



BIG SPRING SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

45 Mount Rock Road

Newville, PA 17241-9466

717-776-2412

Dear Big Spring Families:

We have spent the past few weeks researching and monitoring the rapidly changing COVID-19 coronavirus health issue. Recently, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf has directed the closing of all Montgomery County schools and strongly encouraged the cancellation of any events with large gatherings of individuals. This morning, I was part of a call with the Pennsylvania Secretary of Education, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA). It became clearly apparent as a result of the information shared this morning that as we negotiate this uncharted territory, it is time for our school community to make an important decision to not only protect our students and staff, but also our community.

All schools in the Big Spring School District will not be in session from Monday, March 16, 2020 through Friday, March 27, 2020. This notice not only applies to school operations, but also to all athletics, field trips, and community-based experiences for our students. All events held at Big Spring School District facilities, be they indoor or outdoor, be they district-sponsored or run by community groups, are cancelled during this time. Additionally, all student and staff field trips, off-site events, and travel, including athletics and staff professional development or conference attendance during this time are cancelled as well. Only essential Big Spring SD staff will be permitted in the buildings during the time of closure. The restriction of access to the facilities will enable the custodial staff to complete a deep clean of the facilities prior to a return to normal operations.

The safety and well-being of our students, staff, and community is our utmost concern. We are in ongoing communication and consultation with the following organizations that are experts in emergency preparedness and crisis management:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC);
- PA Department of Health;
- Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA); and
- Cumberland County Department of Public Safety.

Please know that we have taken dramatic and progressive steps as a collective staff to ensure educational continuity. More specifically, education will be delivered to our students while they are offsite. Our staff are in preparations to deliver content remotely to our students via appropriate tools such as SeeSaw, Google Classroom, and other learning management applications. Additional building level and course specific information will be communicated on Monday, March 16, 2020 to guide your student and your family through this process. Again, the ultimate goal is for continuity of the educational process in spite of restricted physical access to the District campus.

As you discuss the school closure or Coronavirus with your student, please consider utilizing this article from the National Association of School Psychologists entitled, "[Talking to Children about COVID-19 Coronavirus: A Parent Resource](#)." Not only is the information helpful, but it comes from a vetted and research-based source.

As you continue to navigate this pandemic as a family. Please continue to utilize these measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 Coronavirus.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Take flu antivirals if prescribed by your health care provider if you have the flu.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

While we have been preparing for this scenario, the suddenness of this directive leaves us all with questions without immediate answers. Please be assured that while our schools may be closing, we will continue to work diligently to provide direction and updates to the Big Spring Community.

Sincerely,



Dr. Richard W. Fry
Superintendent of Schools