

March 14, 2020



Dear Parents and Guardians,

We want to reassure you that Salina Public Schools is monitoring the rapidly changing COVID-19 situation. There are currently no known cases of the virus in our area. We continue to base decisions upon the guidance we have received from KDHE, KSDE and the Saline County Health Department.

We want to be proactive and implement the recommended steps we have received to date. **To plan and organize necessary changes, we would like only staff to attend school on Monday, March 16. Students will get an extra day of spring break and not return until Tuesday, March 17.** The spring break extension is not a health department requirement. Having Monday with no students will ensure our staff is ready for your student on Tuesday.

**Why is USD 305 closing only on Monday, March 16?**

At this time, the guidance provided to us is to remain open. “Closing schools early in the spread of disease for a short time (e.g., 2 weeks) will be unlikely to stem the spread of disease or prevent impact on the health care system, while causing significant disruption for families, schools, and those who may be responding to COVID-19 outbreaks in health care settings. It may also increase impact on older adults who care for grandchildren.” *Source: Considerations for School Closure CDC*

**Why are large events cancelled, but school is not?**

KDHE says schools are different from large events. In a school, the public health department can identify who had direct contact with an infected individual. Most large gatherings have no record of who attended the event. In addition, schools can put in recommended precautions such as increased handwashing and surface cleaning.

**Can I decide to keep my student home because of COVID-19?**

As always, the final decision about your child attending school is yours. Please notify the school if your student will be absent. Your student’s school will be your resource for missed schoolwork. During this time, we are adjusting attendance policies to hold families harmless regarding truancy.

**What if staff or students traveled during spring break?**

We are asking that all staff and students who traveled outside of the United States stay home for 14 calendar days from the date of return to the United States. If this applies to your family, please call the school attendance office to notify them.

**Are school start and dismissal times affected?**

No. School start and dismissal times are unchanged.

We are committed to communicating with you as soon as new information or facts are available. These letters – and other helpful resources – are archived on our COVID-19 webpage found at [usd305.com](http://usd305.com).

You play an important role. Focusing on facts and remaining calm will help our students, schools, and community. Please help prevent misinformation from spreading – especially on social media – so that fear and speculation do not gain power in this stressful situation.

Sincerely,

Linn Exline, Superintendent

