

# SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT THIRTY-NINE

Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan Cooperative School Districts

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## **COVID-19/Corona Virus Update**

AMHERST AND MONT VERNON – Friday, February 28, 2020

Dear Parents, Students, and Community Members-

Welcome back from February vacation! I hope it was a time to recharge and to rest!

I want you to know that our school system shares your concerns about COVID-19 (aka the “Corona Virus”).

While there are no suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Hampshire, we are going to be proactive in taking appropriate steps to prepare ourselves in the event the issue becomes localized.

I have personally been in contact with the Deputy Director of the NH Division of Public Health Services and the Bureau Chief for Infectious Disease Control. In addition, the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) has provided guidance for school districts that we are following carefully.

I have appointed a task force within our SAU comprised of key stakeholders at each school. This group has been communicating during the vacation week and will be meeting first thing Monday morning to continue our planning and preparations. Our school nurses will also be included in these discussions and will be critical resources for our task force.

Here are some precautions that DHHS has advised us to take within our schools:

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash hands often for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Stay home from class and work until the sick individual has been fever free for at least 24 hours off any fever reducing medication, and they are feeling better.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects.
- Encourage/recommend the annual influenza vaccine.

In addition, you can expect the following actions from our school system in the short-term:

- We will be instructing our school nurses to remain vigilant at sending students home who present with respiratory issues or a fever;
- We will be focusing our custodial efforts on cleaning commonly used surfaces (such as desks, door handles, etc.) on a daily basis;
- Constant coordination with local, State, and Federal agencies, as needed; and,
- Frequent communication about any local developments or changes to our protocols.

We can expect that several families have traveled during this past week, including some to areas of the world listed on the CDC's website with travel advisories. I have no authority to quarantine students or staff members or to restrict their attendance from school. However, if any student or staff member chooses to remain at home for a period of time because they are concerned about their travel-related exposure, I will work with those families and staff members on a case by case basis to ensure their absences are excused and any support is provided to those students.

For the most up to date information about this situation, you can visit the Center for Disease Control's website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>, the World Health Organization's website at <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>, or the NH DHHS website at <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/2019-ncov.htm>.

We take these issues seriously and will do whatever we can to support a safe environment for our school community. If you have any questions or concerns, as always, reach out to me at [asteel@sprise.com](mailto:asteel@sprise.com), by phone at (603) 673-2690, or at <http://bit.ly/superintendentsteel>.

Sincerely,

Adam Steel

Superintendent of Schools