March 10, 2020

Good afternoon,

This is my second letter to our LRSD community to share updates on the COVID-19 outbreak. We know that this is an evolving issue and one that we all should monitor. Yesterday, a video was shared providing an update on where things stand in our community and specifically in LRSD. That video can be accessed via this link - https://youtu.be/5Z5x-YEhrC8.

The message we share this week is to be informed and utilize facts over fear. I acknowledge the reality that many have become anxious about this new virus. Anxiety, however, can be lessened by having simple facts. One of the best ways to understand the status of COVID-19 in our state is to access Healthy.Arkansas.gov. This link will provide updated statistics and include links to the CDC website, which provides helpful information to all stakeholders regarding proactive measures. The website also has information for anyone that feels that they have symptoms of this virus. It is important to note that as of today, Arkansas has not had anyone test positive for COVID-19.

Our reality is that we are still in flu season while this new virus emerges. As we mentioned last week, we can share proven CDC recommendations that can assist all of us in staying healthy:

- Wash your hands frequently. Wash your hands with soap and water for over 20 seconds. Share with your younger students how to wash appropriately.
- When greeting someone, use a fist bump or elbow bump rather than a handshake or hug.
- Ask your students not to share personal items like drinks, food, etc.
- If you get sick or your student gets sick, stay home. If you have a fever, the CDC advises you call your doctor rather than making an office or hospital visit.

We are asking staff to assist by:

- Avoiding the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Alcohol-based sanitizers have led to eye issues as our younger students typically are not used to this type of product.
- Avoid use of bleach in your classrooms. This is not a recommended product in schools at any time. Use of aerosol sanitizing sprays should also be avoided when children are around. Such sprays can aggravate asthma and cause other respiratory distress.
- Avoid use of hand wipes, as many students are allergic to these types of products. If they need a hand wipe, allow them to use the restroom to properly wash their hands with soap and water.

Finally, I want to share that we are consistently monitoring releases of information from our state via the governor, the Department of Health and the Department of Education. We also stay in close contact with medical experts from Arkansas Children’s Hospital and other medical facilities. We will continue to provide updates. This is not a time to panic, but rather a time to be informed and take simple steps to keep ourselves and our loved ones healthy.

Sincerely,

Michael Alan Poore
Superintendent