

NEVADA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADVISORY

The safety and wellness of students, families, and school personnel are the highest priorities of all Nevada County schools. In recognition of the statewide COVID-19 situation and the potential impact in Nevada County, School District Superintendents, Charter School Directors, and County Superintendent of Schools Scott W. Lay, have decided to suspend starting distance learning this week and close all public Nevada County schools during the week of March 16-20, 2020. The reason for suspending distance learning at this time is the lack of clarity received from the State and federal governments on guidelines. We will reassess the ability to operate distance learning by March 20, 2020 in hopes of having distance learning operable for the weeks of March 23 - April 12, 2020.

Dr. Ken Cutler, the County's Health Officer, has had regular discussions and consultation with the Superintendent of Schools Office. The Nevada County Public Health Department understands and supports the school administrators' decision. Several counties in California and states across the country have made similar choices, including the counties of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and Ventura. The states of Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin have decided to close all public schools.

While we recognize this decision will pose challenges and hardship to many families in our county, the most effective way to slow and disrupt the transmission of this pandemic is by implementing social distancing practices. During the time of the school closure, we are asking that students and families follow the County Public Health Officer's directive to stay home and minimize social contact to the extent possible.

Protecting public health requires a community-wide response, and we will need the help of families to help remain united in our response. Dr. Cutler emphasizes that, "while school dismissals are intended to protect students, teachers, and staff, we need everyone to take social distancing seriously if we are to achieve the greater benefit of protecting everyone in the County from COVID-19." While children have not been shown to be a high-risk group for serious illness from COVID-19, they are still able to transmit the virus to populations who are most vulnerable to serious illness, such as older adults and those with compromised immune systems. To achieve the greatest effect in reducing COVID-19 transmission in Nevada County, please encourage students and their families during this time to:

- avoid large public gatherings such as malls, movie theaters, and other spaces, especially those that are indoors
- plan to spend the dismissal week with just their immediate family and a few friends
- use social media and phone to keep in touch with the rest of their family and friends
- postpone visits to older adult relatives and neighbors, and to people with compromised immune systems
- avoid traveling out of the county to other locations where COVID-19 is circulating more widely

We understand that implementing these changes with such limited notice is challenging and disruptive, and we appreciate your patience and cooperation. We are grateful to community members throughout our county for their tremendous efforts during these challenging times.

This is a dynamic situation where information and circumstances can evolve quickly.