



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.

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