

Dear Montville Public Schools Community,

I am writing to inform you that the Montville Public Schools will be closed until further notice effective at the end of the workday today. At a minimum, schools will be closed for two weeks. Please be aware that as guidance is updated, the length of our closure may need to be extended. Spring sports are also suspended until further notice.

On the advice of three local health departments, the school superintendents in southeastern Connecticut have come together to make a decision to put the health of our community (both our school community and the community at large) at the center of our decision to close schools. We have been advised by local health authorities that the implementation of social distancing measures is a proven science-based intervention that has been shown to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with communicable disease outbreaks. In the past, communities in which schools closed were able to positively impact and reduce the spread of disease. We felt compelled to make this decision to prevent the spread of illness among our students, our staff, and our communities.

We also clearly heard that we cannot confirm that this illness will run its course in two weeks; in fact, it is not likely that it will. We made the determination to make this closure “indefinite” based on that information. This decision was made in consultation with, and with the support of, the region’s public health departments, elected officials and emergency management professionals.

There has been much discussion about the concept of distance learning during prolonged absences. At this time the Connecticut State Department of Education has strongly discouraged districts from utilizing this approach due to concerns over instructional consistency (especially in the early grades), equity of access to learning experiences, disruption of special education services, and multiple employee contractual issues. We will continue, during this school closing, to seek ways to provide supplemental education to our students. Should we be able to utilize a distance learning model in the event of a prolonged closure, we will notify parents, students, and staff members of how this will be implemented.

I will email you later today to communicate plans to open the schools so you can pick up medications and other materials you might need from the schools. We will also explain how all students can access supplemental work materials through the school web site or Google Classroom. Furthermore, we will share plans to provide breakfast and lunch at designated meal sites for students who need meals during the school closure.

I will continue to communicate with you as we receive updated guidance from our public health officials, the CDC, and state officials. Superintendents from across the region will meet every Thursday afternoon to review any changing guidance, and I will email you every Friday morning to provide updates. Please monitor your email to ensure receipt of the most current information; all communications will also be posted on the district website.

Sincerely,

Laurie Pallin, Superintendent

Montville Public Schools