Hart County Charter System Covid-19 Protocol
March 2, 2020

Hart County Charter System is currently taking steps to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19. Our schools play an important role in this effort. Through collaboration and coordination with our local health department and EMA, HCCS can take steps to disseminate information about the disease and its potential transmission within our community. Schools are prepared to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among their students and staff should local health officials identify such a need.

Schools should continue to collaborate, share information, and review plans with local health officials to help protect the whole school community, including those with special health needs. School plans should be designed to minimize disruption to teaching and learning and protect students and staff from social stigma and discrimination. Plans can build on everyday practices (e.g., encouraging hand hygiene, monitoring absenteeism, communicating routinely) that include strategies for *before*, *during*, and *after* a possible outbreak.

Who is this guidance for?
This guidance is intended to help our administrators prevent the spread of COVID-19 among students and staff. This guidance is intended for administrators at both the school and district level.

Why is this guidance being issued?
Information provided should help our staff and parents understand how to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 within our community and facilities. It also aims to help us react quickly should a case be identified. The guidance includes considerations to help our administrators plan for the continuity of teaching and learning if there is community spread of COVID-19.

What is the role of schools in responding to COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel virus, and we are learning more about it every day. There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. At this point, the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes it. Stopping transmission (spread) of the virus through everyday practices is the best way to keep people healthy.

Preventive Guidance for school administrators (we do not have COVID-19 identified in our schools or community)

To prepare for possible community transmission of COVID-19, the most important thing for our staff to do is **plan and prepare**. Schools should prepare for the possibility of community-level outbreaks. Our schools need to **be ready** if COVID-19 does appear in our community.

Review, update, and implement emergency operations plans (EOPs). David Seagraves will head up this task force. This should be done in collaboration with our local health department and county manager.

Ensure the plan includes strategies to reduce the spread of a wide variety of infectious diseases (e.g., seasonal influenza). Effective strategies build on everyday school policies and practices.

Ensure the plan emphasizes common-sense preventive actions for students and staff. For example, emphasize actions such as staying home when sick; appropriately covering coughs and sneezes; cleaning frequently touched surfaces; and washing hands often.

Contact the CDC for workplace resources such as posters with messages for staff such as staying at home when you are sick and how to avoid spreading germs. David Seagraves

Ensure handwashing strategies include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

CDC offers several free handwashing resources that includes information on proper handwashing techniques. This type information will be passed along to our parents.

Develop information-sharing systems. Heather Crump

Information-sharing systems can be used for day-to-day reporting (on information such as changes in absenteeism for students and staff.

Monitor and plan for absenteeism.

1. Review the usual absenteeism patterns at your school among both students and staff.
2. Alert local health officials about large increases in student and staff absenteeism, particularly if absences appear due to respiratory illnesses (like the common cold or the "flu," which have symptoms similar to symptoms of COVID-19).
3. Review attendance and sick leave policies. Encourage students and staff to stay home when sick. Use flexibility, when possible, to allow staff to stay home to care for sick family members.
4. Discourage the use of perfect attendance awards and incentives.
5. **Identify critical job functions and positions, and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff.**
6. Determine what level of absenteeism will disrupt continuity of teaching and learning.

Establish procedures for students and staff who are sick at school. Principals

1. Establish procedures to ensure students and staff who become sick at school or arrive at school sick are sent home as soon as possible.
2. Keep sick students and staff separate from well students and staff until they can leave.
3. Remember that schools are not expected to screen students or staff to identify cases of COVID-19.
4. Most respiratory illnesses are not COVID-19. If our community or schools have cases of COVID-19, local health officials will help identify those individuals and will follow up on next steps.
5. Share resources with the school community to help families understand when to keep children home.

Perform routine environmental cleaning. Craig O'Barr and Kenny Teasley

Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, countertops) with the cleaners typically used. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label.

Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, light switches, doors, handles) can be wiped down by students and staff before each use.

We have 7 Electrostatic Sprayers to spray large areas of the schools and buses. The electrostatic spray kills the Coronavirus.

Create communications plans for use with the school community. Anna Hall, David Buddenbaum, Jennifer Carter

Include strategies for sharing information with staff, students, and their families.

Include information about steps being taken by the school and how additional information will be shared.

Coordinate with local health officials to determine what type of information might be best to share with the school community. Consider sharing the following fact sheets and information sources:

Schools may need to postpone or cancel trips that could expose students and staff to potential community spread of COVID-19.

The School System has an additional plan that addresses when Covid-19 has been identified in one of our schools.