



March 24, 2020

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians:

In twenty-eight years of education this is one of the toughest announcements I have had to make to a school community. Beginning Friday, March 27th Shelby-Rising City Schools will move to a Remote Learning Plan to provide education to our students. This plan will remain in place through April 30th and during that time the school building will remain closed to the public and students. Staff will have modified schedules which will include working from home.

Teachers will be working to finalize their learning plans over the next two days and all students/parents will receive communication by the end of the day on Friday. If students need materials, especially their Chromebooks/iPads those can be picked up between 9:00am and 3:00pm on Wednesday, March 25th (tomorrow). All elementary students will be permitted to take their technology home during the closure.

All student learning/curriculum will be delivered in a single platform, for example all students in Grades 6 to 12 can access courses through Canvas, Grades 3 to 5 through Google Classroom, and Grades K-2 is using Remind and Zoom. Zoom will be used for all teachers to establish virtual face-to-face office hours each day Monday through Friday to assist students. Teachers will be prioritizing learning and it is expected that students will have about two hours of school work per day during the closure. Additional details will come from each student's teacher(s) and/or Principal by Friday. There is no expectation of having internet access every day at home, however, it will be necessary to have some internet access each week for a period of time to download or access materials. Please notify your child's Principal if that is not possible. If your child receives interventions or other services those will be handled on an individual basis and additional communication and planning will occur. During this time face-to-face instruction or support is not safe and is the primary reason the District is opting for a remote learning strategy.

As parents, do not feel like you need to supplement or find additional educational activities to fill a six hour day for your child. It is certainly your decision, but two hours of learning a day in this new format is acceptable.

During the closure school activities are suspended. We will follow the guidance of the NSAA for those activities governed by that association. All other school activities during the closure are considered cancelled at this time. A final decision on Prom will be made this week.



Shelby-Rising City Schools will continue to offer the Monday through Friday lunch program during the mandated closure using the same guidelines and practice that was started on March 23rd.

The third page of the letter includes a recommendation from the Health Department(s) that led to the decision to move to the Remote Learning Plan and extend the closure of the building.

Page four of this letter includes tips for parents during the COVID-19 pandemic. I highly recommend taking a look at this document.

The District will continue to use our communication system to keep parents, students, and our school community informed. During our time using the Remote Learning Plan do not hesitate to e-mail your child's teachers with questions. All learning is being directly supervised by your child's Principals. If you have additional questions you should reach out to Denise Glock (PK through Grade 5) and Cody Bobolz (Grade 6 through 12). As Superintendent, I am working diligently with several District services, the School Board, and the Nebraska Department of Education to ensure compliance, safety of students-staff-families, and providing necessary services of support during this challenging time. I have complete faith and confidence in our staff, especially our teachers, to do what is best to get our students through this difficult time with some priority learning and the necessary personal support.

This continues to be a time for calm, resolve, and common sense. There is no way to simply pretend that everything is OK and that we should go back to normal operations. While it is heart breaking in so many ways to be where we are today, the safety and health of our school community continues to be one of the paramount reasons for the decisions being made. I understand that we gravitate to the things we are not doing, however, take time to be appreciative of the things we are able to do during this time and continue to be optimistic about the final outcomes.

I anticipate questions over the next few days and we continue to work through a fluid guidance process with our State and Federal government. I am hoping to have a virtual town hall meeting next week and invite everyone to join for a school-wide briefing and question/answer session.

Sincerely,

Chip Kay, Superintendent



**EAST-CENTRAL DISTRICT
Health Department**



March 22, 2020

Recommendations for Continued School Closure Due to COVID-19

Based on the current epidemiological risk factors, and projections by state, federal and national health officials, East Central District Health Department (ECDHD), Four Corners Health Department (FCHD), and Central District Health Department (CDHD), strongly recommend that all schools served by ESU 7 close until April 30th. This recommendation will be reviewed on April 16th. While everyone is anxious to get back to "life as usual," there is a possibility that schools will remain closed for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year.

This recommendation to close schools is not undertaken lightly. It was made after hours of consultation with education officials at the state and local level, as well as ongoing monitoring of the increase in COVID-19 cases in, and in close proximity to, the counties served by ESU 7.

ECDHD, FCHD, and CDHD realize that our recommendations carry economic and personal costs for thousands of persons in your school districts. However, COVID-19 is easily spread from person-to-person, and it is not safe for large groups of people to gather. The latest epidemiological evidence has shown that persons, including children, can spread the COVID-19 virus before symptoms develop. This recommendation is meant to help our communities "flatten the curve," and prevent community spread in the ESU 7 service area. The only way to slow the spread of disease, increasing the medical community's ability to treat those infected, is to practice social distancing, including keeping 6 ft. between persons and limiting their contact with other persons, in large or small groups. While children are out of school, locations such as shopping malls, movie theaters, bowling alleys, laser tag or other arcades, and community centers should be avoided.

We encourage those who need general information about COVID-19 to call 2-1-1 or the NE Department of Health and Human Services COVID-19 Information Line at (402) 552-6645.

While there is currently no vaccine or other medical treatment for COVID-19, there are a few things anyone can do to protect themselves from COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses, and we encourage you to continue this information with your school populations:

- Practice social distancing. Stay 6 feet away from the person or persons next to you.
- Avoid close contact with sick people and stay home if you are sick.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough with your elbow or a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

Chuck Sepers
Chief Public Health Officer
East Central District Health Department
Boone, Colfax, Nance, & Platte Counties

Teresa Anderson
Health Director
Central District Health Department
Hall, Hamilton, & Merrick Counties

Laura McDougall
Executive Director
Four Corners Health Department
Butler, Polk, Seward, & York Counties



Tips for Parents During COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Limit Media and Social Media Exposure – This is good advice for people of all ages. The target audience of media outlets is adults, so their broadcasts can cause even more confusion and anxiety for younger children.
2. Have a Routine – With school out it is important to establish a new daily routine. Wake up, get dressed, complete distance learning school work, eat meals, and go to bed at the same time each day. Create a schedule that includes these things plus relaxation time, chores, exercise, creative time, etc.
3. Allow Your Child to be in Closer Proximity to You – With so much change and uncertainty, children may need additional reassurance.
4. Make Time to Allow Your Child to Talk About How They are Feeling – Ask open ended questions, listen without interruption and avoid the temptation to quickly provide a solution to their concerns.
5. Provide Factual Reassurance AFTER They Have Had a Chance to Express How They are Feeling – Honesty and accuracy is critical. Facts to consider sharing:
 - Most people do not have COVID-19 and most people who have it don't get seriously ill
 - We can control the spread of the disease by washing our hands and avoiding contact with people who have it
 - The nation's best medical professionals are working to help people with COVID-19 some of which are right here in Nebraska.
 - If true, remind them that everyone in their family is fine.
6. Tell Your Children You Love Them and Spend More Time with Them – Make more time than usual to share activities together; play games, read to each other, watch a movie or TV show, create art, make crafts, sing and dance, go for a walk outside. There are many free online resources to help generate ideas.
7. Encourage Teens to Do Stress Reducing Activities – read, journal, write poetry or short stories, draw, exercise, listen to music, or simply close their eyes and focus on taking slow deep breaths.
8. As Much as Possible Have Your Child Eat Healthy Well-Balanced Meals – this has an impact on mental and physical health.
9. If You Have Concerns Reach Out to Your Child's School Counselor – If their district is doing some kind of distance learning, chances are their school counselor is working from home and is prepared to support you and your child during this difficult time. Reach out to them via their school email address. Keep in mind each school district has its own set of criteria for school counselor ability during this time.