Dear Parents, Staff and Community Members –

Yesterday, Governor Inslee and State School Superintendent Reykdal made an unprecedented announcement that they were cancelling school in three western Washington counties, impacting 43 school districts and over 600,000 students. The Cashmere School District continues to work collaboratively with health professionals and government officials to help reduce the spread and effect of COVID-19. The recent information and recommendations that we have received have led to some very difficult but necessary decisions. The purpose of this letter is to update you on the steps our district is taking.

Effective from March 13th through April 12th, the following precautions are now in place:

- **Cancellation of all Events/Athletics/Field Trips/Staff Travel:** This includes all field trips, staff travel, extra-curricular and athletic contests. Outdoor athletic practices will continue as planned as will “staff-led” before/after school activities such as clubs, tutorials, etc.

- **Limiting Non-Essential Contact:** All school campuses will be closed to volunteers, visitors and guest speakers. This precautionary measure includes not entering school buildings when picking up and dropping off kids. Parents will continue to be allowed to visit schools for essential business only.

- **Community Facility Use:** We are suspending community use of our indoor facilities. District staff are contacting individuals and organizations who have reserved our facilities to inform them of these cancellations.

- **Medically Vulnerable Staff and Students:** Staff with compromised immune systems who choose not to come to work or school must provide a release from a physician and request time off through normal leave procedures. Students with compromised health issues that are not attending school during this time frame will be exempt from truancy procedures. Note: these students must follow the pre-approved absence process in order for these absences to be excused. As long as school is in session, students will need to plan with their teachers to stay current with assignments per our usual practices when a student is absent.

- **Too Sick for School:** If your child is not feeling well, do not send him/her to school. If your child is kept home or sent home with a fever, cough/cold symptoms and has shortness of breath, the current guideline is to keep him/her home for 72 hours after the fever breaks and he/she is symptom free. For all other illnesses, per district policy, the return time to school remains 24 hours. This applies to staff members as well.
Please be aware that the COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly developing situation, and we will continue to inform you when changes are made that impact students, staff, families and the community at-large. In regards to school closure, our schools will remain open unless we are directed by local health officials or State government to close. That said, it is important for the school district and families to proactively plan for this possibility. We strongly encourage you to engage in discussions with family members, friends, etc. regarding childcare options in the event of a school closure. Our staff and administration have been actively discussing what services we might be able to provide to students and families in the event of a prolonged closure of schools including:

- Instructional support for students including on-line possibilities.
- Meals for students who depend on breakfast and lunch from our food service program.
- Childcare for children of health care workers, first responders and some of our most at-risk students whose families cannot find childcare.

Like you, I worry about the anxiety and stress this event may cause for our students. Children of all ages will need to see us modeling a sense of hope and optimism. I urge you to consider the following for younger children support:

- Answer questions when they ask, but don’t offer more information than they request
- Model and practice good hygiene together
- Help them be proactive in cleaning and sanitizing their own spaces
- Keep their regular schedules and routines as much as possible
- Limit exposure to media (television, social media)

The health and well-being of our students, staff and community continues to be our number one priority. Currently, we have no known cases of COVID-19 among students or staff in Cashmere. We will continue to closely monitor this rapidly evolving situation and are committed to keeping you updated.

I want to thank you all for your patience and understanding during these challenging and unprecedented times as we work together to mitigate the spread and effects of the virus. If you have questions, please contact your student’s school or the district office at (509) 782-3355. For additional updates, please visit our website at www.cashmere.wednet.edu.

Glenn Johnson, Superintendent
Cashmere School District