

March 18, 2020

Given the rapidly evolving situation with COVID-19, Howe ISD will extend the suspension of normal district operations through Friday, March 27th in an effort support our nation's need to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. Our health officials report that cases are continuing to spread in the state, and an increase in confirmed cases in our area seems likely. Suspending operations for this length of time will allow us to determine, in coordination with local health officials, whether the virus is continuing to have community spread or whether it has been contained. Our current plan is to re-evaluate the situation weekly. I understand that other area school districts have announced long-term closures, but making weekly determinations provides us the maximum amount of flexibility. I acknowledge the fact that we are most likely looking at an extended closure, but at this time we will continue to go "week to week" in order to maintain that flexibility. However, this may change in the coming weeks based on the guidance from state and federal officials.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has outlined the need for all communities to implement a social distancing protocol. We want to reiterate a request to our broader community to take the following reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of the illness:

- Don't shake hands
- Wash your hands regularly
- Limit movement within the community, especially avoiding crowded places and maintaining 3 to 6 ft of distance between people (at least an arm's length)
- If you are moving around in the community, don't congregate in large groups
- For those who have traveled to areas with known COVID-19 cases – both inside and outside of the country – we ask that you self-quarantine and monitor for symptoms. Students who have traveled should plan to stay home for two weeks after arriving home. Please contact your campus to let them know, and this will be considered an excused absence.
- If you suspect you have [symptoms of COVID-19, call your health care provider for medical advice](#).
- Keep your child at home if he/she feels ill, even if you think it is just a cold.
- Do not leave the house if you are ill, except to access medical care

This is a quickly changing situation, and we will continue to monitor information, will assess conditions throughout the week, and will provide the next update by March 25 via our website and email.

Thank you for your support and cooperation as we ensure that all members of the Howe ISD community stay safe and healthy.

Regards,

Kevin Wilson