

FEARLESS  THINKERS  
SINCE 1885

March 23, 2020

Dear Yellow Springs Families & Staff,

This letter is my fifth communication regarding the current situation around coronavirus (COVID-19).

Per Governor DeWine's press conference on Sunday, March 22, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Dr. Amy Acton, has issued a "stay-at-home" order for all Ohioans (with certain exceptions for essential functions) beginning at midnight tonight. This means that the Yellow Springs Central Office may only be open for limited hours each day. Employees, including the superintendent (to the extent possible), will be working remotely. We will continue to answer phone calls and emails, although there may be a slight delay in response time. There will be a skeleton custodial crew working in the buildings as well as perhaps one or two other key personnel. All employees working in the buildings will follow ODH's social distancing guidelines.

Also per Governor DeWine's press conference on Sunday, March 22, pursuant to the U.S. Department of Education's decision to release states from federal testing requirements, testing in Ohio for 2019-2020 will be waived.

Although K-12 schools in Ohio are closed for three weeks until end-of-day, Friday, April 3, Governor DeWine has frequently mentioned (almost daily) that it is unlikely schools will reopen on April 6, and in fact may remain closed for the remainder of the year. Should that happen, I suspect the governor will continue distance learning requirements. The following questions (and many others) still need to be addressed by the governor and the Ohio Department of Education: (1) If distance education continues, will the governor end the school year for all Ohio schools on the same date, or will he ask schools to continue distance education until they have met the minimum school year requirements? (2) How do we treat seniors in determining who is eligible for graduation?

As I plan for the future and anticipate non-traditional instruction/distance learning for the remainder of the year, our instructional approach must change. I will be spending the remainder of this week working on that plan in collaboration with teachers and administrators. As soon as this is ready, and as soon as we have more clarity from the governor and ODE, I will share it with all of you.

As a reminder, you can find a wealth of information on the district website (<https://ysschools.org>). The [COVID-19](#) link will take you to district letters, public health information, and relevant articles about the virus. The [Non-Traditional Instruction](#) link will take you to educational materials and instructions from each teacher.

An allowance in Dr. Acton's stay-at-home order is permission for outdoor activity. This allowance reads that "individuals may leave their residence only to perform any of the following Essential Activities: c. For outdoor activity. To engage in outdoor activity, provided the individuals comply with Social Distancing Requirements, as defined below, such as, by way of example and without limitation, walking, hiking, running, or biking. Individuals may go to public parks and open outdoor recreation areas. However, public access playgrounds may increase the spread of COVID19, and therefore shall be closed."

Because of this, the playground set at Mills Lawn Elementary will be roped off. Please do not use the playground until we have clearance to do so. Below is a graphic that helps explain social distancing in outdoor settings.



We will continue to provide food to our families who utilize free and reduced lunch services and to others who have indicated a need. The “stay-at-home” order does allow for this. However, in order to fully support this order, we may be reworking our food delivery schedule to limit the number of people who are out of their homes. We will keep families informed as we make changes to our food delivery program.

As I receive additional guidance from the governor or the Ohio Department of Education, I will communicate this to you. I remain committed to communicating with you regularly.

Do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions. Thank you for your continued support in keeping our students, staff, and community safe. Together we will get through this. Patience, kindness, and understanding are behaviors to which we need to remain committed during this time.

Enjoy this unforgettable Spring Break week.

Sincerely,

Dr. Terri L. Holden  
Superintendent