



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

Public Health Services
820 Scenic Drive, Modesto, CA 95350-6194

Julie Vaishampayan, MD, MPH
Public Health Officer

Phone: 209.558.8804 Fax: 209.558.7286
www.hsahealth.org

March 13, 2020 3:00 p.m.

To: Superintendents, Stanislaus County School Districts

As of today, Friday, March 13, 2020, there are two confirmed Coronavirus cases in Stanislaus County. At this time, the Stanislaus County Department of Public Health remains committed to providing school districts the most current guidance and information related to student and staff safety.

Today, it is my guidance as the Public Health Officer for Stanislaus County that schools remain open and in session. This recommendation is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the California Department of Public Health guidance, and available science and data as of this writing.

Specifically, factors against closing schools include the following:

- Available modeling data indicate that early, short term to medium (2-4 weeks) school closures do not impact the mitigation or spread of the disease.
- Data also show that countries that closed schools, (Hong Kong) have **not** had success in reducing the spread of the disease than those that did not close schools, (Singapore).
- Closing schools may increase risk to older adults or those with underlying health conditions, due to increased social mixing (example: grandparents providing care to children).
- Closing schools will increase social mixing of populations, which may increase the spread of disease and lessen ability to monitor students – social mixing of populations are those places where people not typically associated with each other come together, such as theme parks and other large gathering venues. Closure of these venues are more likely to prevent the spread of disease.
- There is a disproportionate impact to children whose parents/care givers are hourly and low-wage workers.
- Students who rely on key services (meals, mental health, social services and other programs) are put at greater risk.

The Coronavirus/COVID-19 transmission and data are very fluid and changing quickly. It is possible that future guidance from the California Department of Public Health and the CDC may change the message regarding school closures. Daily evaluation of the community mitigation and disease control will continue, with any changes in guidance to school administration officials being the top priority.

Student and staff safety are among the most important public health concerns of the community. As of this writing, students and staff are believed to be safest in their school environments. Any changes in this guidance will be communicated as quickly as possible. For more information on considerations for school closures, please go to www.cdc.gov.

Julie Vaishampayan, MD, MPH
Public Health Officer

