



Schuyler Community Schools
 ALL STAFF Meeting: Return to Learn Protocols
 Thursday, March 19, 2020 8:00 AM
 Schuyler Community Schools Board Room
 120 West 20th Street
 Schuyler, NE 68661

I. Discussion Items

Effort	Communication	Responsibility	Belief
	Respect		

MEETING AGENDA AND DISCUSSION TOPICS: This meeting included all district staff in a ZOOM meeting
We just received the following information: On March 18th epidemiological evidence led ECDHC to add Florida to the list of affected areas that trigger voluntary self-quarantine. If you have traveled to Florida in the last 2 weeks, you need to go home and call the hotline. So in addition to Washington, California, Colorado, and outside the country, you need to add Florida to the list.

Welcome

We are called to respond in difficult and unprecedented times. Our students, parents, and community are counting on us to lead them through this and protect their child's right to an education. It is natural that when the initial fear, anxiousness, and anger, subside, we turn to see how it affects us. I challenge us to rise above those feelings and focus on our students who, at this time, have lost everything they looked forward to in this 4th quarter of our school year. (School, social connections, sports, clubs, and activities, field trips, Prom, Graduation)

Throughout the spring break, we met with state and area health officials and school districts across the state to discuss our response to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in our schools. East Central Health District is the agency that would track information and they would advise us of the need to close. On Friday, we were told that school closures would be by Service Unit areas in consultation with their health district. The trigger for closure at that time was 2 incidents of community spread. Later in the day, we were told the number would be reduced to 1 within our service unit area. On Monday in a press conference with the governor, education commissioner, and state health officials, we were mandated to conduct an orderly shutdown, removal of students, by Friday, March 19th. This shutdown would be for a minimum of 2 weeks from the day students were released from your building. (April 1st). Return to learn would be reassessed every two weeks by the governor, commissioner, and state health officials. As of today, we have no known cases of COVID-19 in Colfax County. The school website has links to additional information for protection against COVID-19 and how to respond to a required quarantine or isolation setting as well as links to the Nebraska Department of Education and East Central Health District Resources.

In addition to conducting an orderly release of students we are also required to develop a plan for the orderly return to learn. Below is an outline of considerations and requirements we need to address.

1. How COVID-19 Spreads

Person-to-person spread

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Can someone spread the virus without being sick?

- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Spread from contact with contaminated surfaces or objects

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

How easily the virus spreads

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (spread easily), like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained, spreading continually without stopping.

*The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community ("community spread") in some affected geographic areas.

Our Response to reduce exposure: We need to make sure that we use our staff to create a safe environment to work. Therefore, top priority for Thursday and Friday is to make sure we use all staff to work with custodial staff to disinfect all classrooms, offices, meeting rooms, locker rooms, etc... Once the building is disinfected, we will work on a consistent basis to keep the work areas clean and safe.

2. **Support Staff Employee Pay, Benefits, Hours, and Leave**

Area schools are all over the place with work expectations, course delivery, educational programs, etc... I stepped out on a limb by guaranteeing our staff payroll and benefits. As of now, there are limited ways to legally carry out this commitment.

- a. **Work regular hours:** We can continue to employ staff on a regular work schedule and find meaningful work.
- b. **Deferred Payment:** Teachers are currently on a deferred payment schedule. They work 9 months but their pay is deferred over 12 months. If we elect to send people home with pay, they will have to make up those hours at a later time or reimburse the district.
- c. **Combination of Full Pay or Partial Pay for partial work:** If we have some support staff that elect to voluntarily reduce their work schedule, they will get paid for hours worked without jeopardy of losing their future job.
- d. **Adjust hourly wage to compensate for reduced hours:** Increase hourly wage for reduced hours. *This requires board action.
- e. **Unemployment Benefits:** In order for staff to receive unemployment benefits we have to deny them an opportunity to work. Unemployment benefits are paid by the employer, therefore, if we are going to pay the benefit, we just as well get some benefit to the taxpayers.

3. **Certificated Staff Pay, Benefits and Leave**

Nebraska Statute 79-8,106 states "In case of epidemic sickness prevailing to such an extent that school or schools in any school district shall be closed, teachers shall be paid their usual salaries in full for such time as the school or schools shall be closed."

With this guaranteed salary, we may require teachers to fulfill their contractual agreement for the number of contract days specified (185). However, in our zoom meeting on Tuesday night with the Perry Law Firm, we discussed the option of "administrative leave".

Due to the required 14 day mandatory quarantine and possible isolation for sick individuals associated with COVID-19, the superintendent is granted authority to institute an "**administrative leave**" period of 80 hours (10 Days). This makes sense as the 14 day required leave equates to 10 working days and two weekends. In order to be fair with all employees, I plan to recommend to the board of education 80 hours of administrative leave to ALL EMPLOYEES. All employees not working on Wednesday will have 9 additional days of leave they can use if they are required to be isolated or quarantined. Any additional required leave will be considered on a case by case basis. If you are sick or need to be home, you may access your remaining PTO and Sick Leave.

*All staff needs to be aware that reduced hours (hours without pay or leave) could affect their eligibility for health insurance benefits and retirement hours toward full-year credit. **Health Insurance:** Minimum of 30 Hours **Retirement:** Minimum of 20 Hours

4. **Thursday and Friday Teachers and Support Staff Assignments:**

- a. **Thursday: All staff zoom meeting with Superintendent:** Tech staff will work to make sure your staff will be divided into small work groups 10 or less while practicing "social distance".
- b. **Disinfect the Building:** Work with custodial staff to disinfect the building to create a safe and positive work environment
- c. **Complete COOP Requisitions:** Work on completing Coop Requisitions for 2020-21 school year. Deadline is April 1st, but if we can move that deadline up, it gives administration and business office time to work with staff requests.
- d. **4th Quarter Curriculum Review:** Teachers need to prioritize course requirements and focus on skills, vocabulary, course expectations needed to prepare students to be more successful at the next level.
- e. **Week of March 23-27:** Administrators will meet on Friday afternoon to discuss work for the week of March 23-27. Requirements change by the hour. We will hopefully know by Friday afternoon if there are further restrictions or allowances for meeting the complexity of payroll, benefits, and requirements.
- f. **Enrichment vs. Education:** During the closure, K-8 programs will be "enrichment". 9-12 courses will be education. Enrichment programs cannot be graded, provided to build skills and engage parents in their child's education. 9-12 courses will be graded and full credit (5 credits) given for satisfactorily completed work. If students choose not to complete work, they will receive 2.5 credits for 3rd quarter passing grades. This is extremely important for Seniors needing credits for graduation.
- g. **Special Education:** Darli Vrba is working with ESU 7 to make sure we are in compliance with required special education services and timelines. Where "enrichment" is done (K-8), special education service requirements are at a lesser level of compliance than if the programs were provided as "education" requirements.
- h. **Paid Breaks throughout the workday:** We will increase the lunch break from 30 minutes to 1 hour. We are required to deduct 30 minutes from the support staff hours, but will allow up to 60 minutes due to limited options and restaurant capacity. In addition, we will also support a one hour per day mental health/physical health break. This can be taken as coffee breaks, walking, reading, etc... for a total of one hour per day.
- i. **Disaster Declaration:** Colfax County has issued a disaster declaration to include all cities, villages, schools, utility companies, first responders, fire and rescue departments, power providers, and hospitals. See attachment below.



Colfax County Emergency Management
Mark Arps, Emergency Manager
Michelle Evert, Deputy Emergency Manager
466 Road 10
Schuyler, NE 68661

To: All Press Outlets

From: Mark Arps, Colfax County Emergency Manager
Michelle Evert, Emergency Manager, City of Schuyler

Date: March 18, 2020

RE: Coronavirus Update

There are no cases of COVID-19 (otherwise known as the Coronavirus) in Colfax County. Test kits for Coronavirus are not yet available in Colfax County but limited test kits are available in the State of Nebraska if needed.

The public is asked to shelter in place and stay at home.

At the present time testing is prioritized as follows:

1. People over age 65 showing symptoms;
2. People with ongoing health issues that place them in a higher risk showing symptoms;
3. Those employed in the medical field; and
4. First responders including EMT's and law enforcement.

Colfax County is issuing a disaster declaration to include all cities, villages, schools, utility companies, first responders, fire and rescue departments, power providers, and hospitals.

The Colfax County Courthouse and Schuyler City Hall will remain open to the public at this time BUT before coming to the Courthouse and City Hall please contact the office you intend to visit to make an appointment. The telephone number to all offices in the Colfax County Courthouse is (402)352-8500. The telephone number for Schuyler City Hall is (402)352-3101.

With limited exceptions no more than ten (10) people are allowed to congregate or be together in one location at the same time. This rule applies to public buildings and offices such as the Colfax County Courthouse and Schuyler City Hall. If more than ten (10) people are in the same location at the same time, please leave the location and call to make an appointment at a later time to return. This rule applies to all public and private gatherings.

If you are aware of anyone over the age of 65 or anyone with ongoing health issues who may need extra assistance, or who officials need to check on periodically, please provide their name, address and telephone number to (402)352-7958.

If you have any questions regarding medical symptoms of the COVID-19 please dial 211 on your telephone. If your symptoms warrant you will be referred to a local COVID-19 testing facility.

If you are a businessowner or member of the public with general questions regarding Colfax County or the City of Schuyler's COVID-19 response please call (402)352-7958.

This pandemic can last up to eight (8) weeks or more.