

## Press Release

**UPDATE March 12, 2020,**

Dear Community,

The McKean County Superintendents have been in constant contact with each other as well as other state agencies to determine a best course of action to proceed to ensure the safety of our students and our communities during this pandemic. Across McKean County, the health, safety and well-being of our students and staff are our top priorities. With the recent actions taken regionally and nationwide regarding the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), we want to be sure our public is aware of the planning considerations underway in our public schools.

As school districts, we are closely monitoring the situation and taking guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As the days and weeks progress, we will keep the community informed of any potential changes to our calendar, our processes, and our educational programming. The impact of any school cancellation must be considered carefully. The safety of students and staff at home, as well as at school, are our priority. The feasibility of online learning options across our region is limited due to the lack of adequate broadband access. We want to stress that any changes for any district will be shared via webpages, social media sites, and mass notification systems in place.

As we prepare for a multitude of possibilities, we are asking for parents' cooperation with the following:

- As information related to COVID-19 continues to be released, please be sure to act with only factual information. The unintended consequences of rumors or false claims on social media can severely impact our ability to appropriately respond.
- If children are feeling sick, please keep them home from school. Allow them some time to feel better so that they do not risk infecting others. If a fever is present, student should stay home from school. Please contact your primary care physician to receive appropriate guidance to return to school.
- Reinforce the need for good hygiene habits at home. Everyone at home should wash their hands regularly and cover mouths when coughing or sneezing.
- Families that have traveled outside of our immediate area are asked to notify school officials. School nurse offices can monitor those students for any symptoms that require additional precaution.
- School events that require student travel outside the immediate area will be considered carefully by each school district. Notice by each school district will be provided in the event of any change.
- Each school is aware of our "high risk" populations as it relates to their risk of any illness. Schools will be in contact with parents as needed to assess needs for those individuals.
- Schools may potentially need to close for an undetermined length of time. Please start making plans now for childcare in the event this should occur.
- School meal programs can continue during any school cancellation. Information would be provided through your specific district.
- School districts will provide an appropriate level of flexibility, to be determined at the local level, as it relates to student absences. (Primary focus should be on health, not perfect attendance awards.)

If you have any questions, please contact your local school district or building office.

Sincerely,

Katherine Pude, Bradford Area School District

Brock Benson, Kane Area School District

Matthew Splain, Otto-Eldred School District

Gary Buchsen, Port Allegany School District

David London, Smethport Area School District

Additional resources:

∄ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Information  
<<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>>

∄ COVID-19 and Children:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>

∄ Avoid the Spread of Germs

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>