

Superintendent Newsletter--June 2020

Dear Marathon ISD Families and Community Members,

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first two weeks here in beautiful Marathon. My first impressions of the district and stakeholders have been extremely positive. What a wonderful, family-centered learning community! If I have not met you yet, I look forward to meeting you in the coming weeks.

Obviously, the focus of all superintendents around the nation is the coronavirus and what the reopening of schools will look like in August. Here in Texas, superintendents receive regular updates from Governor Abbott and the Texas Education Agency, since the news can change quickly. I also check the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website on a weekly basis for more information. And, as we all know, Texas has currently seen a spike in coronavirus cases, even in Brewster County.

As we plan for our first day of school, our #1 goal is student and staff **safety**. We will provide you the details of that plan in the coming weeks, but most likely it will include social distancing, disinfecting classrooms, and hand washing, among other measures. Thankfully, being a small school district, we have much more flexibility around keeping students and staff six feet apart throughout the school day. As for face coverings, we have not yet received definitive guidance from the state, but as we get closer to August, the school board and I will make a decision that prioritizes safety for everyone.

As of June 29, our plan is for:

- Teachers to return to school for planning, preparation, and training on Wed., Aug. 12
- Students return to school on Monday, August 24.

We are also creating a plan for at-home learning just in case we are unable to return to school on August 24 or if we have to close school anytime during the school year due to a local outbreak of the virus.

As we receive updated guidance from the state, we will share the information with you. Again, all decisions will be made with safety as the top priority. If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, you are welcome to email me at pprice@marathonisd.net, call me at 432-386-4431 x102, or drop by my office. I am excited about the coming school year and partnering with you!

Pete Price, Superintendent

For more information about the coronavirus, see below (click on the underlined phrases for additional information).

How to Protect Yourself & Others

Know how it spreads

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus (COVID-19).
- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
 - These droplets can land in the mouths, noses, or eyes of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
 - Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

Everyone should:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, even inside your home. If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- Put distance between yourself and other people outside of your home.
 - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus.
 - Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
 - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.
 - Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.

Cover coughs and sneezes

- If you are around others and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.

- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Clean and disinfect

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work.

Monitor Your Health

- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.
- Take your temperature if symptoms develop.
 - Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.
- Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.