

FEARLESS  THINKERS
SINCE 1885

March 11, 2020

Dear Yellow Springs Families & Staff,

This letter is a follow-up to my letter one week ago, dated March 4. As predicted, the situation surrounding coronavirus (COVID-19) is changing rapidly.

As of this afternoon, there are four confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ohio. The fourth case indicates community spread. Gov. DeWine, in a press conference just this afternoon, discussed this and accompanying restrictions that will occur. Per the governor, as of today, K-12 schools are not being asked to close.

Since the health and safety of our students and staff are our first priority, in situations where students and staff have traveled to areas affected by COVID-19, Yellow Springs Schools will be asking those students and staff to self-monitor and remain at home for a period of time. We will work closely with Greene County Public Health and families of any students and/or staff to which this may pertain. We ask for your cooperation as we employ these proactive measures, and your help by limiting speculation and reaction if students or staff members remain home for purposes of self-monitoring. The Yellow Springs Schools will notify the school community in any case of potential exposure of students or staff to COVID-19.

Currently, we have one student who traveled with a parent to an affected area. The student (who attends the Greene County Career Center) and the student's family (including younger siblings in YSS) are voluntarily cooperating with our self-monitoring protocol. In this case, the student has not returned to the Greene County Career Center since returning to Ohio, and there is no confirmed exposure or symptoms. YSS, the GCCC, and the family are operating out of an extreme abundance of caution, and there is no identifiable risk to the school communities.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding COVID-19, you may visit www.coronavirus.ohio.gov or contact the Ohio Department of Health call center at 1-8334-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

Yellow Springs Schools will continue to follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Ohio Department of Health (ODH), and Greene County Public Health (GCPH) regarding recommendations for the prevention of COVID-19 and any other respiratory virus.

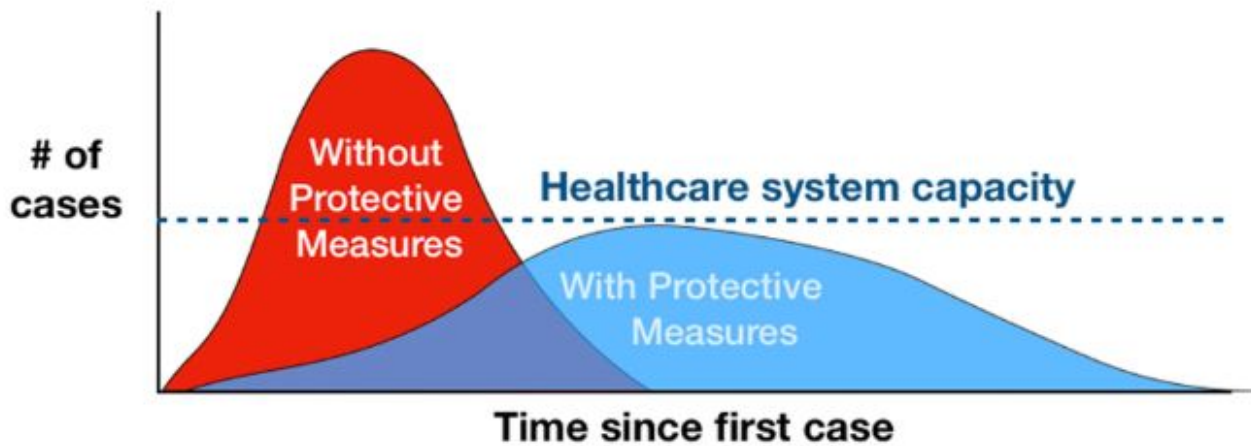
Last week I suggested simple ways to protect yourself and your family that included: washing hands often with soap and water; avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth; not sharing food, drinks or eating/drinking utensils; coughing or sneezing into an elbow or tissue; (and place immediately in the trash); cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces; avoiding close contact with people who are sick; and staying home when sick (both children and adults).

In addition, as of today, we are taking the following preventative measures:

- Providing additional cleaning in each building every day.

- Teaching children to begin practicing “social distancing.” This means we will refrain from hugging, shaking hands, and giving high-fives or fist-bumps to minimize the risk of transmission. Students will be taught other non-touch ways to greet others or show appreciation.
- Canceling all out-of-state trips, particularly those to “high-touch” areas like Washington, D.C. or New York City;
- Canceling tutoring programs at Mills Lawn Elementary;
- Suspending any award programs we have (formal or informal) that recognize perfect attendance;
- Eliminating any mass gatherings (per order of the governor); and
- Preparing for the course of last resort: a short-term closure of our buildings.

All of these measures will help us “flatten the curve.” This means that when prevention measures are put in place, the rate of infection and illness slows, and the healthcare system is not overly stressed.



Adapted from CDC / The Economist

The New York Times online, 3/11/2020 (Siobhan Roberts)

One cannot escape the 24/7 media coverage and opinions regarding the COVID-19 situation. Our goal is to provide factual and timely information to our students, families, and staff. To that end, we have dedicated a space on the district website titled **COVID-19**. Go to the “menu” (for any building) and you will see a section called COVID-19. There you will find district letters, public health information, and relevant articles about the virus. It is here where you will find educational materials (listed by teacher) in the event that we have to transition to distance learning /non-traditional instruction in the future. Prudent behavior, not panic, will serve us well in the upcoming weeks.

It is safe for your children to come to school.

Please feel free to contact me, your child’s building principal, or school nurse if you have any questions. Thank you for your continued support in keeping our students and staff safe.

Sincerely,

Dr. Terri L. Holden
Superintendent