

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Letter to El Dorado County

The safety and wellness of students, families, and school personnel are the highest priorities of all El Dorado County schools and districts. In recognition of the statewide COVID-19 situation and the potential impact in El Dorado County, School District Superintendents and Dr. Ed Manansala, County Superintendent of Schools, have decided in concurrence with Dr. Nancy Williams, County Public Health Officer, to close all public El Dorado County schools during the week of March 16-20. Districts will notify families for actual dates. We will reassess at the end of next week whether an extension of school closures beyond March 20th will be necessary. Dr. Nancy Williams reported while there are no current positive cases in our county at this time, the El Dorado County Public Health Division expects to begin seeing positive cases in the coming days and weeks which may require a continued response.

Several counties in California and states across the country have made similar choices, including the counties of 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. Williams 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 El Dorado 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.

For the latest updates, visit:

- Centers for Disease Control COVID-19 website: <https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>
- El Dorado County Public Health website: <https://www.edcgov.us/Government/hhsa/Pages/EDCCOVID-19.aspx>
- El Dorado County Office of Education website: <http://edcoe.beehv.com/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-information>

For ideas on how to talk to your children about COVID-19 please visit: [https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

Sincerely,

Dr. Ed Manansala, El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools  
Jeremy Meyers, Superintendent, Black Oak Mine Unified School District  
Dr. David Roth, Superintendent, Buckeye Union School District  
Matt Smith, Superintendent, Camino Union School District  
Dr. Ron Carruth, Superintendent, El Dorado Union High School District  
Meg Enns, superintendent, Gold Oak Union School District  
Scott Lyons, Superintendent, Gold Trail Union School District  
Grant Coffin, Superintendent, Indian Digging School District  
Dr. James Tarwater, Superintendent, Lake Tahoe Unified School District  
Natalie Miller, Superintendent, Latrobe School District  
Annette Lane, Superintendent, Pioneer Union School District  
Dr. Marcy Guthrie, Superintendent, Mother Lode Union School District  
Eric Bonnicksen, Superintendent, Placerville Union School District  
Pat Atkins, Superintendent, Pollock Pines/Silver Fork School Districts  
Cheryl Olson, Superintendent, Rescue Union School District.