



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF JEFFERSON
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TO: All District Parents

FROM: Mark D. Rollefson, Ed.D., Superintendent 

RE: Update on COVID-19 / District Status / Spring Break

DATE: March 12, 2020

As the number of [COVID-19](#) (Coronavirus disease 2019) cases in the United States continues to climb, and as spring break approaches, I felt it an appropriate time to communicate with you.

Helpful Yet Not Prescriptive

This phrase “Helpful Resources, Helpful Guidance, and Helpful Information,” is indeed just that. It is helpful. It is helpful, but not prescriptive when deciding how and when to respond to COVID-19.

As such, with no prescription to follow we will consider many helpful resources and make the most informed decision(s) we can given the amount of available information.

Calm, cool, and rational thinking will prevail.

Is it all media hype?

- One could ascertain that there is far too much hype regarding COVID-19. Similar to H1N1, SARS, Zika and others, this will likely run its course.
- However, public health professionals will assist in guiding decisions.
- Given the depth of closures and social distancing it is also reasonable to ascertain legitimate concerns, particularly for the elderly and for those with immunodeficiencies.
- The District will take a cautious stance with the information available to us.

Is there genuine reason to be concerned?

- The following questions still loom:
 - What if the number of cases grows in Wisconsin?
 - What if there are more deaths across the United States?
 - What if parents, community, and others insist upon more action?
 - What if universities, businesses, and others close?
 - What if health care professionals (World Health Organization, Center for Disease Control, Jefferson County Health Department, others) insist upon closures and precautions?
- If answered, the School District of Jefferson may have to take more precautionary measures.

How bad is student attendance?

- During the last week of February and the first week of March, the SDoJ observed a slight increase in student absences due to illnesses, including the flu.

- This week (March 9 through 13), student attendance has actually been better than normal for this time of the year.

Who is the School District of Jefferson (SDoJ) relying upon for information and guidance?

- Department of Public Instruction (DPI)
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services (W-DHS)
- Wisconsin Department of Administration
- Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- State School Nurse and Health Services
- Jefferson County Health Department (JCHD)
- World Health Organization (WHO)

Wisconsin Department of Health Services Update (3/10/20)

- A third confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported.
- If COVID-19 begins to spread in Wisconsin communities, state and local public health officials would consider community interventions such as temporary closures of child care facilities and schools; workplace social distancing; measures such as replacing in-person meetings with teleworking, and modifying, postponing, or canceling mass gatherings.
- Decisions about the implementation of community measures would be made by state and local officials based on CDC guidance, as well as the scope of the outbreak.
- The District will take a cautious stance with the information available to us from these various resources.

Would the SDoJ consider a virtual learning option?

- In the event school is closed for an extended period of time, it is important to think about continuity of learning as well as required education for students with special needs.
- If schools are closed for a brief period of time (5 days or less) the SDoJ would treat this in similar fashion to snow days. Some days/hours would not be made up while others would. We would assure that the district meets WI-DPI minimum hours of instruction requirements.
- To date, the district has had no weather-related closures for the 2019-2020 school year.
- If school were canceled for more than 5 days, the SDoJ would consider (a) utilizing virtual learning, (b) making days/hours up to meet state instructional requirements, or combination of both (a) and (b).
- Virtual learning may not be an option for the District simply due to the fact that there are many families who do not have WIFI home access.
- It is realized that universities and colleges are utilizing online learning.
- The scope of how online learning would work for K-12 schools is very different than universities and colleges. The following factors need to be considered:
 - Do 100% of K-12 students have access to high quality WIFI at home? The answer to that for the SDoJ is "No."
 - Have all K-12 teachers had proper professional development training on how to deliver instruction and learning utilizing an online platform? The answer to that question is "No."
 - The few teachers that we have who have taught online classes to high school-age students via JEDI Virtual learning had extensive training prior to being able to effectively deliver such instruction.
- Is it possible that the SDoJ would allow for some very limited and case-specific online learning? The answer is potentially, "Yes," but likely not an option for all students.

WI-DPI Instructional Hours Requirement

- School boards, under Wisconsin Stat. 118.38, may request a waiver from DPI after a public hearing is held in the district.

- Historically, the DPI has not waived the hours requirement through this process.
- DPI has recently gone on record indicating they do not anticipate approving waivers for instructional hours at this time for COVID-19.

Mandatory Testing

- The DPI has received questions about the testing window.
- Testing is both a federal and state requirement.
- The vast majority of students have already completed ACT testing.
- The Wisconsin Forward Exam and the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessments run from March 23 to May 1.
- The ASPIRE assessment window is April 6 to May 6.
- Given the unknowns associated with the spread of COVID-19, DPI encourages districts to consider testing earlier in the window to leave flexibility.
- DPI is not able to extend the testing window.

Rumors of Universities and K-12 Schools in Wisconsin Closing

- Things are rapidly changing. Every half-day there are more closures and social distancing occurring.
- Clearly an increase in the number of universities, colleges, businesses, and events being canceled or altered is occurring.
- Leadership at the SDoJ will continue to monitor the spread of COVID-19, local outbreaks, the reaction from schools and organizations, and the guidance from health care.
- Leadership at the SDoJ will only make closure decisions when considering directives or guidance from public health officials.

Can PowerSchool assist with virtual learning and/or communication?

- The PowerSchool team is monitoring the situation closely and is keeping the health and safety of their customers and employees a top priority while working to ensure every student continues to get access to the education they deserve.
- PowerSchool has proactively assigned a team to support schools as the situation evolves.

Bus Transportation

- Dousman Transport is proactive in protecting their passengers.
- They have implemented a routine sanitization schedule for all school buses.
- They will continue this process until the current COVID-19 outbreak subsides.
- They will be using a product manufactured by 3M called Neutral Quat Disinfectant. This is a cleaner that is used by hospitals.
- This product will be sprayed on the interior of the school bus after the afternoon bus route, then left to dry overnight. No rinsing is required.

Sanitization Process by School Custodians/Cleaners

- We have implemented an increased focus and routine regarding sanitization of classrooms, lunch rooms, desks, locker rooms, cafeterias, bathrooms, and other such spaces.
- We will continue this process until the COVID-19 outbreak subsides.
- We are using a variety of products approved to kill germs and viruses including COVID-19.

China, Iran, Italy, and South Korea

- If you are traveling to any of these countries, please know that these countries are designated by the CDC as a [Level 3 Travel Health Notice](#).
- This status designation is as of March 10, 2020.

- Travelers returning from these 4 countries are asked to do voluntary self-quarantine and self-monitoring, not requiring direct local health department supervision (daily check-ins, etc.).
- This may affect attendance for students or staff.
- For these travelers returning from these 4 countries, the CDC is recommending the following:
 - Stay home for 14 days from the time you left an area with widespread, ongoing community spread.
 - Practice social distancing.
 - Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever.
 - Watch for cough or trouble breathing.
 - Stay home and avoid contact with others. Do not go to work or school for this 14-day period.
 - Discuss your work situation with your employer before returning to work.
 - Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares during the time you are practicing social distancing.
 - Avoid crowded places (such as shopping centers and movie theaters) and limit your activities in public.
 - Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters).
 - If you get sick with fever (100.4°F/38°C or higher), cough, or have trouble breathing:
 - seek medical care;
 - call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room;
 - tell your doctor about your recent travel and your symptoms; and
 - avoid contact with others.

Does the SDoJ have Level 3 travelers?

- As of March 10, 2020, the SDoJ has not been informed of any students or staff currently traveling to these countries or traveling there over spring break.

WIAA Boys' & Girls' Basketball State Tournament Play

1. Jefferson boys and girls are not in the state tournament, so this WIAA communication does not directly impact the SDoJ.
2. This communication from WIAA is not regarding spring sports.
3. Communication from the WIAA regarding spring sports may or may not be forthcoming.
4. For those of you monitoring all the various decisions across the State of Wisconsin, here is WIAA's stance on Basketball Tournament Play.

From WIAA Executive Director Dave Anderson

As recently as late this past Monday afternoon, the recommendation of the CDC with respect to COVID-19 was "don't be scared, but be prepared." In the last 24 hours, the views and perspectives on the virus, its spread and containment, require that the WIAA re-evaluate what we can do to balance member interests, the efforts and sacrifices of teams, families and coaches, with our responsibilities as State Citizens.

In concert with our member schools still hosting boys sectional play, The University of Wisconsin and the Resch Center in Green Bay, in an emergency conference-call meeting this morning, the WIAA Board of Control unanimously approved the following adjustments in order to do our part to help limit the spread of COVID-19.

The limiting of crowd size, while still allowing the contests to be played, is consistent with most sport organizations' stance at the present time and conform with leading health organizations current positions.

As I shared with the Board this morning, part of the WIAA's charter is teaching and fostering citizenship. This is clearly one of those times we must look at this picture from that perspective.

We will do our very best to answer your questions—as best we can as soon as we can—under the circumstances. Of course, tickets already purchased will be refunded in full.

We appreciate your help in managing this sudden change.

Sincerely,

David J. Anderson
Executive Director

Does the SDoJ have school-sponsored spring break travel?

- Yes.
- Solo and Ensemble – Whitewater (March 14)
- Social Studies Conference – Madison Concourse – 3 staff members attending (March 16)
- JHS Softball Team - Minneapolis, MN (March 20-22)
- JHS Track Invitational – Whitewater (March 20)
- JHS eSports State Tournament – Montello (March 21)
- JHS Robotics Trip – Milwaukee (March 21)
- At this juncture these activities are scheduled to occur.
- The district will continue to monitor all information coming in from health officials/agencies.
- Cancellations of events across Wisconsin are happening at a rapid rate.
- The SDoJ will keep families, staff, students, and the community informed if any of the above spring break events are canceled and/or altered.

Will school be canceled?

- We do not have an answer to this question yet, but we assure our families, staff, students, and the community they will be kept informed as decisions are made.

What can you do to help?

- Wash your hands.
- Have your students and children wash their hands.
- If you have symptoms, stay home or seek medical assistance and advice.

Stay Tuned

As events evolve, the District will communicate as appropriate depending upon national, state and local updates.

Thank you for reading this important memo, and please stay healthy.