Dear Families,

Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES has been closely following information regarding the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), New York State Department of Health and our local health departments.

Although there are no confirmed cases of the virus in New York State, and only a small number of cases nationwide, we understand that you may be concerned. We want to assure you that the health and safety of your children is our top priority.

The CDC and state Health Department are continuing to provide guidance to school districts. Our actions have been, and will continue to be, in alignment with those recommendations. We are communicating regularly with our district physician, nursing team and administrators to ensure that our actions are consistent.

We encourage you to stay informed and gather information from reputable sources. We are including links to several here:

- CDC's 2019-nCoV website
- NYS Department of Health's dedicated 2019-nCoV website
- NYS Department of Health directory of local health departments
- New York State Center for School Health website
- NYS Department of Health Novel Coronavirus Hotline: 1-888-364-3065

As you may already know, experts urge that everyone follow best practices for health and hygiene.

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hand) when coughing or sneezing. If you use a tissue, throw it in the trash.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- CDC recommends that travelers avoid all travel to China.
To avoid the spread of illness at school, please keep your child home if:

- He/she has, or has had, a fever within the previous 24 hours.
- He/she has had vomiting or diarrhea within the previous 24 hours.
- He/she has a persistent cough or cold, which is getting worse.

In keeping with our usual best practices during cold and flu season, we will send home any child who has a fever or exhibits vomiting, diarrhea, deep cough, sore throat or excessive nasal discharge. Children should not return to school until they are symptom-free for 24 hours and are no longer experiencing fever without medications such as Tylenol or ibuprofen for 24 hours.

We hope you find this information helpful, and we look forward to seeing your child healthy and happy every day in our schools.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

James M. Ryan, Ed.D.
District Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer