

March 14, 2020

Dear Ranger Families,

With cases of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) being verified in Missouri, I wanted to take a few minutes to update you on our plans at this time. First, we have no positive COVID-19 cases reported in our district. As of now, we are still planning to be in session on Monday, March 16, 2020. Even so, we are considering contingencies in case we are forced to postpone or cancel school in the future. In the event we are forced to close, we will do what is in our powers to continue to ensure the education of our students through virtual methods and/or take-home materials. Please keep in mind that this situation is very fluid right now, and all this could change depending on how the virus progresses and upon recommendations from various health agencies and the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. The following questions and responses should provide some guidance:

Who decides if school should close due Coronavirus COVID-19?

Closing a school would most likely be at the recommendation of public health authorities in the region or state, or at the direction of state education officials. It is also possible that the Board of Education and I would make the decision to close school. The last information we received indicated that the government and the department of education had no plans to make a blanket closure of schools. This, of course, could change as well.

How will you inform us if school is closing?

We will use the same methods to announce a school closing as we do for snow days - text alerts, Facebook and Twitter posts, and notifications through our district app. We would also share any necessary information afterward through those same channels.

What should my child do to prepare?

If your child has been assigned a Chromebook, make sure your child brings the Chromebook home every single afternoon. A closing could occur overnight. One of our possible contingencies might also involve assigning a computer to all students for home use.

Have your child bring home textbooks or other books that they are assigned every night. Teachers may provide additional resources and instructions regarding materials for students to bring home.

How has the District responded to COVID-19?

Our janitorial staff works hard to keep our facilities clean and sanitary. Our janitors, teachers, and students were already doing extra cleaning and disinfection in response to the flu. During spring break, our janitorial staff disinfected again all surfaces with which students are regularly in contact - desks, doorknobs, restrooms, water fountains, etc.

We also receive regular updates from various health agencies, CDC, and the department of education. While there are still many unanswered questions, the information provided has helped us in making contingency plans for possible school closings.

What is the school doing to prepare?

We are exploring the options of using virtual education as a resource for our families. If you are able, please respond to a survey to let us know about your access to the internet. The message that survey will be sent separately from this letter. We realize that not all families will be able to access the survey, but hope that most will at least have access via phone to provide us with information that will help make plans should we need to close school temporarily.

Knowing that not everyone has reliable internet access, we're also making plans in cases where take-home packets and assignments are needed.

Our staff will continue to work with students to promote good hygiene, emphasizing hand washing and healthy habits, to keep everyone healthy and safe. Please help us in reinforcing healthy practices at home with children.

What if we traveled over Spring Break?

If you were on a cruise or traveled over Spring Break to a country with a Warning Level 3 Travel Health Notice (widespread, ongoing transmission, including China, Japan, Iran, South Korea, Venezuela and the countries listed in Europe at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/warning/coronavirus-europe>), **please contact the school prior to returning on Monday.** The countries and information may change, so please check the CDC's website at: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices#travel-notice-definitions>.

What can we do to help?

It is very important to keep your child home if he/she is experiencing flu-like symptoms (fever, sore throat, cough, body aches, headaches, diarrhea, vomiting), and keep them home until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine. We will send home any students who display these symptoms.

Remind your children and family members to always cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.

Proper hand washing is crucial in preventing the spread of germs. This means washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after touching your face, blowing your nose, using the restroom, and before you eat.

Remind your children to avoid touching their mouth, eyes and nose.

Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects such as tables, door knobs, bathroom handles, cell phones, remotes, etc.

Serve as a role model, keep calm and only share age-appropriate facts about COVID-19. You may check the CDC for updated information on the COVID-19 disease at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Be adaptable to change. The information we are considering is changing constantly. In turn, our contingencies also change. We recognize that virtual education and take-home work is not ideal; however, we will do our best to continue to effectively educate your child. Remember, it's only temporary.

We receive regular updates from local and state health officials, who have the latest information from the CDC, as we monitor the situation. We will let you know if there are any developments that affect our schools. As I've mentioned, all these plans could change based on new information we receive. We will release any changes as they occur. Thank you for your support and understanding as we work together to keep learning happening for our students!

Lyndel R. Whittle
Superintendent
Iberia R-V School District
573-793-6818