

**Dr. Thomas Sharp**  
Superintendent

**Scott Harrington**  
Principal & Activities Director

**Brent Heusman**  
Athletic Director

**Addie Heusman**  
Guidance Counselor

# STERLING PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**"HOME OF THE JETS"**

250 MAIN STREET · P.O. BOX 39 · STERLING, NEBRASKA 68443

PHONE (402) 866-4761  
FAX (402) 866-4771

## RE: Coronavirus Update - March 15, 2020

Sterling Community,

We just wanted to provide you with an update on the steps the school has been taking in response to the coronavirus situation. The administration has been on numerous conference calls with the Governor, Commissioner of Education, and Southeast District Health Department throughout the last few days to keep updated with the most current information surrounding this very fluid situation. The Governor and Commissioner of Education said on Friday they plan to use the regional ESU Districts and regional health departments when announcing school closures. School officials will continue to keep in frequent contact with public health officials as we continue to progress through this unpredictable situation. We will also continue to communicate with the Sterling community as well.

As of Sunday, there are no cases of community spread in the ESU4 region which Sterling is located in. Community spread means that they cannot track, at least through travel, how the person came into contact with the virus. These community spread cases make it extremely difficult to contain and school closures pretty much a guarantee. They also said that when there is a case of community spread, of even 1 person, schools will be closed anywhere from 6-8 weeks or possibly longer.

As you may know, the most vulnerable populations to the virus are older people, those with other health conditions, and people with compromised immune systems. So, is closing schools the best thing to do? According to the Governor, the rationale for closing schools is that schools are oftentimes the densest population in a community or area and kids will be the vectors that spread the virus to other parts of the community.

So, where do we go from here? The Southeast District Health Department is not recommending the canceling of events at this point, but things could change rapidly. They are continuing to recommend good hygiene practices and increasing social distancing. Missoula's Children's Theatre will go on as planned this week as of right now. We encourage each of you to begin thinking about what a school closure could mean for your family. There are so many variables and unknowns to this situation and I wish I could give you more concrete plans for the future. I do ask you to be flexible with us as we work to safely navigate through these uncharted waters while continuing to do our best to provide all our students with a safe and effective learning environment.

Sincerely,

Scott Harrington