



William S. Hart Union High School District

Dear Hart District Families,

I am writing to you today to share an important message about the Coronavirus. Yesterday, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 an international pandemic. The declaration is not intended to inspire fear. Rather, it is a scientific term that signifies that the virus is documented to be spreading widely across the globe. It signals a call for more assertive action to help resolve this public health emergency. This morning the Governor of California ordered schools to cancel all group meetings of 250 people or more and to enact social distancing policies where possible.

Since the start of this public health crisis, the Hart District has been in close contact with the LA County Office of Education and the Public Health Department. These institutions have provided critical guidance for how schools should respond to the virus to protect the health of our communities and to prepare for potential disruptions to come. The Department of Public Health releases updated guidelines on a daily basis.

Experts from these institutions have prepared a framework to help us respond rationally and deliberately to this public health emergency. This framework includes recommendations for progressively restrictive precautions as the number of individuals infected within LA County grows. It also includes guidelines for what could happen if an individual is diagnosed with the Coronavirus and exposes others at a school site.

I understand there are concerns about school closure. At this time, school closure is not recommended by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LADPH) for any Hart District School. The Los Angeles County Office of Education's guidance is to only close a school at the direction of the LADPH. As of today, there is no one currently diagnosed with the virus within the Santa Clarita Valley. Should we learn that someone obtains a positive diagnosis and has exposed others at a school site, LADPH will work directly with us to determine whether a temporary school closure is recommended. If closure occurs, health officials will help set a time frame for reopening and reestablishing normal routines.

However, with the number of people diagnosed with the virus increasing in Los Angeles, the time has come for us to take more aggressive action to protect our community. Based on State and County recommendations, the Hart District is implementing the following new measures to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus.

- Large gatherings (such as assemblies) are canceled
- All Hart District Open Houses are cancelled
- All athletic competition and extra-curricular activities are suspended (including prom)
- All school trips are canceled
- Public use of District facilities is suspended
- District-related travel (conferences etc) outside the Santa Clarita Valley is canceled

(These restrictions will be in place at least through April 30, 2020)

Public health officials have encouraged a coordinated community response to the Coronavirus. Know that the Hart District is working together with our elementary school district partners, the College of the Canyons, the City of Santa Clarita, local law enforcement and other community leaders to maximize the effectiveness of our prevention efforts.

We should not minimize the seriousness of this public health challenge. The situation calls for bold action and requires a public commitment to these prevention efforts. It also calls for us to respond with courage in the face of fear and thoughtful action instead of unproductive panic.

Thank you for your patience and resilience,

Sincerely,

Mike Kuhlman

Superintendent

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