

March 10, 2020 (First Update)

From: Dr. Eric Mackey, State Superintendent

To: Local Superintendents

Superintendents,

Today, State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris, EMA Director Brian Hastings, and I hosted a press conference to update the public about our plans related to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Although things are changing rapidly, here are some salient points:

- 1) We strongly recommend that you cancel any overseas travel for students or staff for at least the remainder of this school year. Monitor the situation to any foreign country utilizing guidance from the US State Department for summer travel, etc.
- 2) If a case of coronavirus (COVID-19) is confirmed in a school community (student, staff, volunteer, etc.), we will in cooperation with ADPH and the local school system, cancel school for 24-48 at that facility. During that time, we will assess the situation and let ADPH make further recommendations for action.
- 3) **Clarification for 24/72 hours.** We realize that most school policies say that students who have had fever should stay home until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. Keep those policies in place. In areas where the virus is actively circulating, public health officials are recommending 72 hours. **However, at this time you may continue to utilize the 24 hours rule until further notice.**
- 4) **Once again, if you become aware of a confirmed case in your school community, notify Jennifer Ventress immediately.** jventress@alsde.edu or phone: (334) 694-4726 cell: (334) 268-0133.
- 5) Regarding your Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for Pandemic Response, I am attaching an excellent example from Calhoun County. Superintendent Donald Turner has agreed to share, but wanted you all to know that his team is actually currently updating their plan, too.
- 6) Dr. Harris and ADPH will be doing weekly updates and they will be updating the ADPH school website on a regular basis.
<http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases/cov-schools.html>
- 7) Also, look for regular correspondence from us as the situation changes.

Thank you for all you are doing to keep our students safe and our communities calm and informed.

Best regards,

Eric G. Mackey

State Superintendent of Education