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March 13, 2020

Dear SAU 50 Parents and Staff,

I am writing to provide you an update on the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). On Thursday, March 12, we received an update from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services; we participated in a conference call with Commissioner of Education Frank Edelblut; and met with our building leaders and central office staff to discuss and implement plans in the event we are forced to close schools due to COVID-19.

Update from NH DHHS

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services has announced a new presumptive positive test result for COVID-19. As of today, there are currently six (6) positive cases in New Hampshire.

Despite increased testing in the state, NH DHHS has not yet identified any widespread transmission in New Hampshire nor individuals who test positive without clearly identified risk factors.

Update from NH DOE

On Thursday, March 12, Commissioner Edelblut met with the State Board of Education and reported that the State Board decided to waive some of the requirements for remote learning, making it easier to plan and implement in the event of school closures. Additional information on remote instruction follows below.

The Commissioner also reported that the New Hampshire Department of Education is seeking three waivers from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. The purpose of these waivers is to support schools and communities in providing meals to children in areas experiencing school disruptions in response to COVID-19. Should the waivers be granted, schools could use their building to provide meals with limited interaction.

The emergence of COVID-19 has led many institutions to examine whether to continue with planned events with large crowds. New Hampshire is currently a low-risk area for the spread of COVID-19. The NHDOE discourages people who are sick from attending events, particularly older adults who have severe underlying medical conditions.

Update from SAU 50

On Thursday, March 12, I met with central office staff and building leaders in the afternoon, following the update from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services and Commissioner Edelblut. Here is a summary of the meeting:

* Effective immediately, all field trips for the remainder of March will be cancelled and we will re-evaluate the situation in April.

* We continue to monitor the Greenland Grade 8 trip to New York City and the Rye Grade 8 trip to Montreal scheduled for later this year.

* Local school events such as extracurricular activities, sports, and evening presentations will continue as scheduled. However, we will continue to monitor these events and make decisions as appropriate.

Preparation for Possible School Closures

* Any decision regarding school closures will be made in conjunction with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services and the Town Health Officer.

* Beginning Friday, March 13th, building principals and staff will be planning for remote instruction in the event of school closures. All plans for remote instruction will be ready to be implemented by Wednesday, March 18th. Principals will notify parents with specific directions if and when remote instruction is necessary.

* It is our intent to provide parents and guardians with at least 48 hours advance notice in the event of school closures, when possible.

* We continue to prioritize touched surfaces such as desks, tables, chairs, and doorknobs in our cleaning practices. Our custodial staff has done an excellent job disinfecting these key areas in order to maintain a clean and healthy learning environment.

I will continue to provide you updates as information is received from our state and local agencies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Salvatore Petralia". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "P".

Salvatore Petralia
Superintendent of Schools
SAU 50