

Dear Hawthorn District 73 Community:

Hawthorn School District 73 has been closely monitoring the rapidly changing COVID-19 coronavirus health issue in our region and across the world. Every step we have taken has been preceded by thoughtful consideration and detailed discussion with many who are invested in both the education and well-being of our children. We have decided to take the following steps.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

After careful consideration, to protect the health and wellness of all students and staff, **we are closing school for students for three weeks beginning on Monday, March 16.** At this time, our plan is for staff and students to return on Monday, April 6. This difficult decision was made after consultation with area school officials and following the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) regarding limiting the gathering of large groups as a precautionary measure to limit the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in our community. By closing schools, we are implementing social distancing; this will help to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 in our community.

ACCESS TO BUILDINGS LIMITED

Effective Thursday, March 12, District 73 implemented procedures to limit access to our buildings. We have canceled all before and after school activities from Monday, March 16 through Sunday, April 5. If your family needs something from the school, such as medication, please call the school office and make arrangements to pick up the item(s) by Monday, March 16 when staff are still in the building. Please note, that beginning Monday, March 16, 2020, PALS before and after-school child care services will not be providing services.

E-LEARNING PLANS AND TECHNOLOGY

Monday, March 16 will be a day of non-attendance for students. Staff will report to school on Monday as a workday to prepare for e-Learning. E-Learning will be put in place from Tuesday, March 17 through Friday, April 3. Teachers will not institute e-Learning during Spring Break from Monday, March 23 to Friday, March 27.

Specifics regarding e-Learning can be found on the District 73 website, and the District will share more information regarding our e-Learning program on Monday, March 16. Note that both online and offline learning options will be provided to students. In addition, information regarding the Comcast Essentials Program is posted on the District 73 e-Learning webpage. This program provides free/low-cost internet to households who qualify. If, at any time, your child will not be participating in an e-Learning day due to illness or other reasons, please call your school's attendance line to report their "absence." Please contact your child's teacher or the office if you need assistance.

Please know this was a very difficult decision for us. We understand this may create challenges for families, but we also believe it is our responsibility to do all we can to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of our students, staff, and families and do our part to mitigate the impact of this pandemic. The school district is planning to provide meals to students who qualify for free or reduced lunch during our time off due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Communication will be forthcoming to families. I am grateful to each and every one of you for your support and understanding as we navigate this challenging situation together.

In closing, we will continue to keep you informed as we navigate these challenging times. Thank you for your support, understanding, and partnership. I sincerely hope you and your family remain healthy.

Sincerely,

Pete Hannigan, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools