



COVID-19 Coronavirus Update (1)
March 15, 2020

Dear Parents, Families and Colleagues,

Governor Bullock has made the difficult decision to close all public schools in the State of Montana for the next two weeks. This closure is effective immediately as our schools will be closed for regular school/instruction beginning tomorrow, March 16 through Friday, March 27. However, with Spring Break beginning Monday, March 30, the next possible in-person school day will Monday, April 6.

Please know that we are meeting now to plan forward and will be communicating additional details shortly (tonight) and across the coming days. For now, school campuses will be open tomorrow (3/16) and Tuesday (3/17) for students and parents to pick-up needed personal belongings, books, medication, etc. However, no classes will be in session and teachers will likely not be available due to planning. Hot meal service will also be available for regularly scheduled breakfast and lunch but transportation services will be canceled for the duration of this closure.

For the next three days, our educators will be working to develop materials consistent with remote or virtual learning. For grades 6 through 12, we plan on delivering educational content via an online platform. For grades PK through 5, teachers may opt for more traditional educational material (packets of resources) emailed to parents. However, some elementary teachers may choose to design a more blended environment that includes some online learning opportunities.

Remote learning is scheduled to begin on Thursday, March 19 but please allow for delays should your child's teacher/teachers be unavailable or ill for any reason.

Finally, we are working on plans to provide continued meal service and optional technology (Chromebooks) checkout. Our plan is to move to regional meal pickup sites with the eventual goal of neighborhood or home delivery. For those in need of a Chromebook device to access remote learning content (primarily grades 6 through 12), regional pick-up sites will be established and communicated in the coming days.

If you know of families who are not receiving communication from my office, please have them call their child's school office and provide updated contact information to include current email and phone numbers.

In closing, I applaud Governor Bullock's decision to close Montana public schools as a strategy to combat the spread of the COVID-19 Coronavirus. As I've heard repeatedly over this past week, in the end, it will be impossible to know if we overreacted or did too much, but it will be quite apparent if we under reacted or did too little. Please look for additional communication shortly.

Best,



Tyler Ream
Superintendent, Helena Public Schools