Dear Parents/Guardians,

We know many of you may have questions and concerns around the expanding global outbreak of a respiratory illness caused by a new coronavirus called COVID-19. Yesterday, the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Department of Public Health shared information with Iowa schools.

Here are a few facts:

* There are currently no cases of COVID-19 in Iowa and there is no person-to-person spread in the U.S.
* Schools are working with state and local public health partners to review and update emergency plans.
* Being concerned about this new virus is normal. It is important to understand that the risk of influenza is much higher than the risk of COVID-19 in Iowa right now.
* Be advised that while COVID-19 is not currently circulating in the U.S. or Iowa, influenza is circulating at high levels. Prevention measures are the same for both viruses, including:
  + Cover your cough
  + Clean your hands frequently with soap and water
  + Contain germs by staying home when ill

Ottumwa Schools has posted a frequently asked questions (FAQ) flyer about the Coronavirus on our website. You’ll find it under Parents - Student Health - Coronavirus. We are also attaching a fact sheet in English and Spanish to this email to provide additional information.

As always, we will keep you updated if this situation changes and thank you for trusting us to keep your child(ren) safe.

Sincerely,

Nicole Kooiker

Superintendent