

April 3, 2020

Dear Community Members,

As many of you know, upon becoming aware of the spread of COVID-19 in Colorado and the myriad concerns inherent, school superintendents took action several weeks ago to protect students, staff and the community. We have been working hard to provide leadership guidance to families throughout Colorado. As school superintendents, we consult and collaborate many times each day to share thinking and to problem solve as a regional group.

Two days ago, on April 1, Governor Polis announced extended closures of schools in Colorado through April 30, 2020. Over the past several weeks, we have spoken regularly and often to public health officials and state officials to better understand the timeline and path forward for the year, both with regard to COVID-19 and “traditional” school year expectations. We understand that there are not specific answers to exactly how and when we return to “life as normal” during this unprecedented health crisis. Given that, we must rely upon our best judgement and place safety above all else.

What is clear is that there will not be definitive, universal guidance to proceed as normal. Rather, there will be a gradual lifting of restrictions and a step-by-step return to normalcy. What we do know is that once the “Stay at Home” orders are lifted, we will continue to have restrictions on social distancing and the size of group gatherings for at least several weeks, if not months. Given the nature of a school environment (classrooms, passing periods, buses, playgrounds, etc.), these restrictions are not practical within the school setting. As such, there does not appear to be a viable way for us to convene traditional in-person learning this school year.

Collectively we believe, and are making the decision, that in the best interest of the children, staff, and the communities that we serve, our schools will remain closed to in-person learning for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

A significant consideration in making this decision today is guidance from the respective health departments serving our districts. Many models currently show that the impact of COVID-19 is likely to peak in the last week of April. Even once COVID-19 reaches its peak in Colorado, we know that there will be an equivalent amount of time after the peak in which the virus continues to pose a significant threat. The continued safety and public health risk this presents for our students, staff, families, and communities moves us to take the step of extended closure to in-person learning through the balance of the school year.

Additionally, providing a concrete direction now with regard to in-person learning for the duration of the school year allows us to focus our energy and attention to addressing

questions and concerns, rather than ongoing uncertainty. It will also allow us, as school district leaders, to shift to a proactive stance in that we can begin to plan for completing the current year remotely, and returning to school in August when we are able to joyfully welcome our students, staff and families back into our buildings.

Making this decision was extremely difficult. We do believe, however, that this is the right decision given all of the information that we have received from health experts and state officials. Our teams have been hard at work developing quality remote learning opportunities for our students. Please know that the health and safety of our students, staff and families is paramount. We believe that finishing this school year through remote learning is one of the most effective ways in which we can do our part to avoid exposing anyone to unnecessary risk.

Sincerely,

Chris Fiedler
27J Schools

Thomas Tucker
Douglas County Schools

Chris Gdowski
Adams 12 Five Star Schools

Wendy Rubin
Englewood Schools

Don Rangel
Adams 14 Schools

Jason Glass
Jeffco Public Schools

Rico Munn
Aurora Public Schools

Brian Ewert
Littleton Public Schools

Scott Siegfried
Cherry Creek School District

Charlotte Ciano
Mapleton Public Schools

Karen Quanbeck
Clear Creek School District

Patrick Sandos
Sheridan School District 2

Susana Cordova
Denver Public Schools

Pamela Swanson
Westminster Public Schools