

March 9

Dear Staff, Students, Parents, and Community,

Based on the recent information and guidance sent out by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and Mesa County Public Health, we are issuing a travel directive for the remainder of March that we have NO school-sponsored trips out of state or out of the country. As the situation is changing on an hourly basis, we will examine the status of the disease progression at the end of March or before, if needed, and make any determinations for April at that time.

We are not making this directive lightly, as we appreciate the amount of time and energy that goes into putting these trips together, and how excited you all are to take these trips, but feel we must protect our students and staff by following the guidance of the state and county health departments regarding travel.

For the most up-to-date information regarding Mesa County and guidance regarding any travel, we suggest you check the COVID-19 page on the Mesa County Public Health Department website at [health.mesacounty.us](http://health.mesacounty.us).

Just a reminder, we are asking that people self-isolate if they have any symptoms. Those symptoms are listed as having a fever of 101 or fever of 100 and any flu symptoms, which include coughing and shortness of breath. Please do not go to school or work, and consult your physician if that is the case.

While there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Mesa County at this time, we are waiting for the results of several COVID-19 tests on the Western Slope. The virus has an incubation period of 2 weeks, so you want to watch for these symptoms if you believe you have been exposed.

Our schools will all receive a disinfection of all surfaces over Spring Break and we will continue to do so after our student and staff return.

Please feel free to contact our office, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

**Diana Sirko**

Diana Sirko, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Mesa County Valley School District 51  
970-254-5193

March 12, 2020

Dear District 51 Families:

I'm sure many of you have questions about COVID-19 and the school district's plans to address its spread in Colorado. I want to assure you that District 51 is disinfecting all schools over Spring Break and will continue to make decisions we believe are in the best interest of all students, staff, and our community at large as the situation evolves. For the most recent updates on COVID-19, please visit [health.mesacounty.us](http://health.mesacounty.us), and for the newest information pertaining to the school district, visit the "COVID-19" Updates section on our home page at [d51schools.org](http://d51schools.org).

The district has been in contact with the Mesa County Public Health Department (MCPH), Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE), Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) and the Governor's Office. Each agency has been an immense help in guiding tough decisions. Here are a few updates for you:

- **Sports** - As directed by the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA), all sports and activities, including practices, are suspended from March 13 through April 6. Further information about the spring sports season will be communicated when available.
- **Travel** - All school-sponsored travel out of state or country for staff and students has been canceled through the end of March. For personal travel, we recommend following [CDC travel recommendations](#).
- **Updated Closure Information** - State-mandated requirements as of March 11 direct Colorado school districts to close all schools in a district for at least 14 days if three or more of its schools have positive cases of COVID-19 in their staff or student populations within a 30-day period. Mandates for individual school closure are:
  - Close a school for at least 72 hours for cleaning and social distancing if one staff member or student has a confirmed case of COVID-19
  - Close a school again for at least 72 hours for cleaning, testing, and public health investigation if there are two confirmed cases of COVID-19 within a 30-day period at a school.
  - Close a school for at least 14 days if three or more staff members or students have confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- **Instruction During a Closure** - District-led portions of the staff in-service planned for March 13 have been canceled to give educators time to prepare for the possibility of delivering instruction in alternative ways in the event of a

closure. The D51 Technology Department will provide links to online training options and videos that may be used for alternative delivery distance-learning methods.

● **For more information** - Please visit one of these resources: [health.mesacounty.us](https://health.mesacounty.us), [dc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](https://dc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html), [colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/2019-novel-coronavirus](https://colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/2019-novel-coronavirus), [cde.state.co.us/safeschools](https://cde.state.co.us/safeschools), and [d51schools.org/resources/covid19](https://d51schools.org/resources/covid19).

We will communicate updates via email over spring break. Please check your district email on a regular basis.

While I know that all of this information is overwhelming, I want you to know that the health and safety of our students and staff is a top priority. Please enjoy Spring Break, stay safe, stay healthy!

Sincerely, Diana

Diana Sirko, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Mesa County Valley School District 51 970-254-5195

March 16, 2020

Dear D51 Families,

After much deliberation, consultation with health experts, and discussion of how best to address the many needs of our 22,000 students and 2,800 staff members during a large-scale shutdown, D51 leadership has made the difficult decision to close all of our schools and buildings through April 10. This was not an easy decision, and we know it will be hard for many families, but feel that it is in the best interest of our entire community. Allowing for social distance during this time will help flatten the curve on COVID-19 cases in our community and help prevent our health care facilities from being overwhelmed.

Please note that future recommendations from local, state, and federal health officials may cause us to close for even longer, so we strongly encourage families to plan for a longer closure, if needed. Please continue to check

[www.d51schools.org/resources/covid19](http://www.d51schools.org/resources/covid19) for updates as they become available.

We realize that this decision changes plans for the spring semester. Our Curriculum Team is currently working on guidance for remote learning and we will share that information as soon as possible.

All district buildings, including schools and administrative offices, will be closed to the public March 18 - April 10. For district-specific questions, please contact 970-254-5100. For COVID-19 questions, please contact the Mesa County Health Department at 970-683-2300.

The D51 Nutritional Services is developing a plan to provide meals to students. Multiple sites will be identified as drive-thru locations where families can pick up breakfasts and lunches each day. More information will be shared with families via email and at [www.d51schools.org](http://www.d51schools.org).

We know that there are still a lot of questions. Our leaders are working hard to learn more and provide answers. Please continue to check your email, and [www.d51schools.org/resources/covid19](http://www.d51schools.org/resources/covid19) for more information as this situation progresses.

Thank you,

Diana Sirko, Ph.D.

March 18, 2020

Dear District 51 Families:

D51 Food & Nutrition Services will provide free, nutritious daily meal service for all Mesa County children 18 years old or younger at 12 schools and 3 Lunch Lizard mobile stops starting Monday, March 23, 2020.

Meal service will run Monday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the designated school site locations during the district-wide school closure. You can find the schedules for the three Lunch Lizard stops and the 12 school drive-thru sites at [bit.ly/lunchlizard](https://bit.ly/lunchlizard).

All stops are selected based on [USDA Eligibility Requirements](#) in 50 percent or greater free and reduced areas of Mesa County. Children accessing the daily childhood hunger program can be from any school system in Mesa County.

The Lunch Lizard will work the same way it does during the summer, with students picking up food from the food truck window. At school sites, meals will be provided curbside in the main entry loop. The pre-packed sack lunch and breakfast will be given out in a system similar to a drive-thru at a restaurant. Lunch Lizard and drive-thru sites will each encourage social distancing during pick-up.

We will provide children with a lunch choice of either the hot entree of the day OR cold option of the day. All lunch choices will include a fruit, vegetable and milk. In addition to the daily lunch choice, students will receive a grab 'n' go breakfast pack to be used as a breakfast for the next morning.

Food Bank of the Rockies and Kids Aid will be providing additional food at each site/stop on Fridays. Check [bit.ly/lunchlizard](http://bit.ly/lunchlizard) for any schedule updates regarding food service sites and our partners.

Sincerely,  
D51 Food & Nutrition Services

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Dear D51 Families:

Buildings will be open to parents and students (who are NOT showing symptoms of COVID-19) beginning at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, March 24. Families can come to schools on this day to check out Chromebooks, and students can access the building to gather any belongings that they will need to participate in remote learning. Families needing to pick up medications need to call the school starting on March 23 to set up a time to meet with the school nurse. During this time, we encourage that these visits to buildings are done as quickly as possible, and that people practice social distancing while there. Please continue to check your email or this website for more information.

Chromebook Checkout Policy: <https://bit.ly/3b7JBTO>

Emergency Meal Schedule & Locations: <https://bit.ly/3a4hwvK>

Students should participate in the remote learning opportunities in order to meet requirements for credits. At this time, we are unsure of how this situation will affect graduations. We will update families as soon as we learn more about graduations.

The D51 Nutrition Services Department has released information about Emergency Meals during the building closures.

[Click here for more information, and the schedules and locations.](#)

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Dear D51 Families:

We have just received information from the Governor's Office that Gov. Polis has issued an executive order that suspends in-person instruction at all public and private schools in Colorado through April 17, 2020. You can read the press release and executive order [here](#). We will continue to open schools on Tuesday, March 24, for students who need to pick up items left behind at school that they may need for remote learning and for the drive-thru Chromebook checkout system, but please be careful to maintain social distancing. Please continue to check your email and [d51schools.org/resources/covid19](https://d51schools.org/resources/covid19) for updates about this ever-evolving situation.

Sincerely,

***Diana***

Diana Sirko, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Mesa County Valley School District 51

970-254-5193

March 19, 2020

Dear D51 Families:

Online learning for students will begin on March 30, 2020. We understand that not every student has access to a device for school work. Families will be able to check out devices for students on Tuesday, March 24 starting at 9 a.m.

To help us facilitate this process, we are asking for an estimate of devices needed per school. Please use [this form](#) to find your student's school and designate how many devices you will need. If you have students at different schools, please answer for each school individually. This way, we can anticipate the need for devices. \*We cannot guarantee that every student will receive a device. Distribution will be based on availability.\*

If you already have a computer or laptop at home that your student can use for remote learning, you are more than welcome to use that device, and do not need to check out a Chromebook. Please ensure you have access to the Google Chrome browser.

Click here for the Chromebook Checkout Policy: <https://bit.ly/3b7JBTO>

Internet access: Technology Services are also creating a wireless network that will surround every District school for families that wish to drive up next to these locations. Families can use the "D51free" network at schools for wifi access. Families can also contact Spectrum at 1-844-488-8395 to set up 60 days of free internet access. Please note the Spectrum offer is only available to new customers.

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Dear D51 Families,

Like many of you, we learned that Governor Polis signed an executive order closing school buildings through Friday, April 17, due to the coronavirus (COVID -19). At this time, and per this order, all students - including D51 students, would return to school on Monday, April 20. You can read the press release and executive order [here](#).

This is a challenging time for schools and families across the nation. The impact of the COVID-19 virus has been significant. In response to this closure, teachers will spend the coming week preparing lesson plans, and remote learning is scheduled to start on March 30th. With the closure of school buildings, our school leaders have been evaluating their preparedness plans, identifying technical needs, inventorying and assembling Chromebooks for check out, and working with school staff to develop school-specific plans for remote learning. You will be hearing directly from your child's school principal about their specific plans by the end of the day on Monday, March 23. Below are guidelines and things to consider for students and families as they prepare for remote learning. Please read this message in its entirety, so that you stay informed. As new information becomes available, you will be updated. Closure-related updates are also being posted at [d51schools.org/resources/covid19](https://d51schools.org/resources/covid19).

What is remote learning?

Remote learning experiences may include online resources, online instruction delivery, email, and other electronic platforms. D51 educators are expected to plan for and deliver instruction, as well as engage with learners to the degree feasible given the current circumstances.

Teachers have flexibility in how to design remote learning based on their content and student needs. This definition will evolve as our system's capacity grows over time. At this time, we do not anticipate that staff will have access to physical materials (copy machines, scanners, printers, etc.) to make and distribute learning packets. So most, if not all, learning will happen digitally.

When will remote learning begin?

Remote learning is scheduled to begin on March 30th. Your student's teacher and/or building principal will be reaching out to you in the very near future explaining how students will be accessing their remote learning.

How often are teachers expected to deliver remote lessons?

It is expected that a good faith effort will be made by our educators to ensure that students have weekly remote learning opportunities. At this time, D51 secondary teachers will create at least three lessons per week, per class. Elementary teachers are focusing on 2-3 lessons of literacy and math per week. Should our district need to close for a longer period of time, weekly lesson delivery needs may be increased.

What are the learning expectations for my student(s)?

It is an expectation that D51 students are engaging in remote learning during school building closures in order to minimize learning gaps.

What if my student needs a device at home for remote learning?

Every D51 building has Chromebooks for students to check out and will be checking out these devices on Tuesday, March 24th. Please check your student's school website and watch for emails from the principal on how the check out process will be carried out. Information will also be posted at [www.d51schools.org/resources/covid19](http://www.d51schools.org/resources/covid19)

If your student is a Tech Scholar or Early Scholar (attends classes on the WCCC campus or CMU campus), he/she will need to check out a laptop instead of a Chromebook. Please notify the staff member assisting you in the checkout process that your student needs a laptop instead of a Chromebook.

How will this impact graduation and earning credits?

As stated above, it is an expectation that all students will participate in remote learning. Completed student work in each of their classes will be used as evidence for earning credit towards their graduation requirements.

What if my student is participating in an internship or job-shadowing experience for credit?

Students who are participating in an internship or job-shadowing experience as part of receiving school credit will be allowed to report to their employer as long as 1. The employer remains open and does not have any concerns regarding the virus, and 2. parent/guardian has approved continuing with the internship or job-shadowing.

What if my student is enrolled in a course at Colorado Mesa University (CMU) or Western Community College (WCCC)?

CMU has notified their students that all on-campus classes have been moved to online for the remainder of the semester. If your student needs a device, please plan to check out a laptop at your student's high school on Tuesday, March 24th. Your student's professor will be contacting you regarding how online learning will be set up for the class. If you do not hear from the professor, you are encouraged to email him or her.

What about preschool students?

Preschool classroom staff will connect families with resources and recommended activities to support learning. Preschool teachers are creating learning activity packets for our preschool students during the building closure. These packets will not require online access nor technology. Parents will be able to pick up the learning packets on March 24th. Your student's teacher and/or principal will be reaching out to you in the very near future explaining how and when students will be accessing their learning packets.

For students who qualify for special education services, providers/therapists may use online methods to deliver therapy. Chromebooks will be available for parents to pick up at the home school on Tuesday if needed. Please check your student's school website and watch for emails from the principal on how the check out process will be carried out.

My student receives Special Education, Gifted & Talented or English Language Learning services. What will those look like with remote learning?

Our Student Services Office is coordinating efforts to ensure student educational needs are met to the greatest extent possible during these unique circumstances. Special Education professionals will coordinate with teachers to provide support to students with disabilities. Gifted & Talented professionals will coordinate to provide support to students with Advanced Learning Plans. The English Language Development professionals will coordinate to provide support to English Learners.

How can I help my student(s) for remote learning?

There are many things parents and/or guardians can do to support remote learning for their students. Here are a few examples:

Check your email often for updates and notices from D51 and your student's teacher(s)

Check out the D51 learning resources for families and students.

Elementary Resources for Parents

Secondary Resources for Parents

Set up a place to focus on learning at home.

Familiarize yourself with the technology that your student will be using during the remote learning time period.

Keep a routine or schedule during school building closure with

Set school work time, quiet time and outside time

Routine bedtimes

Help your student balance TV and device screen time

How do I check out a Chromebook, and how many can I get for my kids?

Chromebooks can be checked out at schools on Tuesday, March 24th, starting at 9 a.m.

Parents are asked to come with their children for checkout, and parents will have to sign a

checkout form, which is available at <https://bit.ly/3b7JBT0>. Printing and filling out the last page

of the policy will help the process move more quickly. Do not email these forms - we will need a

paper copy at checkout time. Paper copies will be available at the school if you do not have

access to a printer. The checkout process may vary slightly by the school, and you may hear

more from your child's school early next week about how it will work at your particular school.

Depending on supply and demand at your child's school, families are encouraged to share a

Chromebook or Chromebooks with siblings to ensure everyone who needs a Chromebook can

get a Chromebook.

My student left his/her books and/or other personal property at school that he/she needs.

Schools will be open to students on Tuesday, March 24th, starting at 9 a.m. Students can come

during this time to pick up items they may need for remote learning. Students should only

remain at the school as long as needed to pick up these items and practice social distancing

while in the school.

With no counselors at schools and students more isolated from their peers, how can students seek mental health help?

Students and families can always access any of the crisis services listed on the D51 Mental

Health Resource page. The district is working on procedures for students and families to

communicate with their school counselors or mental health therapists. D51 will post as soon as

these procedures are in place. If you feel your student is in immediate danger to themselves or

others please call 911.

What if we do not have Wi-Fi at our home?

Charter will offer free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi access for 60 days to households

with K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a Spectrum broadband

subscription. To enroll, call 1-844-488-8395. Installation fees will be waived

for new student households. Some areas may not be served by cable providers.

Alternatives include but are not limited to using a hot spot, public Wi-Fi, or

internet provided through a cell phone company. Some cell service providers

have removed their data cap to support students' online learning. Please check

with your local provider.

Will meals be provided for students during building closures?

D51 Nutritional Services has identified 11 school sites for drive-up service (plus one with a private vendor - Lincoln Orchard Mesa), and the Lunch Lizard will visit three locations to provide a breakfast/lunch meal packet. Find more information here.

What if I need child care during school closure?

All D51 school campuses, including preschools, will be closed through April 17th, however, there are four Extended Hour sites that will be open during the COVID-19 school closure. Parents must register as spaces are limited. This closure includes preschools. This closure may be extended as we learn more about the impact of COVID-19.

Please contact Mesa County Department of Human Services for any additional options.

What about events in April and May?

We are constantly revisiting our calendars making decisions based on updates from local, state, and federal health experts. Events between March 18 and April 17 will be canceled, and we will revisit other events at a later time.

Where can I direct any additional questions and comments?

Please click here to send in any questions and comments.

Where do I get more information about COVID-19?

Visit <https://health.mesacounty.us/>

Where do I get more information about the D51 closure due to COVID-19?

[d51schools.org/resources/covid19](https://d51schools.org/resources/covid19).

### March 20

*The following letter is a message for parents of children with special needs. If this does not apply to you, you can choose to delete this message or read on.*

Dear Parents of Students with Special Needs,

We hope this finds you and your family well. We understand the current situation has brought many changes and challenges for all. This letter is sent to communicate information concerning your child's special education services and supports during the school closure.

District #51 has determined that educational opportunities will continue to be provided for all students during school closures. These opportunities may be provided through various means and could include distance-based learning through virtual means, written packets, videos, as well as many more.

Our special education teachers and service providers will be working through the extended Spring Break, March 23 -27, to determine how services can and will be provided for each

student they serve. They will be investigating various ways in which services can be provided. They will coordinate with your child's general education teachers and all necessary service providers to make certain services and accommodations can be provided.

Initial evaluations or re-evaluations may have already been scheduled for your child. Even though we will attempt to conduct these evaluations in a timely manner, we are unable to conduct any evaluations that require face-to-face with your student. We will continue with those assessments not requiring person to person contact, or will attempt to find alternate methods to conduct and gather necessary information. If we are unable to conduct or complete evaluations, we will delay these until we are able to reopen schools.

IEP meetings that have been scheduled, or are due in the immediate future, will be delayed until further notice. We continue to work with State and Federal agencies to determine guidance regarding these meetings and how to move forward.

As each student requires individualized services and supports, you will be contacted and given specific information for your student through their current case manager. We hope to work in collaboration with you to make certain your child is afforded the services that will allow him/her to continue to make progress.

As questions or concerns arise, please do not hesitate to contact this office or personnel from your child's school. We appreciate your patience and assistance while we work through this unprecedented occurrence.

Jan Blair

Interim Director of Special Education

MCVSD#51

[jan.blair@d51schools.org](mailto:jan.blair@d51schools.org)