to keep you updated as I receive new information to share. Please feel free to contact me or our School Nurse, Maggie Clouet, with any questions or concerns.

For more information regarding COVID-19, please visit the following links:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Public-Health-Preparedness/Main-Page/2019-Novel-Coronavirus>

Sincerely,



Joseph Onofrio II
Superintendent
Salem School District

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