

Dear YPS Families and York Community Members:

York Public Schools has decided to close school for the remainder of the week and will evaluate the situation over the weekend. Students that attend York Public Schools, St. Joseph Catholic, Emmanuel Faith Lutheran, Little Blessings Preschool, Little Angels Preschool, and York PLAY at York Elementary will not report to school March 17-March 20. A variety of factors have been considered and deliberated on in making the difficult decision to close.

First and foremost, among these are the desire to proactively attempt to prevent spread of the COVID-19 virus. With rapidly changing guidance from the CDC that has imposed further restrictive parameters on group meetings, it has become abundantly clear that it is not feasible to maintain a regular educational environment.

While as of this moment there is not verified community spread of the COVID-19 virus, we realize that this is inevitable based upon person-to-person interactions. With many families having traveled from other states with more advanced spread or having had close contact with individuals in communities such as Omaha that have documented cases, our decision to close proceeds from an understanding of the elevated risk assessment around the virus.

While the COVID-19 virus does not appear to attack healthy children most maliciously, our students and staff have frequent interactions with and close contact among more at risk and vulnerable populations, including the elderly and immuno-compromised individuals, so this must also be considered.

Furthermore, we have reached a critical mass in terms of overwhelming capacity of local health officials to be able to effectively deal with contingency planning when the attention of health care experts needs to shift soon to mitigation efforts including testing and quarantining of possible cases.

Please know that these decisions were not made in isolation, but included ongoing consultation with our public health officials at state and regional levels, including Four Corners Public Health and Public Health Solutions.

Expect ongoing communication with many changes in the coming days.

Thank you for your support.

Dr. Mitch Bartholomew - Superintendent
York Public Schools