

Dear Parents and Families,

We are facing unprecedented challenges due to the rapid spread of COVID-19 across our nation. Circumstances are changing by the hour, though at this moment we have no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Manchester. There is a need for all communities to take a proactive approach in slowing the spread of the virus.

That being said, we have made the difficult decision to close all Manchester Public Schools indefinitely effective Monday, March 16, 2020. It is our hope that the closure will last two weeks but we will need to closely monitor conditions across the state and region before making a decision on a return date.

Tomorrow schools will remain open following an abbreviated schedule. That represents a change for Illing Middle School and Manchester High School who were scheduled for a full day. Conferences at the elementary level and Bennet Academy are cancelled. We understand some parents may choose not to send their children to school tomorrow. If that is the case, please contact your child's school and the absence will be excused.

We will not have any formal distance-learning during this closure of school as such an approach would not allow for equitable experiences for all students. Students who are in school tomorrow will be given optional supplemental work to bring home with other optional work posted on school websites and shared through email, social media and more.

We are also in the process of developing a plan to make school meals available during the closure. We will provide additional information as it becomes available.

We know that this may create a hardship for many parents and guardians, but this decision is being made in the interest of the safety of students and staff. Health experts say it is crucial that steps be taken to contain a virus to minimize how quickly it may spread. We hope that this preventive measure will allow for a return to our usual schedule as soon as possible.

In the meantime, we appreciate your understanding and cooperation during this stressful situation.

Sincerely

Matt Geary

Superintendent