



EDWARDSBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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JAMES A. KNOLL, SUPERINTENDENT

March 13, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Yesterday at 8:00 a.m., Superintendents from Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, and Van Buren Counties, met with heads of the local health departments, along with several doctors who have worked specifically with various epidemics.

Upon my return to the district, I continued to work with members of our health team to formulate the next steps and to provide the most accurate information to you, our employees, and the community.

At 11:00 p.m. last night, Governor Gretchen Whitmer and State Superintendent Michael Rice announced that all K-12 school buildings – public, private, and boarding – are ordered to be closed from Monday, March 16, to Sunday, April 5, 2020, to slow the spread of COVID-19.

So what does this mean? Please read all the information below carefully, but with caution, since I am updating you as of Friday at 1:30 p.m. and the situation is constantly changing.


1. I know emotions are high and uncertainty is rampant, and I can tell you that nothing frustrates me more as a leader than to not have clear information to provide you. Please know that I and the administrative leaders in our district are providing the best information we have, and we are making decisions based on the ever-changing landscape and guidance we receive. I also ask that you please do not “feed the beast” of negative information, innuendo, or rumor. Seek out reliable information and do not trust things you hear second-hand or over social media without knowing it has a basis in fact.
2. Spring Break will remain as scheduled throughout Cass County.
3. The health department guidance, as of yesterday morning, advised that we continue with the preventative steps we were already taking. As of today, there are still no confirmed cases in Cass County. Be comforted, based on the health official’s data at this time, the COVID-19 does not appear to be as severe on children’s health as other recent flu epidemics. As we learn more from the local and state health departments, we will share it with you.
4. The recommendation from the health department, which was echoed in Governor Whitmer’s statement, is that non-essential travel and gatherings should be stopped. ***Therefore, Edwardsburg Schools will suspend all school related travel for staff and students to any field trip, event, or conference, at least through Spring Break.*** Events in the district or county may still proceed as long as they abide by the guidelines in Governor Whitmer’s statement. Particular attention must be paid to the no students and 100-person limit for non-essential gatherings.

5. Based on the administrative discussion this morning, and the decision made by Governor Whitmer to close schools, the district leadership is planning on the following steps at this time. *Again, please know with the changing guidance from the state and the possible change in federal action, these plans may need to be adjusted.*
- a. All school buildings and offices will remain open on Monday and Tuesday for parents from 7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Teachers are not required to report on these days.
 - b. Curriculum - Until further guidance is received from the State of Michigan or MDE, we will not be providing an online format to replace face to face instruction. Public Schools were not given enough time or resources to implement online curriculum or to provide equitable access to all students. We will be providing support, reference, and practice materials, to students to maintain their skills.
 - c. Meals for Students – The state has recommended we provide meals to our students. The details of how this will be implemented have not been finalized at this time.
 - d. Periodically review your emails and communications for updates.
 - e. We will update you on state testing and procedures, once we receive information.
 - f. Be prepared for an extension of this mandated closure.
 - g. Future calendar events and make-up dates for all activities are currently on hold.

This is the initial set of actions we are taking as a district and we hope to know more, later today or next week. I would like to share my appreciation for all of the support being offered from our staff and community. Your care and concern for our students says so much as to why we are the district of choice.

For additional questions, you may call the District Administrative Center at 269-663-3055.
Thank you and stay safe.

Sincerely,



James A. Knoll
Superintendent