



**West Orange Public Schools**  
**179 Eagle Rock Avenue**  
**West Orange, New Jersey 07052**  
(973) 669-5400 ext. 20512 Fax (973) 669-1432

**Superintendent of Schools**

**J. Scott Cascone, Ed. D.**

March 10, 2020

Dear West Orange Families,

As you are aware, news reports about the Coronavirus continue to raise awareness, as well as heightened public concern for the potential impact on our home and school communities. As of today, no cases have been presumed or confirmed in the West Orange Public Schools, to include our student and employee communities. While health officials assure us that the immediate risk to our population is low at this time, we want to assure you that we are staying updated on the status in New Jersey and within our own school community. We continue to follow the guidance of our local health department and information being conveyed from the State of New Jersey. Communication is ongoing and the situation is being monitored closely across our district.

As of March 10, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is reporting eight confirmed cases in the State of New Jersey. As such, the New Jersey Department of Education has asked public schools to develop a *School Closure Preparedness Plan* outlining how it will provide instruction to students should they be asked to preemptively or reactively close or cancel events.

In response, the West Orange Public Schools is in the process of assessing its capacity to provide online instruction to students PreK-12.

To support this goal, we have created an [E-Learning Home Readiness Survey](#) to measure internet access and technology device options at home. We are asking all families to complete one survey per student by Monday, March 16, 2020. Kindly answer the survey questions with the most candid response.

**Additionally, on Monday, March 16, 2020, the district is planning to close in order for staff to meet and develop instructional plans in the event of a school closure, to include E-Learning opportunities.**

To provide clarity on field trips, indoor events such as school performances or play productions, and scenarios that are now considered questionable as it relates to the CDC guidelines and COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

With regard to Field Trips:

In order to be preventative and sensitive to the current status with 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), the West Orange Public School District is being proactive on all currently scheduled field trips. Each trip will be handled on a case by case basis but we are using the following questions to help determine the status of the trip:

- Is the trip destination in a location experiencing sustained community transmission?
- Is the trip in a large venue with a high level of attendance?
- How many of our students and staff are attending the trip?
- What is the purpose for the trip?

- Curricular

- Extra-curricular
  - Competition
  - Team Building
- Is there time to “wait and see” on the trip? Meaning, if the trip is scheduled for May or June, can we evaluate it at a later date.

Please understand the health and safety of our students and staff come first and the monetary aspect second; therefore, if a trip is cancelled, the district will make every effort for reimbursement; however, this may not be possible. You will be notified by your child’s school if a trip is going to be canceled or postponed. As it relates to transportation; do know that our school busses are being cleaned with more regularity and with attention to thoroughness.

With regard to athletics in district:

The spring sports season is underway. With that said, the school district is taking precautionary measures to minimize the spread of viral illnesses. Therefore, the athletic department will not provide any school issued water bottles for practices and games. Each student-athlete should bring their own bottle with their name on it, to be taken home and washed each night.

Teams may use a school issued Gatorade cooler from the athletic training staff, however it must be returned to the Athletic Trainers’ Room for proper cleaning at the end of each day. Our student-athletes should also be diligent in the daily cleaning and disinfecting of their athletic equipment (helmets, pads, bats, sticks, rackets, etc). Our athletic facilities will continue to receive enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures including:

- Locker Rooms
- Athletic Training Room
- Weight Room
- Team Rooms

As always, the health and safety of our staff and students remains of paramount importance.

With regard to school based performances:

The students and staff have worked tirelessly in an effort to offer the community an opportunity to convene at a performance and enjoy the fruits of their labor. To date we have not received a directive or guidelines from the Department of Education or the Centers for Disease Control regarding convening as a large group in an auditorium or gymnasium. As with field trips, we are evaluating each on a case by case basis.

We thank you in advance for your continued support and collaboration as, together, we work through the planning stages in the event of a school closure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Scott Cascone", written in a cursive style.

J. Scott Cascone, Ed. D.  
Superintendent