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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BBE Schools Community:

Discussion of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) seems to be everywhere at this time. Below is the latest information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on Belgrade-Broton-Elrosa Schools and the potential for school closure.

Belgrade-Broton-Elrosa Schools is actively monitoring the situation with the help of the Department of Education and the Department of Health. Community health and student safety is of paramount importance to PAS. In order to make the best decisions regarding school, student, and community safety, we need all families to help. According to the Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control, the best COVID-19 prevention activities are the same activities we teach children when discussing influenza and the common cold:

- 1) Use Quality Hand Washing practices,
- 2) Cover Your Cough,
- 3) Stay Home if You Do Not Feel Well.

If you, a family member, or someone you have been in contact with is diagnosed with COVID-19, please notify us at school immediately. Belgrade-Broton-Elrosa Schools will consult directly with the Minnesota Department of Health in the event of local exposure to COVID-19.

Belgrade-Broton-Elrosa Schools participates in state-wide conference calls as scheduled with representatives from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Both departments are coordinating their messaging and work to manage the COVID-19 outbreak in Minnesota. Belgrade-Broton-Elrosa Schools will continue to participate in all pertinent meetings and implement all recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Education, and the Center for Disease Control.



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Additionally, Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa Schools is reviewing our crisis response plan in preparation for any directions from the appropriate state or federal agencies in regards to COVID-19. We have secured the appropriate cleaning agents to conduct a 'super-clean' of both school buildings should circumstances necessitate this action.

As early as later this afternoon, our administrative team and School Board will start making necessary changes to protect our students and community the best way we are being advised.

Both MDH and MDE have addressed the issue of school closure in the event of COVID-19 cases in Minnesota. In each instance, the plan to close schools on a state-wide basis would be a last-resort measure and is not recommended at this time. As events unfold and conditions change, this position will be reevaluated and communicated with all of our constituents. .

As more information becomes available and recommended prevention activities are prescribed, Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa Schools will communicate these events with all students, employees, families, and community members. Here is a direct link the Minnesota Department of Health's website that provides guidance to schools and child care providers:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools.html>

If you have questions or concerns about COVID-19, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Patrick Walsh

BBE Schools Superintendent

pwalsh@bbejaguars.org

NOTE: Please read the following directives as additional guidance during this period of time. This is the best information we have available.



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Joint Stearns County Superintendent's Letter:

In response to the recent report by Stearns County Public Health of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in Stearns County, Superintendents from the county have agreed upon shared school operations protocols.

The districts will follow the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "Mild/Moderate Mitigation for Schools with COVID-19 Cases in their Community."

[Implementation of Mitigation Strategies for Communities with Local COVID-19 Transmission](#)

The districts will also continue to partner with local health officials, Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).

The following protocols will be in place in our districts beginning Monday, March 16th and will continue until further notice. Due to daily changes and guidance from the CDC, MDH, and MDE, this date will to be evaluated and may be adjusted during this time frame.

- For the safety of students, staff and community, only district personnel (those on payroll and contracted partners) are permitted inside district schools. Visitors and volunteers will not be admitted to schools at this time.
- Beginning and end of day routines allowing families into the school to drop off or pick up students will remain the same, but other family visits during the school day will be limited to scheduled school business.
- Public health officials have advised limiting large gatherings of people. In response, all school-sponsored public and family events and activities will be cancelled until further notice. Junior high and high school practices for activities and athletics, however, are considered an extension of the school day and will continue as scheduled.
- All field trips and school sponsored travel will be suspended.
- JKC and Preschool classes will remain open before, during and after school.
- JSS activities will remain open.

Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa School District, ISD 2364 710 Washburn Ave., Belgrade, MN 56312

Phone 320-254-8211 Fax 320-254-3784 Web <http://www.bbejaguars.org>

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- ECCE classes are cancelled.
- Community education classes will be cancelled including youth and adult recreation and enrichment courses. Fees will be refunded when applicable.
- Use of district facilities by external organizations and community groups will be suspended.
- Students who have been exposed to a diagnosed case of COVID-19 must communicate with School Administration prior to returning to school.
- Students who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or who are diagnosed with COVID-19, or who have a household member who is diagnosed with COVID-19 should not attend school and must notify the school office of the student's condition.
- Parents must notify the school office if their student is not in attendance as a precautionary action related to COVID-19.
- Staff members who have been exposed to a diagnosed case of COVID-19 must notify the Superintendent prior to returning to work.
- Staff members who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or who are diagnosed with COVID-19, or who have a household member who is diagnosed with COVID-19 should be in communication with the Superintendent to evaluate work status.

Health organizations are asking us to plan for the worst and hope for the best. We are encouraging parents to do the same. Currently there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our community. If there was a confirmed case, MDH and Local Public Health agencies would contact the school district and work with us to determine the next steps. It is entirely possible the governor, state health organizations, or the department of education will direct schools to close. families are encouraged to begin planning in the event this could happen.

Stearns County Superintendents are committed to the health and safety of all students, staff and families. The districts will continue to monitor developments of the coronavirus COVID-19 and regularly update the community.



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From the Minnesota Department of Health:

We are in the prevention stage of helping manage the spread of COVID-19. The most important things we can all do are recommended to prevent the spread of any illness:

- Protect yourself and others by washing your hands often with soap and water; covering your cough and sneeze; avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- If you or your child are sick, stay home from school and activities.
- Do not return to school or work until you are feeling better and a fever is gone for at least 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication.
- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home. Keep enough food, regular prescription drugs, and other necessities on hand in case you need to stay home and are not able to go out easily.
- Frequently clean all commonly touched work surfaces, work areas, and equipment (e.g., telephones, doorknobs, lunch areas, countertops, copiers, etc.). To learn more about COVID-19, visit:
 - [Minnesota Department of Health Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Website](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>)
 - [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html)
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>)
- In the event a parent chooses to self-quarantine their student, BBE Schools will treat the absence in the same way another absence will be handled. Teachers should communicate with parents and ensure email information is correct. Assignments will be sent to parents via email and will be completed in the same timeframe regular makeup work.

Thank you for working with us to keep our community informed and safe.