



March 15, 2020

Dear PCSD 25 Parents, Guardians and Staff:

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is causing great concern in our community. The Pocatello/Chubbuck School District 25 is working daily to address this situation. We are reading your emails. We are listening to staff. We are monitoring what is being posted on social media.

We continue to agonize over the decision whether to close schools prior to spring break. Our entire administrative team was in constant communication over the weekend and called a special meeting on Sunday to address our next steps. We have spoken with various agencies at every level of government and participated in a conference call held today for all Idaho education stakeholders with Governor Little and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. During that call, Governor Little urged Idaho school districts to remain open. Guidance for this recommendation is provided by the CDC: "Considerations for School Closures" (<https://www.sd25.us/userfiles/2295/my%20files/considerations-for-school-closure.pdf?id=6378>)

Closing schools is not a decision we take lightly. Agencies at every level of government are urging us to continue school. Therefore, our plan is to continue school this week. At a special Board of Trustees meeting scheduled on Monday, March 16 at 3:00 p.m. our administration will be presenting recommendations for the Board to consider moving forward. We will make a formal announcement about those plans at the conclusion of that meeting.

During this time, it cannot be reiterated enough that any student or staff member who is exhibiting illness should stay home until he or she has fully recovered from the illness.

Finally, the ultimate responsibility for health and safety is a parent's decision.

For the week of March 16 through March 20, all learner absences will be excused. Parents, please call your learner's school to report the absence.

Many aspects of our lives are being impacted by the arrival of COVID-19 in Idaho. All of us will be thinking about how best to get through the spread of infection during the next few months. At the heart of our decision-making process continues to be what is best for our staff, our learners, our families, and the community as a whole. These decisions mean thinking about all of the learners we serve – including all those who depend on the various services schools offer from academic services to food services to services for students with disabilities.

Events are changing rapidly. Our team will be meeting again tomorrow to review what steps we will need to take next. We will send out updated communications at that time. Thank you for your patience as we work together to do what is best for our community.

Sincerely,
Douglas Howell, Superintendent