

Dear Westerville City School District Families:

Over the past three days, district leaders from critical areas of operation have been involved in planning our response to the coronavirus based upon new information and guidance received. Yesterday's directive from Governor Mike DeWine to close schools for three weeks beginning at the end of the day on Monday, March 16, shortened the timeframe in which some of these critical decisions had to be made.

In this update I will share our latest decisions and offer insight on some of the topics we continue to discuss. We intend to follow the Governor's directive and efforts to minimize the spread of the coronavirus. More importantly, our goal is to provide support to our students, staff, and community as we work together over the next three weeks to address this public health issue.

ACCESS TO FACILITIES

- Monday, March 16, 2020, will be a regular school day for students and staff.
- Beginning Tuesday, March 17, all Westerville City School District facilities will be closed for students, but all staff are expected to report to work. Staff will be receiving additional communication regarding expectations for working from home over subsequent days.
- With the exception of those who will be deep cleaning our buildings, other authorized essential employees, and legally-required access to our schools, absolutely no one will be permitted to enter district facilities during this three week closure.
- All student athletics, clubs, and other activities are suspended effective with the close of school on Monday, March 16. This means no practices, conditioning, competitions, or travel for teams, individuals, or groups. There will be no building access; students should take their personal equipment home. Additional information about travel is provided below.
- The district's Enrollment Center, located in the OhioHealth facility on Polaris Parkway, will be open on Monday, March 16. After that date, the center will be closed until at least April 5, 2020. Enrollment Center staff will work to reschedule any family appointments that otherwise would have been held during this time.
- The use and rental of district facilities by outside groups and organizations is prohibited and existing contracts to use district facilities through at least April 5, 2020, will be cancelled. The only exception to this, given the service being provided to support families during these unprecedented times, is the YWCA's Kids Place childcare services at Wilder Elementary during spring break. This service will be allowed to continue and we will ensure the program site is appropriately cleaned prior to staff and students' return to school.
- The Ohio Revised Code requires school districts to make their buildings available as voting locations. Nine of our elementary schools will be used as voting sites during the March 17, 2020, primary election. While all schools will receive a deep cleaning while closed, we will ensure areas used as voting sites receive additional attention.

STUDENT TRAVEL AND FIELD TRIPS

- No field trips or other planned student trips will be permitted. This morning, our Board of Education held an emergency meeting and took action to withdraw all board-approved student travel, both domestic and international. School officials have been in frequent contact with the tour companies; school and travel officials will be communicating directly with impacted

families. This action of our Board was necessary due to the various cancellation deadlines of these tour companies. Our goal in taking this action was to protect our students and staff while minimizing the financial impact to families.

CONTINUITY OF INSTRUCTION

- As mentioned earlier, Monday, March 16, will be a regular school day at which time our teachers will share important information with students regarding the next three weeks while everyone is away from school.
- Students will stay home on Tuesday, March 17, but staff is expected to report. Teachers will use this day to develop/finalize their instructional plans for the three-week closure. Teachers will begin remote instruction opportunities beginning Monday, March 30. Teachers will be expected to clearly communicate this information and other student expectations to families as soon as possible.
- Our spring break was scheduled from March 23-27. We will still recognize this break and no instructional services will be provided during this time.

STUDENT CARE

If your child has any medication at school and you need this medication at home, please make sure an authorized parent or guardian picks up the medication by the close of business on Tuesday, March 17.

Many recent conversations among district officials have focused upon the ways we can provide necessary support to our families and community throughout the remaining weeks of this public health matter. We serve many populations that require additional support and care, including students with food insecurities, students with special education needs, homeless students, and students who benefit from additional social-emotional support. We continue our planning efforts and are engaging our community partners to determine how we can work together to overcome these and other challenges created by the mandated closure of our schools. We will communicate those solutions directly to our families as soon as possible.

We will be doing our part as your school district and encourage everyone to take this public health crisis seriously. Even the simplest acts, such as minimizing social interaction and practicing good hygiene methods, help prevent the spread of coronavirus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the following:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Put distance between yourself and other people (this is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick, which includes older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease).

- Take steps to protect others. Stay home if you're sick, except to get medical care, and learn what to do if you are sick. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces around your home daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. If surfaces are dirty, clean them: Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

We encourage you to check your email regularly and monitor the special web page our district has made available at <http://www.wcsoh.org/covid19> for updates. Like you, much of what we are learning can change quickly. We will continue to communicate critical information directly to you as it becomes available.

Sincerely,
Dr. John R. Kellogg
Superintendent