

Dear Ipswich Educational Community,

I am writing to update you on the current status of our schools in relation to the COVID-19 situation. To date, there are no suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ipswich.

This week I have had several phone conference calls with the Department of Public Health, local health officials, and members of the CDC. We continue to follow all of their recommended guidance and maintain close contact on a daily basis. Tomorrow morning I have an additional conference call with the Commissioner of Education and the Department of Public Health where I anticipate we will receive information on this quickly evolving situation. This afternoon I participated in a brief video with town officials that you can find on the local ICAM channel to update the Ipswich community on our actions to date.

The leadership team of the district met this morning and made the following decisions:

- Effective immediately, all in-door field trips are cancelled for the next 30 days, at which time we will re-evaluate. "Outside" field trips will still be allowed such as Crane Beach, the salt marshes and the vernal pools.
- Outside groups will no longer be able to access the buildings for meetings, events, etc.
- Ballroom Dancing will happen this evening as planned with notice to parents about concerns for group size.
- The middle school play will proceed this weekend, again with notice to parents. Unfortunately, the show cannot be recorded due to us not owning the rights to the show.
- We are postponing the STEAM Showcase until a later date to be determined.

In addition to these immediate decisions, we also discussed the current cleaning protocols in our buildings. All of our buildings were disinfected this past weekend and on Tuesday in addition to our daily cleaning and disinfecting. We have also begun discussions for some type of distance learning in the event that we have to close schools.

Given the timing of my conference call tomorrow morning, I will send out an additional, updated letter to you tomorrow with any new information that I learn. As this is an ever-evolving situation, I thank you for your continued patience as we work through it. Please know that we continue to keep the health, well-being and safety of our students and staff foremost in our minds.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian J. Blake
Superintendent of Schools