



Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D., Commissioner

NEBRASKA

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To: Nebraska Public School Superintendents, Non-Public School Administrators, & ESU Administrators
CC: State Board of Education, Commissioner's Cabinet and NDE Leadership

Good Afternoon,

As you are likely to see in the media, Nebraska has its first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Omaha. Naturally, this is part of an expected spread of this virus. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) is in frequent communication with state and local officials and I encourage school officials to be attentive to information as it becomes available.

We continue to use the <https://www.education.ne.gov/publichealth/resources/> website as our main repository of resources and information for your reference. I am in regular communication with the Governor and Governor's office and will be proposing a few further communication protocols to keep you informed. However, I do expect all such communications to be posted on the resource website and it is a strong base of information for you.

The Governor is beginning to communicate to the public through the media that everyone should prepare for any scenario that might cause a disruption in normal routines, including the possibility of cancelling large events or closing schools. We will continue to share information with you as educational leaders and encourage you to fill out the contact form on the website if you have any questions: <https://www.education.ne.gov/publichealth/contact/>.

I want to emphasize that the NDE will be working to provide guidance about community operations and procedures as we learn more from state health officials. I also want to encourage you

To lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living.

to identify your local health regions and appropriate local officials (<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Local-Health-Departments.aspx>). It is likely that one of the strategies designed to reduce the spread of the virus may be a consideration to close schools as a community, regional, or even state approach. If there is a need to close schools or otherwise cancel events, we encourage you to follow the recommendations of state and local health officials. Although everyone hopes closures will not be necessary, some thoughtful consideration of how to communicate at a local level is important.

The NDE will be flexible about rule and regulatory issues during this time while encouraging your innovative solutions to maintain a sense of normalcy for students and families. I have fielded many questions about virtual education and other strategies to maintain educational opportunities. I will be working with our staff to address those questions in the coming days.

Thank you for your leadership and please feel free to share this information with others.

Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education