

March 21, 2020

Dear Ithaca City School District Community,

I write again in hopes that our children, staff and families are well during this difficult time. Throughout the last several weeks, we have partnered with local health officials to guide our responses to this virus. On the evening of March 20, 2020, the Tompkins County Health Department (TCHD) confirmed the first case of COVID-19 within the Ithaca City School District school community.

This news may generate anxiety and concern. Many experts remind me that we knew this day would come, and that there will be **many more cases in the coming days and weeks**. We continue to work collaboratively with the TCHD to support students, staff and families. As partners in this effort, we share information with local health officials so they can communicate with people who may have been exposed to COVID-19.

As you know, **privacy** is critical when it comes to students, personnel and health care. We are notifying each school community when the first case at their school arises, as promised. However, I am asking our entire community to respect and protect the right to privacy these members of our community are afforded under the law. Again, the TCHD directly contacts those people who are at risk.

I continue to urge our community members to adhere to **physical distancing** practices to slow the spread of COVID-19. Governor Cuomo recently signed executive orders closing schools, restaurants, and mandating that only essential staff travel to work with good reason. Physical or social distancing decreases the number of interactions each of us has, and in turn decreases the chances for COVID-19 to pass between people. Because of this, our meal service will be delivery-only soon. We will also continue our deep cleaning protocols.

This extended closure also necessitates **distance learning** for our students. We've received much feedback from community members who've shared their ideas, questions, concerns and support. Please look at our [updated FAQ page](#) to learn more details about the why and how of our approach. We are committed to partnering with our fabulous educators to ensure that our plan grows in ways that help our entire community.

As more cases are confirmed throughout ICSD, the TCHD will continue to communicate with anyone who needs to be notified, and we will notify school communities. Please refer to our website for all past and future communication at www.ithacacityschools.org/coronavirus. Thank you for all you are doing in the midst of extraordinary circumstances. I wish you all safety and strength.

Sincerely,



Luvelle Brown
Superintendent