

March 13, 2020

Dear NEC Parents;

After a great deal of consideration and consultation with our member districts, we have decided to close all NEC Schools until March 27th as a preventive measure to avoid the spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 in our region.

I know that this creates a great hardship for students and families, and I don't make this decision lightly. You will be hearing from your child's teacher, counselor, or principal on Monday with some more details about how we can support you and your child during this unexpected break from school. We are working on plans to provide you with learning opportunities for your children, phone support from our nurses, teachers, clinicians, and specialists, and food if needed.

Administrative offices will be open at all schools from 8-12 during each day of this period, and school leaders will be checking email and phone messages regularly. Please feel free to call or email if you are in need of support.

The uncertainty of this pandemic and the conflicting messages we are all receiving from the media create a lot of stress and anxiety. Please don't panic.

Here are some facts:

- There have been no known cases of COVID-19 in the NEC Community....the actions we are taking are to protect everyone's health and prevent further contagion.
- We have excellent cleaning and sanitizing procedures in place.
- The best way to stay healthy is to avoid crowds, wash your hands, and clean surfaces with soap and water or sanitizing wipes.

If your children are anxious, we suggest a simple message like *"Lots of people all around the world are getting this virus....and it spreads very fast. Because it's a "new" virus, people got very nervous. The way it spreads is if someone who has the virus coughs or sneezes, the germs travel to people who are near them or land on surfaces that other people touch. That's why staying away from crowds and washing your hands a lot helps. For most people it just feels like getting a bad cold. But for some people who are old or sick it can be more serious. Lots of schools are closing and events are being cancelled so that the germs will stop spreading so fast and we can all get back to our normal routines."*

Please keep checking your emails regularly, as we will send you updates throughout the two week period. Hopefully we will be able to resume our normal schedule on March 30th.

Sincerely,

Fran Rosenberg