

PARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT RE 2

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March 5, 2020

Dear Park County School District Re 2 Families,

We want to assure our families that Park County School District Re 2 is aware that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a statement advising communities to prepare for a domestic outbreak of COVID-19, commonly known as the coronavirus that originated in China. To date, there have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Colorado.

We are working with Park County Public Health as we monitor the global outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). It is important to know that during an outbreak, we would follow the health agency's lead on any quarantines, closures, or other health measures needed. Our focus has been on how to ensure the safety of students and staff, and how education can continue.

At this time of year, there are many causes of respiratory illnesses, including the common cold and influenza. Symptoms of coronavirus infection include fever, cough and/or shortness of breath. Symptoms usually appear within two to 14 days after being exposed to the virus. Information regarding Coronavirus is posted on our website, along with information on the Flu and Vaccinations. We will continue to list any updated information there as it becomes available.

What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. These viruses spread through coughing or sneezing, much like the flu.

What can I do to stay healthy?

The risk to the general public in the U.S. from this virus is considered low, but just as is recommended for other respiratory viruses, people can protect themselves and others by practicing everyday actions:

Practice good hand hygiene.

- Wash your hands frequently - remember to wash your hands after coughing or sneezing
 - Wash with soap and water, or
 - If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands

Practice respiratory etiquette.

- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - If you are ill, you should try to distance yourself from others so you do not spread your germs. Distancing includes staying home from work or school when possible.

Additionally, we have cleaning practices in place to help avoid disease transmission.

Park County School District Re 2 will continue working closely with local, state and national health officials to monitor this situation and will provide additional communication as it is available. The safety of our students and staff remains our top priority.

Sincerely,
Park County School District Re 2

Highly Infectious Disease

Readiness & Operations Plan

Park County RE2 School District – Updated on 3/3/2020



INTRODUCTION

The Park County RE2 School District serves approximately 500 children in our PreK-12 system. The onset of a highly infectious outbreak in our community could be detrimental to our population. This plan was prepared to facilitate our school district in the best communicating steps to be undertaken to reduce the potentially chaotic nature of a highly infectious outbreak.

This plan outlines PCSDRE2's strategy in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a highly infectious disease outbreak such as Pandemic Flu in a collective, community approach.

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This plan contains the following components:

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Producing Positive Outcomes

Positive Outcomes for PCSDRE2 Residents

The purpose of this plan is to achieve the following positive outcomes for PCSDRE2 residents:

- Maximize the protection of lives while minimizing educational and social disruption.
- Enable PCSDRE2 to continue to operate and provide services as normally and effectively as possible in the event of a highly infectious disease outbreak with minimal academic and economic losses.
- Coordinate our response with the applicable federal, state, local agencies and access available resources from each source.

- Continue the core operations of PCSDRE2 in the event of increased staff/student absences due to a highly infectious outbreak.
- Establish and maintain a coordinated command system that prioritizes effective, timely and sensitive decision-making to keep student learning needs as the focal point.
- Develop a communications plan that produces timely and accurate information to the PCSDRE2 community regarding potential prevention and mitigation measures.
- Coordinate the use of PCSDRE2 facilities for the use of vaccination sites, temporary clinics/health areas, or other needs when appropriate.
- Coordinate with other close districts for safety measures related to the outbreak. These districts include Summit County, Chaffee County, Teller County, Lake County and Platte Canyon School District 1.
- Prepare for and provide mental health service needs of students, staff members, and families.

Authorities, Roles, and Responsibilities

Federal, State, and Local Authorities Working Together

During an outbreak of highly infectious disease, the **US Department of Health and Human Services** along with the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** are the national leaders for overall communication and coordination efforts.

The **US Department of Health and Human Services** along with the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** roles in such a situation are:

- Identify, appoint, and lead the highly infectious disease response; enact or modify legislation and policies required to sustain and optimize pandemic preparedness, capacity development, and response efforts across all sectors.
- Lead national efforts in surveillance and detection of outbreaks. Prioritize and guide the allocation and targeting of resources.
- Provide additional resources for national pandemic preparedness, capacity development, and response measures. Support rapid containment of outbreaks, guide state-level authorities on the use and timing of community infection control measures.
- Support research and development of vaccines and medical countermeasures.
- Consider providing resources and technical assistance to countries experiencing outbreaks of the highly infectious disease.

The **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)** takes the lead from the CDC. **Park County Public Health (PCPH)** is guided by CDPHE. In cooperation with these two agencies, **PCSDRE2** assists in efforts to raise awareness and actions that are necessary for response to the severity of the phase of the reported illness. The risks and potential health consequences are taken into consideration by CDPHE and PCPH and assist PCSDRE2 in the following:

- Provide reliable information on the risk, severity, and progression of the outbreak and the effectiveness of interventions used during the outbreak.
- Activate the CDPHE Department Operations Center (DOC) and notify the Governor, the Governor's Expert Emergency Epidemic Response Committee (GEERC) and the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. CDPHE will collaborate with response agencies the State Emergency Operations Center to coordinate response activities.

- Prioritize and continue the provision of health care during a highly infectious outbreak. Maintain situational awareness by monitoring the illness surveillance data and assessing the public health needs of the residents of Colorado.
- Enact steps to reduce the spread of the infection in the community and healthcare facilities. Provide guidance, resources, and technical assistance to local health departments and aid in the need/use of vaccines and other medications. PCPH will then coordinate with PCSDRE2 to aid in the distribution of these supplies.
- Coordinate with public and private healthcare systems to ensure a cohesive healthcare response statewide to handle inpatient and outpatient care.
- Protect and support healthcare workers during the infectious outbreak.
- Notify the local health departments if social distancing and community mitigation is needed, such as closing schools, travel restrictions, cancellation of public events, isolation and/or quarantine to slow the spread of the disease.

PCSDRE2’s response to a highly infectious disease outbreak is as follows:

- The District Incident Commander will coordinate with PCPH, local first responders, and other District personnel to determine if District locations will be needed as distribution/vaccination centers.
- PCSDRE2 will communicate with District employees, students, families, and community members regarding the outbreak, including updating schools with potential changes that may take place and information on the extent of the spread of the illness.
- Maintain school staying in session until notified by state or local authorities for the need to close.
- Coordinate with Children’s Hospital to educate school communities on prevention of illness: vaccinations, proper hand-washing techniques, community mitigation, social mitigation, and data gathering to prevent transmission. Prepare the school communities to minimize risk.
- PCPH will provide the PCSDRE2 community with data and health surveillance reporting and information, as allowed by HIPAA.

Potential Scenarios

If the Governor declares a State of Emergency relative to a highly infectious disease outbreak...

Response to this pandemic will require swift and coordinated action by all levels of government.

- CDPHE will take the lead role at the state level for emergency support and will coordinate with Colorado Emergency Management, within the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and other state and local agencies, as part of a unified command structure.
- Effective prevention and therapeutic measures, including vaccine and antiviral medications, could be delayed, in short supply, or not available.
- Substantial public education regarding the need to target priority groups for vaccination and the allocation of limited supplies is critical in averting public panic.
- Non-pharmaceutical interventions, travel restrictions, cancellation of public events, isolation and/or quarantine may be required to slow the spread of an outbreak.
- Secondary bacterial infections, following the outbreak, may result in shortages in antibiotic supplies.

- PCPH will work with healthcare providers to coordinate the distribution of vaccines, antivirals, and other medications and/or medical supplies. **PCSDRE2 personnel may be used to support this process.**
- There may be a need for alternate care sites as a temporary health facility.
- First responders and healthcare workers may be at a higher risk of exposure and illness than the general population, further straining public resources and response.
- Widespread illness could increase the likelihood of shortages of personnel in other sectors that provide critical services.

Common Prevention and Mitigation Strategies

Prevention Strategies

Public health officials recommend before and in the early phases of an outbreak, to practice every day good health habits and to utilize non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) such as social distancing or keeping environments germ-free by frequent cleaning to prevent and protect the community from the spread of a highly infectious disease. Other possible measures could include the closure of non-urgent/mandated community events.

It is recommended that people protect themselves and others by practicing everyday actions:

- Clean hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cover your nose and mouth with your inner elbow when coughing and sneezing.
- Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms.
- Stay home if you are sick.

PCSDRE2, with support from PCPH, will continue to disseminate materials to the public regarding updates of the outbreak or pandemic, good hygiene methods including the hand-washing protocol, and other pertinent information. Additionally, the District will continue to communicate surveillance data in monitoring the outbreak or pandemic. PCSDRE2 will take great care to make sure that messaging to the community remains consistent throughout the outbreak or pandemic.

PCSDRE2's Response to an Outbreak

In the case that one case is confirmed by PCPH, PCSDRE2 will do the following:

- Assure that teachers have prepared lesson plans ahead of time in case they are out due to illness and/or high numbers of students are out due to illness.
- The Superintendent and Board of Education may review leave procedures in considering the possibility of a large number of employees off of work due to illness.
- The Superintendent, along with the Instructional Leadership Team and Operations Management Team, will identify essential staff functions and ensure that cross-training has been executed to maintain essential services.
- Begin practicing NPIs as the situation has now transitioned into an outbreak/pandemic emergent situation. While taking guidance from the afore-mentioned state and local agencies, PCSDRE2 will take a more active awareness of the everyday good health habits and NPIs. It is our primary

goal to keep our students, staff members, parents, and community members as safe and healthy as possible; therefore, we will continue to provide consistent educational information, as well as factual updates regarding the outbreak/pandemic.

- Initiate the Incident Command Structure in conjunction with state and local agencies.
- In conjunction with PCPH, determine whether or not District facilities are needed as vaccination centers and/or healthcare facilities.
- If needed, distribute Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to PCSDRE2 employees, as guided by PCPH. Instructions on this equipment for utilization and proper maintenance may involve guidance from Children's Hospital and other staff to assist in the use of this equipment.
- If voluntary home quarantine measures are suggested for exposed household members, PCSDRE2 will communicate with staff members, students, parents, and community members as needed to help mitigate the highly infectious illness.
- Depending on the severity of the event, PCSDRE2 will take direction from state and local agencies, including first responders, to identify the next steps.
- PCSDRE2 will initiate data collection of absenteeism rates and provide to PCPH data they may need for the report to CDPHE. PCSDRE2 will enlist the expertise of our Data Specialist to aid in this endeavor.
- During any highly infectious illness outbreak/pandemic, PCSDRE2 will maintain surveillance data and contribute to PCPH and CDPHE in a proactive, positive manner to increase the health and safety of our community.
- PCSDRE2 will manage all internal resources and document expenses in real-time. This will require the support of Accounts Receivable/Payable.

Recovery

Once we are notified by state and local agencies that we may begin to resume regular operations, PCSDRE2 will...

- Conduct an after-action assessment that includes completed surveillance data and feedback from District Directors/Leaders regarding PCSDRE2 crisis operations. Any damage done to the community from this highly infectious disease outbreak will be defined and analyzed for proper future planning.
- Stress the importance of returning to normal practice and procedures for the health and safety of everyone. We will return as quickly as possible to normally scheduled school days and events. PCSDRE2 will assess the need for additional mental health support resources and pursue providing as many resources as possible to our community.
- Utilize the **Park County Department of Human Services** and **Rocky Mountain Rural Health** to aid in identifying families that may need additional resources as a result of the outbreak.
- Communicate to the community when it is safe to return to school and what precautions, if any, will need to occur. All school grounds and property will be cleaned and equipment may need to be sterilized. The Maintenance/Custodial department will help support this practice.
- Monitor the illness and provide data as needed to continue the transparency of communication to the community.
- Establish a protocol with teachers to assure that students who have missed several days of instruction due to the outbreak can get back on track in a reasonable amount of time. Some assignments may need to be eliminated depending on each student's progress relative to content mastery.

- Debrief with all agencies involved in the crisis response. This will aid in refining this plan to better address the next highly infectious disease outbreak. Successes and failures will be discussed in transparency to determine the proper planning for the future.

Appendix: Finding More Information about the Most Prevalent Highly Infectious Illnesses

Web Resources

2019 Novel Coronavirus:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Pandemic Flu - Influenza:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/index.htm>

MERS:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/>

Anthrax:

<https://www.cdc.gov/anthrax/index.html>

Ebola

<https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/>

SARS:

<https://www.cdc.gov/sars/>

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