

March 11, 2020

Dear Superintendents:

As parents, we are very concerned about the rapidly spread of COVID-19 virus in our region and across the world. We are particularly worried that many of our students and their families will travel during the upcoming spring break and hence put our community at greater risks of contracting the COVID-19 virus.

As the University of Tulsa has transitioned to online classes on March 11, 2020, and the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University are exploring ways to mitigate further transmission of the COVID-19 virus following Spring Break, we would like to urge all the Public Schools in the State of Oklahoma to engage in contingency planning and to establish mechanisms to prepare for the virus and protect our teachers, students, and families in our community. ***As Ben Franklin once said, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.***

Specifically, please consider the following suggestions, which have been evaluated and adopted by other communities in the United States:

- **Proactive school closures.** It might be a great choice to proactively close down the Public Schools for at least 2 weeks after spring break before there is a case there. [History](#) has shown that proactively school closures to be one of the most powerful nonpharmaceutical interventions that we can deploy (Couzin-Frankel 2020). Proactive school closures not just keep the kids safe but also keep the whole community—parents, teachers, and their loved ones—safe.
- **Modified attendance policy.** In the 2-4 weeks after the spring break in 2020, should proactive school closures not be viable and families choose to keep students at home, please kindly excuse these students' absences. This policy will help prevent and contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
- **Mandated self-quarantine policy.** If a student travels to and returns from a country, region, state or city that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has designated a Level 2 Bio-Alert or Levels 3 Bio-Warning (whether that level was designated before or during their stay), they will be expected to self-quarantine for 14 days upon their return.
- **Routine health education of students and staff,** including
 - providing students with instructions and reminders of the importance of frequent handwashing and hand hygiene,
 - providing hand sanitizer and tissues in classrooms,
 - allowing enough time for effective handwashing before snack time and lunch time,
 - enhancing the sanitization efforts of high-touch, high-traffic areas/surfaces in the classrooms, on the school buses and of school buildings,
 - reminding students and staff to stay home if they are ill, especially those who have recently traveled to places where coronavirus is prevalent, and
 - not allowing any sharing of snacks or beverages at school.

- **Persistently combat stigma.** Please remind the school community that the risk of COVID-19 is not at all connected to race, ethnicity, or nationality. Stigma will not help to fight the illness.
- **Engage in contingency planning of transition instruction from classroom learning to online learning** should the situation in our state dramatically change in the coming weeks. Northshore School District of Seattle has already moved to [online learning](#). School districts in [Utah](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [Oregon](#) are also considering online learning. To ensure equal access to education for ALL students in a safe and welcoming environment, please: (1) make sure teachers/students are acquainted with the online platform and are equipped with a device and wi-fi to engage in online learning; and (2) develop a plan for providing support to some parents of elementary age students who must continue their regular routines and cannot stay home.

Thank you for your continued leadership in this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Parents of students in State of Oklahoma