

Dear Verdigris parents and staff:

This afternoon, the state Board of Education voted to close all Oklahoma schools, effective immediately, until at least April 6 in an effort to minimize the spread of COVID-19. **This includes Verdigris Public Schools. Additionally, there will be no school activities during this time.**

While state officials mandated schools to close for two weeks following spring break, they also encouraged administrators to prepare for the possibility of longer-term closures, if it becomes necessary. At least 35 other states across the country also have made the decision to close schools statewide in the interest of public health.

Oklahoma schools are not expected to be required to make-up the missed days. At this time, schools have been instructed by the state Department of Education not to provide online, home-based or distance learning for students.

This is an unprecedented situation, and it continues to evolve by the hour. We know this uncertainty can cause anxiety and worry, but we want to assure you that Verdigris Public Schools is doing everything possible to ensure the needs of students and employees will be met during this unique time. We will be closed for classes, but – as a district – we will continue to serve our community, while abiding by the healthy best practices that have been recommended by the CDC. Employees will receive information about their responsibilities during the school closure over the next few days.

We encourage you to comply with what health officials have recommended as well. If you can, please stay home and enjoy family time. If you must go out, please practice social distancing, allowing at least six feet between you and other individuals. If you have questions about COVID-19, please contact your medical professional or the county health department. You also can learn more about how to prevent the illness by visiting

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

Communication will be key during the next two weeks. It is our hope that accurate and up-to-date correspondence will combat fear and panic, as well as help you make well-informed decisions for your family. As a district, we will be sending correspondence to you by phone and email. You also can get the latest information by visiting <http://www.verdigris.k12.ok.us>. There, we will be posting answers to frequently asked questions as soon as they are available, including those about child nutrition services, employee payroll, end-of-year activities and more.

For Verdigris Public Schools, there is nothing more important than the safety and health of our students, staff and community. We want you to be safe, and we appreciate your flexibility and understanding. Verdigris is strong, and we will get through this together.

Sincerely,

Mike Payne

Superintendent