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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents,
School Administrators, and Educators

FROM: Jacob Oliva

DATE: February 28, 2020

SUBJECT: Florida Preparedness for COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Contact Information:

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DPS: 2020-36

Yesterday, Governor Ron DeSantis hosted a press conference regarding COVID-19 (Coronavirus), and announced **there are no confirmed cases in Florida. Currently there is a low risk in Florida.** However, planning and preparing is always important and the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) understands that concerns about health and safety are paramount for all education communities. In response to such concerns, we encourage you to access up-to-date information and resources from the [Florida Department of Health \(FDOH\) website](#) or the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#).

FDOH has been closely monitoring COVID-19 since November 2019, and emphasizes that there is low health risk in the United States. The FDOH Incident Management Team has been working in lockstep with the CDC on daily updates, and hundreds of dedicated FDOH professionals are positioned to respond if the need arises in each county. In addition, county health departments are fully integrated with FDOH and CDC, and are well equipped to respond if necessary.

This virus is spread mostly through contact from an infected individual and transmitted by coughing and sneezing. Common symptoms include fever, coughing, shortness of breath, and lower and upper respiratory issues. It is more likely to occur in the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

If there is an individual with a suspected case of COVID-19, there are protocols in place with **ALL** Florida health care providers and practitioners:

- Immediately contact your health care practitioner or any local hospital. **ANY** local hospital is equipped to handle COVID-19.
- Individuals will be evaluated at any local hospital, and tests will be sent to the CDC for evaluation.
- The goal is **containment** to stop any transmission.

JACOB OLIVA
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

It is currently flu season, and FDOH recommends getting a flu vaccine, taking everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of germs, and taking flu antivirals if prescribed. We encourage you to continue to stress these common guidelines with all members of the school community, students, staff and parents:

- If you are sick, stay home.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Carry and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Call ahead before visiting your doctor.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Monitor your symptoms.

Please see this [helpful flier](#) from the CDC related to handwashing and the use of alcohol based sanitizer.

Florida is doing everything in its power to prepare and respond to COVID-19 and the FDOE is available to assist as needed. Daily updates will be posted on the [FDOH website](#), and rest assured FDOE will provide you with updates as we have them.

JO/tf