

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Darryl L. Williams, Ed.D. ♦ Superintendent ♦ 6901 North Charles Street ♦ Towson, MD ♦ 21204

February 27, 2020

Dear BCPS Families,

Baltimore County Public Schools administrators and staff are aware of and working proactively to address concerns regarding the spread of influenza and COVID 19 (novel coronavirus). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is reporting that, at this time, the health risk to the general American public remains low; however, I want to update you on our efforts to ensure the health and safety of all students and staff in our buildings. We also want to educate staff, students, and community members about precautionary measures that can be taken.

Symptoms of influenza and COVID 19 are similar; persons infected with these viruses often have fever, cough, and shortness of breath. One of the precautionary measures that our employees are taking to prevent the spread of COVID 19, as well as all infectious diseases, includes effectively cleaning schools and office buildings. We are also encouraging staff and students to wash their hands regularly to prevent the spread of illness.

As a best practice for overall health, especially in the influenza season, the CDC recommends that individuals receive the flu vaccine (it's not too late) and engage in everyday, preventative measures, to prevent the spread of germs, including:

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone for 24 hours without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. After using a tissue, throw it in the trash and wash your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like flu.

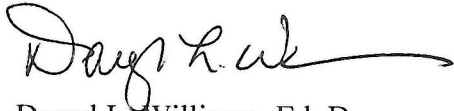
Staff from our Office of Health Services remain in close communication with the Baltimore County Department of Health and monitor guidelines received from the CDC and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). School nurses have received detailed information about COVID 19 and steps that should be followed in schools. They have also received supplies for use in the unlikely case that a person was in a school with symptoms of COVID 19.

Please rest assured that we will continue to work collaboratively with the CDC, MDH, Baltimore County Health Department (BCHD), and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Staff from the Office of Health Services is available to answer questions related to COVID 19 and the BCPS response. Nurses can be reached daily from 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at 443-809-6368.

Please refer to the following resources for additional information:

- www.health.maryland.gov/coronavirus
- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/.html
- <https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/health/>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darryl L. Williams", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Darryl L. Williams, Ed. D.
Superintendent