



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

RICHARDSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Where all students connect, learn, grow and succeed

February 26, 2020

Dear Richardson ISD Family,

You likely have been following news reports about infections of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (referred to as COVID-19 or SARS-CoV-2) that initially were associated with an outbreak in China and now have been confirmed in more than 30 countries, including the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) along with the World Health Organization, are monitoring COVID-19 cases closely and providing updated guidance to federal, state, and local health officials.

The CDC has confirmed multiple cases of COVID-19 in people under federal quarantine in San Antonio. There are currently no other cases in Texas and the Texas Department of Health continues to indicate that the risk for all Texans remains low.

RISD Health Services staff have been in regular contact with Dallas County Health and Human Services to monitor this situation and prepare for the possibility of confirmed cases closer to home in North Texas or our district. As we have done in the past with other outbreaks of viruses, RISD is prepared to implement and follow protocols and guidelines as directed by health authorities if necessary.

COVID-19 is believed to be spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes, much in the way the flu and other respiratory viruses spread. Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms are thought to appear within two to 14 days after exposure and consist of fever, cough, and difficulty breathing – similar to the seasonal flu. Preliminary information suggests that older adults and persons with underlying health conditions or compromised immune systems could be at greater risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

In situations like these where media reports may cause concerns among our families, it is best to rely on factual information from reliable sources. Here are links to information about COVID-19 from local, state, national and international health organizations:

- Dallas County Health and Human Services
<https://www.dallascounty.org/departments/dchhs/2019-novel-coronavirus.php>
- Texas Department of State Health Services
<https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>

- World Health Organization
<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

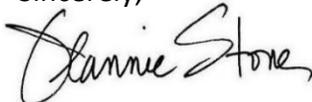
The best precautions we can take currently are the same basic prevention measures everyone should follow to avoid the flu and other common seasonal respiratory illnesses:

- Everyone 6 months and older is encouraged to get a flu shot.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- **Stay home when you are sick.** Keeping a sick child at home prevents the spread of illness in the school community and allows the child an opportunity to rest and recover.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

I also want to assure you that throughout the school year, and in the winter months especially, our RISD Health Services Department works closely with our school nurses to monitor illnesses, such as the flu. We also work with our custodial teams to ensure our campuses receive more frequent and thorough cleanings during flu season, especially in high-traffic, high-touch areas.

As we continue to be in contact with local health officials and monitor the COVID-19 situation, we will provide updates to our community should it become necessary. As always, I thank you for your support as we work to keep our students, employees and visitors healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeannie Stone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeannie Stone, Ed.D.
Superintendent