

## **A MESSAGE FROM THE BETHEL SCHOOL DISTRICT & THE PIERCE COUNTY SKILLS CENTER**

We want to assure you that we are monitoring the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation very closely and that we are prepared if we get a suspected case of COVID-19 in our schools. Here are a few answers to some frequently asked questions we've been getting.

### **Should I keep my student home if they are sick?**

We continue to encourage parents to keep their student home if they are sick, no matter the illness. The flu has similar symptoms as COVID-19, so it should not be assumed that all sick people have COVID-19. It is also important to not discriminate against people who are sick.

### **Does Bethel have a plan if there is a major outbreak in the area?**

Bethel has an Emergency Operations Plan that was approved by the School Board on February 11, 2020. It is a 400-page document that covers everything from fires and floods to cyber-attacks and pandemics. As the situation evolves, we will adjust our plan as new information becomes available. We're working directly with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and OSPI to do so.

### **Will Bethel close schools if needed? How will those school days be made up?**

If the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department determines that we need to close schools, then we will. To make up the days, we would apply for emergency waiver days from the state. Any days not approved would have to be made up at the end of the school year.

### **Are there any plans in place for remote teaching should that need arise?**

We know that the best teaching and learning happens when students and teachers are in class together. If the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department determines we need to close schools for an extended period of time, we will consider creative solutions for continuing education. All of our students have access to an iPad thanks to our voter-approved Technology Levy. That will be a good starting place. But again, online learning would only be a stop gap measure until schools open back up.

### **Are there any extra cleaning measures that have been taken?**

The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department has reported that closing schools to do a one-time cleaning is not an effective solution – it is the routine cleaning we do that helps the most. That is why we continue to follow the normal procedures we have in place during flu season to keep our schools safe for students and staff. We are also promoting hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and sending students home when they're sick.

### **Where can I learn more?**

The Washington State Department of Health's call center can answer questions about the virus. Call (800) 525-0127 and press #.

We encourage you to monitor the [CDC](#) and [Washington State Department of Health](#) websites for the latest information and guidance. For more localized information, visit the [Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department](#) website. These are the most trusted sources for accurate and up-to-date information.

If we have to make any changes that impact our normal school schedule, we will contact parents by robocall, email and text. Please make sure your contact information is up to date with your school office.