



**THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK**

12360 Woodward Avenue  
Highland Park, Michigan 48203

March 12, 2020

Highland Park Public School Academy System (“PSA”) Board  
and Barber Preparatory Academy (c/o Promise Schools)  
45 E. Buena Vista  
Highland Park, MI 48203 - 3343

RE: Proactive Preparation for COVID-19

Dear PSA Partners:

Governor Gretchen Whitmer has declared a state of emergency for the state of Michigan in response to the discovery of two positive cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in Michigan this week. Yesterday the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) released a joint memorandum with recommended mitigation strategies and instructions for local school districts to prevent unnecessary spreading of the virus. I have enclosed a copy of the memorandum from MDE for your review and records.

As of today, MDE has not advised that schools be closed. We will continue to closely monitor state bulletins and response instructions and keep you apprised of any urgent changes. In the event MDE recommends that schools be closed temporarily or for the remainder of the school year, our intention will be that Barber Preparatory Academy (“Barber”) should comply with the recommended request. The safety of the children in our school district and community is our top priority.

In the interim, please review and share information from the attached memorandum with your staff, students and parents to ensure they are aware of and prepared to take the recommended mitigation strategies. We are also requesting that you provide written communication to students, families and staff explaining the protective measures to be taken at the school (which at minimum should mirror what MDE has recommended) and send a copy to our office as soon as it is made available.

We will also be contacting you to discuss contingency plans and capacity for virtual or online learning opportunities for Barber students if schools are ordered closed for the remainder of the school year.

Lastly, in the event influenza-like activity, absenteeism or potential school dismissals are determined at Barber in connection with COVID-19, our office should be promptly notified in order to coordinate appropriate reporting and response to DHHS public health officials (DHHS) and MDE as requested in the attached memorandum.

While the Governor maintains that the overall threat to the general public and in the U.S. remains low, the Highland Park School District intends to mirror the state strategy to prepare for this emerging threat with “an abundance of caution.” As partners, we appreciate that you share our precaution and commitment.

We will keep you posted of any new information or guidance as soon as it becomes available.

Sincerely,



Kevin A. Smith  
Director of Operations

Enclosure

cc: Board of Education, Highland Park School District  
Zakia S. Gibson, Education Compliance Officer



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR



## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 11, 2020

**TO:** Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Directors  
Nonpublic School Administrators  
Public Health Officers  
Public Library Directors

**FROM:** Dr. Michael F. Rice, Superintendent of Public Instruction,  
Michigan Department of Education

Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, Chief Medical Executive and Chief Deputy for  
Health, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Updated Guidance

Governor Gretchen Whitmer declared a state of emergency Tuesday evening, March 10, in response to the discovery of the first two presumptive positive cases of COVID-19. The emergency declaration will allow the state to maximize efforts and assist local governments and officials in slowing the spread of the virus.

Late today, the governor announced recommended community mitigation strategies for local school districts and childcare facilities. In doing so, she said: "We are encouraging schools, universities, businesses, and other organizations to use their best judgment about what steps are most appropriate to keep people safe and to slow the spread of the disease."

We share these recommended community mitigation strategies for schools and childcare facilities below:

1. Educate students and the community about COVID-19 and preventative hygiene practices (see list on the next page).
2. Encourage staff and students to stay home when sick.
3. Report influenza-like activity, absenteeism, and potential school dismissals to public health officials.
4. Separate sick students and staff from others until they can go home. When feasible, identify a "sick room" through which others do not regularly pass.
5. Communicate and reinforce best practices for washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes.
6. Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, like doorknobs, keyboards, desks, cell phones, and light switches.



7. Consider having students eat meals in their classrooms as opposed to a cafeteria-like setting, or alter meal schedules for smaller-group gatherings.
8. Limit large gatherings such as assemblies and inter-school interactions (e.g., greater than 100 people in a shared space).
9. Alter schedules for recess and entry/dismissal to reduce the mixing of large numbers of students and staff.
10. Schools with students at risk of severe illness should consider implementing plans for learning at a distance for those students, to the extent feasible.

The state of Michigan has been working with federal and local partners to monitor the situation, develop and expand laboratory testing, educate and raise awareness, and prepare for COVID-19 in Michigan.

On February 28, Governor Whitmer activated the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to coordinate state-government resources. On March 3, Governor Whitmer announced the creation of four task forces to combat the spread of coronavirus and assess the impact that the virus may have on Michiganders' day-to-day lives. One of those task forces is for education, which has been meeting regularly to monitor and assess the proper guidance for educational institutions.

As you were informed in a memo sent on Friday, Feb. 28, the overall threat to the general public and in the U.S. remains low, but we are approaching this emerging threat to public health with an abundance of caution. As partners, you should have appropriate information on what individuals can do to protect themselves.

**Use good hygiene practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases.**

- Stay home if you are sick, and advise others to do the same.
- Always cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue or sleeve.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and warm water are not available.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

It's not too late to [get your flu shot!](#) While the influenza vaccine does not protect against COVID-19 infection, it can help keep you healthy during the flu season.

**Review travel advisories before planning travel.**

Always review travel advisories from the federal government when planning personal and business travel. Review [CDC.gov/Travel](https://www.cdc.gov/travel) for destinations with risk of community spread of COVID-19.

**Share accurate information.**

Always [share accurate information](#) about a virus and its spread. It is important to remember that stigma and discrimination occur when people associate an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, with a population or nationality. COVID-19 does not target people from specific populations, ethnicities or racial background. Suspected discrimination can be [reported](#) to the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.

This is a rapidly evolving situation. For the latest information, please see [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus) or [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://CDC.gov/Coronavirus). The CDC has provided [guidance for preventing the spread of COVID-19 in communities](#) including businesses, community- and faith-based organizations, and childcare organizations and schools.

Decisions to exclude a student or staff member, or to close schools and childcare centers altogether, must be made on a case-by-case and location-by-location basis, in coordination with local health departments. These decisions are local in nature and could vary from district to district or school to school.

We will continue to share with you as more information becomes available. Thank you for all you do to keep Michigan schools and communities safe.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance  
Robert Gordon, Director, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services