Dear Colleagues,

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus is a phenomenon that is evolving each day, as cases of COVID–19 are now hitting K–12 schools. It is likely that more will appear, as the disease has spread beyond people who have traveled abroad. Scientists and doctors are still learning about the disease, and what will unfold in the weeks and months to come is not yet known. In the absence of clarity, it is advisable for school districts to engage in proactive planning that addresses a variety of scenarios.

Most, if not all school districts, are developing contingency plans or are already managing fallout resulting from COVID–19. On Friday, February 28, OSPI issued Bulletin 013-20. The bulletin includes essential information, along with guidance for schools and school districts. You can expect to receive more information, guidance, and updates from OSPI in the weeks and months to come.

There are many resources for superintendents and school district administrators to access in planning for the impact COVID–19 might have on students, staff, and community. Being prepared and anticipating a variety of scenarios is especially crucial at this time. Modeling “what-if” situations and possible next steps in the event a crisis hits your school community is strongly recommended.

Take time to carefully review the communications from OSPI. Superintendent Reykdal and his team are working hard to provide resources that will help school districts plan and then take proactive measures to keep students and staff safe.

Stay in close contact with your local public health agency, to gain a clear understanding of what the process is going to be in reporting suspected or confirmed cases, and school closure. Establishing a clear line of communication is vital so that local health departments have a way to let superintendents know of new developments—especially those involving students in their schools.

For additional resources, including communication templates, visit the AASA Website.

We have been impressed with your work and responsiveness to this challenge. You have struck an effective balance between the transparency that staff, parents, and community deserve while maintaining a calm and composed tone. It is clear you understand that carefully crafted communications that provide information and answers to questions are essential for your school community. Educating the community while easing potential panic is the balance you hope to achieve.

Currently, we find ourselves in uncharted waters. Each superintendent and his/her leadership team are carefully considering their own local context to make decisions that serve the best interest of the school community. We strongly encourage you to follow the lead of the local/county health department regarding recommendations for keeping staff and students safe and healthy, including the closure of a school.

Don’t hesitate to contact us here at WASA if we can be of assistance.

Respectfully,

Joel
PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR LUNCHTIME RULES

OSPI has established a comment period for review and response to their proposed rules for recess and lunch durations. If adopted, all schools would be required to provide a minimum seated lunchtime of 20 minutes, and elementary schools would be required to hold recess before lunch. Four public hearings have been scheduled, for 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the following locations:

- April 3, Olympia School District Office, Olympia, WA
- April 10, ESD 112, Vancouver, WA
- April 16, Spokane School District Office, Spokane, WA
- April 17, ESD 105, Yakima, WA

School districts are strongly encouraged to provide written or verbal statements during this time of public comment on the proposed rules. In formulating comments, districts should consider the impact of the proposed rules on programming, scheduling, staffing, facilities, costs associated with implementation, and funding sources to cover these costs.

Written comments should be submitted by April 17, 2020 to: Leanne Eko, OSPI, Child Nutrition.

WASA/AESD ASPIRING SUPERINTENDENT ACADEMY

This spring, WASA and the ESD network will launch a professional learning initiative designed for those experienced district, building, and/or teacher leaders who aspire to the superintendency. The Academy will cover topics essential to developing a deep understanding of the role of a successful superintendent. The WASA/AESD Aspiring Superintendent Academy application process will open the week of March 9.

AASA CORNER

- **AASA Leadership Network:** AASA’s Leadership Network Engagement Lifecycle serves superintendents and other district leaders as they PREPARE, CERTIFY, LEARN, INNOVATE, AND COLLABORATE. Click for information.