



WEST OTTAWA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

1138 136th Ave.
Holland, MI 49424

(616) 786-2050
www.westottawa.net

March 12, 2020

Dear West Ottawa Families:

Thank you for your flexibility and patience as we work through the best ways to support all of our students while staying abreast of the ever-changing updates on COVID-19. In speaking with the Ottawa County Department of Public Health officials and other area Superintendents this morning, it is my understanding that very few people have actually been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the state of Michigan. The few cases that have been confirmed are in Wayne and Oakland Counties. However, there is speculation that the coronavirus will spread rapidly through our state in the days and weeks ahead. Governor Whitmer put forth her recommendations which included not holding events of more than 100+ people.

As a result of these recommendations and also those provided by the Ottawa County Department of Public Health, we are taking the following steps beginning today, March 12, 2020, until we are given clearance to resume normal activities:

- 1. All district-wide afternoon and evening indoor events that would gather 100+ people in the same space are being canceled or rescheduled for after Spring Break.** These events include, but are not limited to: Spring Parent Teacher Conferences, Young Americans, school assemblies, WO Stock (High School), Washington DC trip (8th Grade), Muffins with Moms and Donuts with Dads, Elementary Showcases, music concerts and events.
- 2. Limited outside exposure by discontinuing volunteer presence in school buildings.** This includes programs such as Girls On The Run, TTQ, Boys Scouts & Girls Scouts.
- 3. All athletic events will follow MHSAA recommendations.**
- 4. All scheduled field trips prior to Spring Break will be canceled.**
- 5. All students will be strongly encouraged to regularly wash their hands, especially prior to eating their snacks and lunch.** If your children are displaying any symptoms of being ill, it is vitally important that you keep them at home. This is especially true if they have a fever of any kind. The standard rule is that a child should be free of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school. You should consult with your healthcare provider immediately.
- 6. School will still be in session as regularly scheduled at this time.**

I know there are many questions that still need to be answered. For example, if colleges and universities are shutting down, why is West Ottawa Public Schools not following their example? K-12 education is much more complex than that of a college/university. We have the

Preparing Students to be College, Career and Life Ready!

responsibility of not only educating the children we are privileged to serve, but we have the challenge of feeding, clothing, and caring for them throughout the day. If we were to close schools as just a precautionary measure, many children would be home without adult supervision and missing out on the breakfast and lunch we provide for them.

At this time, the Ottawa County Department of Public Health has advised us that we would be focusing on one building at a time versus an entire district if someone was suspected of being contagious with COVID-19. We are being encouraged to continue to keep our doors open until further notice.

As you are well aware, things are changing by the hour as we track this virus. It is very difficult to keep up with everything that is being communicated and recommended from federal, state, and local agencies. We are doing our very best to filter all of the information pertaining to COVID-19 and make student safety decisions accordingly. I will do my best to provide the most up to date and factual information to you as quickly as possible.

To be clear, each of these preventative measures are being taken so that we can resume our normal school operations. **Please plan on school remaining in session unless you hear otherwise from me.**

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in the steps we are taking as a district to comply with the recommendations that have been communicated this week by the Governor and officials from the Ottawa County Department of Public Health.

My Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Tom', written in a cursive style.

Tom