

WESTERN SUFFOLK BOCES
Office of the Chief Operating Officer

March 12, 2020

Dear Parents, Adult Students and Staff,

This is to continue to keep our parents, students and staff informed of the coronavirus outbreak. We wish to thank our parents, students and staff for your diligence in following the preventive hygiene practices to keep yourselves and others healthy and safe.

These are clearly difficult times. Each day, more and more cases of coronavirus are being confirmed in Suffolk County, New York State and across the country. As of the writing of this letter, the number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Suffolk County was 16. We are moving into a new phase of this outbreak as Suffolk County has declared a “state of emergency.” By doing so, it gives the County Executive additional authority to respond to the coronavirus.

As of this writing, there are no reported confirmed cases of coronavirus among students and staff in Western Suffolk BOCES schools. We continue to safeguard our school community by following guidance from the Suffolk County and NYS Department of Health, the NYS Education Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Our custodial staff are continuing with our daily enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of schools.

The COVID-19 outbreak has raised understandable concern globally and here on Long Island. Some Suffolk County schools have had to close for 24 hours in accordance with the NYS Department of Health mandate upon the identification of a confirmed case of the coronavirus in a staff member or student. In these cases, the Department of Health will evaluate the situation and determine if the school district should remain closed beyond this initial 24-hour period. A few other districts have elected to close to prepare for the possibility of a prolonged closing and for other reasons related to the COVID-19 crisis.

Like with every other school district on Long Island, there is the possibility of a school closing at Western Suffolk BOCES, including one that is prolonged, if we have a confirmed case of coronavirus. Whether one or more schools are closed and for how long will be a decision made by the Department of Health after consulting with school officials. We are asking our families and staff to prepare for the possibility of a potential school closing in the event we have a confirmed case of the coronavirus. If we were to close, we will advise parents, students and staff through our emergency telephone notification system. If we were to remain closed, we would refer parents, students and staff to the Western Suffolk BOCES website (www.wsbores.org) for updates. Hopefully, this will not be the case. We have also made the decision to suspend all school trips at the recommendation of the Department of Health to minimize risk to students and staff. In addition, we are suspending evening use of our buildings by outside groups.

Please continue to practice frequent and thorough hand-washing. Any staff member not feeling well should avoid close contact with others and stay at home until fully recuperated. Those experiencing fever and cough should immediately consult with their health care provider. Likewise, any student who is not feeling well or is ill should not be sent to school and the parent should immediately follow-up with their health care provider.

We will continue to keep you apprised of any new developments at Western Suffolk BOCES. We thank you for your support during this challenging time and will continue to do all that we can to keep our students and staff safe.

Sincerely,



Michael Flynn
Chief Operating Officer