



North Stonington Public Schools

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PETER L. NERO
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

DEBORAH MARTIN
BUSINESS MANAGER

March 10, 2020

Dear members of the North Stonington community,

Last evening, I was invited to listen in on a statewide phone conference regarding the COVID-19 virus. The phone conference was presented by several state officials including the Governor and Commissioner of Education. Also listening in to the conference were other superintendents and town officials including mayors, selectmen, emergency management directors, public works directors, as well as police and fire officials. A wide range of issues and concerns were addressed by the presenters as it is assumed that the COVID-19 has "community spread" in many states, including Connecticut. As of today there are 2 confirmed cases in our state. The theme presented yesterday is not to panic but to be prepared. As you can imagine, schools' responses and preparedness to the virus was a major part of the discussion.

The most vulnerable to the virus are the elderly, people over 70, and those with immune deficiencies. We learned some positive news yesterday as it appears that China has been experiencing a leveling-off and a decline in reported cases. The best news that we heard yesterday was children are less susceptible to the virus than adults. Yesterday, we learned what the private sector and government are doing to help curb the spread. Hospitals and nursing homes are significantly limiting patient visitation and the governor has restricted state employees from traveling out-of-state. A quote from *The Day* today, "The state's plan of action, as of Monday, was to get ahead of an outbreak and avoid an emergency."

As you can imagine, many superintendents had questions for the assembled panel. Like the state agencies, it's important not to panic but, most importantly, be prepared. As you know, I have been meeting with my administrative staff regularly with the COVID-19 being the only topic. Each time we meet we discuss what we have newly learned so we can be better prepared.

The media is reporting a number of national public events being cancelled or postponed. There is discussion right now that both pro and amateur sporting events be played with no fans in attendance. Tried and true events such as the Boston St. Patrick's Day parade, have been cancelled.

Yesterday we learned, short of a declaration of emergency by the Governor, school and community events should have a capacity of no more than 100 attendees. Just this morning, the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) announced that after careful consideration, in the best

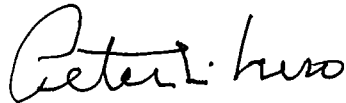
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interest of student health and safety, (they) "made the difficult decision to cancel all remaining CIAC winter tournament games." It is an unprecedented decision by the CIAC.

In an overabundance of caution, North Stonington Public Schools will be postponing, and in some cases, cancelling students traveling anywhere on field trips. We will also be postponing any extracurricular activities and events where a crowd of more than 100 members of the public is present. We are reviewing our public school events at all grade levels and making decisions on what can be postponed to a later date or what, unfortunately, cannot be rescheduled and needs to be cancelled altogether. This will be enforced until the end of March. As we get closer to the end of the month, based on the conditions within the state, relative to the virus, we will determine if further action needs to be taken. While this may be disappointing, we are doing so in the best interest of our students and staff.

Please understand that this is an ever-evolving situation and conditions on dealing with the COVID-19 are subject to change at any time. I will keep you informed when that transpires.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter L. Nero". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter L. Nero
Superintendent of Schools