Dear Hopkins Families:

Over the weekend two cases of novel COVID-19 (coronavirus) were confirmed in the Minneapolis metro – one in Ramsey county and another in Carver county. Today, another case was confirmed in Anoka county. Hopkins Public Schools is monitoring this situation closely with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). There are currently no cases in Hennepin County or within our Hopkins Public Schools community.

At this time, MDH has not changed its guidance or protocols for schools, and the risk for contracting COVID-19 remains low in Minnesota. The safety of our staff and students is our top priority. MDH continues to stress common-sense illness prevention strategies as our best defense for preventing viruses, including COVID-19, from spreading. These strategies include staying home when sick, covering your cough and sneezes, and frequent hand washing.

Hopkins Public Schools has established a pandemic taskforce to plan our response to a number of situations that may develop if the virus spreads to our school community. The task force is meeting regularly to plan for the event that schools may need to close for a period of time. However, in accordance with MDH recommendations, the primary focus of the taskforce is to maintain a clean and healthy work and learning environment.

Our custodial crews will continue to disinfect communal surfaces like door handles, bathroom fixtures, drinking fountains, and classroom sinks with healthcare-grade cleaner. In addition, the team is discussing ways to encourage more frequent student handwashing using soap and water. The best prevention for reducing the spread of illness is to keep your child home if they are sick. COVID-19 symptoms appear to be mild in children, but may include a cough, fever, or respiratory issues.

In the event that we close school, Hopkins will continue to provide learning experiences remotely. A second committee is working to create remote learning resources that will be easily accessible, practical, and consistently available. To best prepare for this outcome, we will be sending out a survey at the end of this week to determine the needs of your family.

With the rise of concerns about COVID-19, there have been increasing incidents worldwide of xenophobia and racism targeting Asian Americans and Asian people. Our school community includes people of many cultures and ethnicities. One of our core values is authentic inclusivity. Acts of discrimination, exclusion, or harassment against any culture or ethnicity are not tolerated. Everyone is welcome at Hopkins.

Hopkins Schools will continue to monitor this situation and will keep you updated should the recommended protocols or guidelines change. You can also learn more about COVID-19 and its status in Minnesota on the Minnesota Department of Health website. MDH has set up a hotline at 651-201-3920 to answer general questions or concerns. You may also contact the school nurse at your child’s school.

Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed, Superintendent