

Graford ISD to remain closed for students and staff until Monday, April 6th

March 18, 2020

To the Graford ISD Community,

Thank you for your concern and understanding during the recent unpredictable circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 virus. Among a magnitude of important priorities of Graford ISD, we know that none supersede the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and visitors.

The purpose of this message is to announce the proactive measures designed to help limit the coronavirus (COVID-19) risk to our school community. The health and safety of all members of the Graford ISD community are our primary concern. At this time, there are no confirmed coronavirus cases among the Graford ISD community. As local, national, and global health recommendations shift to reduce the spread of the virus, as a result of the March 11, 2020, declaration by the World Health Organization that the outbreak of this novel coronavirus is a pandemic, in light of Senator Fallon's recent statement that "The State of Texas is encouraging school closures," and out of an abundance of caution and concern for the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and families, we have made the decision to close the physical campus through Sunday, April 5, 2020.

"It is important to remember that while schools are closed, education continues," said Mr. Dennis Holt, superintendent of schools. "Our teachers and staff will continue to reach out to students to make sure they feel safe, supported and engaged."

The details of the instructional plans will be outlined on various platforms including, but not limited to, our teachers' professional web pages, school website, and through student folders that will be available to parents for pick-up.

Beginning Monday, March 23rd, Graford ISD students in pre-K through 12th grades will be able to continue lessons from home through the use of Google Classroom, teacher provided documents, and various on-line supplemental programs with embedded/linked instructional videos and/or through age appropriate lessons. Also, there will be a turn in tub for the work packets at the front of the school. Teachers will be available for contact with you about your students' usernames and passwords for Google Classroom/iStation. Our attempt is to offer the most thorough instructional support as we deal with the circumstances upon us. Please feel free to email your student's teacher(s) for help. We are here to support you. We realize that not all students will have access to devices or the internet. We will accommodate those needs by communicating with your child's teacher.

Though STAAR or EOC state assessments have been cancelled for this academic school year, our students will still have course and grade level requirements that must be successfully completed. Teachers and staff are working diligently to prepare lessons, packets, resources. The district will communicate distribution times as well as expected dates for return.

Initial Distribution of Materials:

- **Instructional packets for all students (PK-12th grade) and Chromebook distribution (if needed for grades 6th-8th) will be distributed on**
- **Friday, March 20th from 7:00 am - 5:30 pm at Graford ISD elementary drive-way (south-east doors)**

OR

- **Sunday, March 22nd from 12:30 pm -1:30 pm at PK Chamber of Commerce parking lot AND**
- **Sunday, March 22nd from 2:30 pm -3:30 pm at Graford ISD elementary drive-way (south-east doors)**

Expected due date for assignments will be the following Friday, March 27th. You may turn in completed assignments when you pick up your packet. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact the campus principal, Mr. James Womack, jwomack@grafordisd.net.

We want to thank you in advance for your support during this very difficult time. This situation is not ideal for parents, students, or educators. We would much prefer to be instructing our students in person and preparing them for what lies ahead. It is most certainly our desire not to overwhelm students/parents with a plethora of work, but simply to make an effort to continue instruction as best we can per TEA's recommendation. We completely realize that most parents have job responsibilities that must be tended to, in addition to life responsibilities, and we do not want to add unnecessarily to the workload. Teaching and learning are much different now than in the days when most adults were in school, so we understand there can be feelings of frustration at times. Please know our staff is 100% committed to doing all we can to support you and your child (ren) during this difficult time. Our teachers have methods by which you can communicate with them, including via email. Their email address can be found on our "Faculty" page. The teachers will be checking their emails regularly. Though the physical facilities are closed, please know that we are continuing to work remotely. Staff are continuing to diligently plan, jump hurdles, and ultimately support you and your child(ren). We care about our students and definitely want them learning and feeling supported.

Other Information:

- Graford ISD will continue to serve our students with "To-Go" meals and can be picked up at the back entrance of the school kitchen. Breakfast will be available from 7:30 am to 9:00 am and lunch will be available from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm.
- The District is suspending all events, travel, and facility usage effective immediately, through at least Sunday, April 5th. This includes all activities, field trips, extracurricular activities, conferences, etc.
- Spring pictures have been cancelled.
- Beginning Monday, April 6th and throughout the remainder of the month, at minimum, Graford ISD will restrict campus visitors (including parents and volunteers) to only those essential for school operations. All parents/guardians/guests/visitors should limit their time on campus to student pick-up and drop-off only. In order to minimize exposure for

all, visitors will not be permitted into the building past the office during this restricted time period, including during morning drop-off in the cafeteria and/or at lunch. Parent meetings should be scheduled over the phone when possible until after the restriction ends. Please understand we are taking these precautions as a proactive preventative measure to stop the exposure and spread of the virus, not to be unaccommodating or exclusive. This restriction may be extended as necessary for the safety of all.

- During the campus closure, Graford ISD custodial staff will take this time to further clean and disinfect the building. Also, bus drivers will be cleaning and disinfecting buses.
- Graford ISD has been in communication with staff to ensure that there has been no travel to any of the countries listed by the CDC as Level 2 or 3 travel advisory nations for COVID-19 (China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, Japan, and most of Europe) or to any places of active outbreaks, including domestic locations. If any students have traveled to any high-risk areas, domestically or internationally, we ask that the school be notified and guardians should closely monitor the health of all who traveled. Upon the reopening of the building for classes, students or staff should not come to school with a fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher using an oral thermometer until fever-free without fever-reducing or other symptom-altering (e.g., cough suppressant) medication for at least 24 hours.
- You and your family can contribute to the effort of prevention by adhering to the following procedures:

Cover your cough by using your sleeve, arm, or a tissue--not your hands;

Wash your hands often with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds;

Use an alcohol-based sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available;

Limit touching your eyes, mouth, and nose;

Clean and disinfect commonly-touched areas of your home frequently;

Limit public exposure;

Stay away from those who are sick or may be sick;

Stay home if you are sick or if you are experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath;

If you have symptoms, contact your health care professional immediately.

- As a suggestion, we recommend keeping your child(ren) on a routine schedule. This time will likely also be stressful to them, as they are out of normal routine with school closure and they may be hearing conversations that could be worrisome to them. Set aside a dedicated time for them to focus on their school work and what is relevant for them to stay in routine. Most of the work being provided is work they should be able to complete

independently or with minimal support, or work that is supported through online instruction.

Please be informed that we are constantly evaluating the situation and will make informed decisions as needed based on these rapidly developing circumstances. We understand the disappointment and implications of cancelling school, events, field trips, and other travel and we do not make these decisions lightly. Again, we appreciate your ongoing flexibility and continued understanding and support during this time. At this time, we do not have information or details regarding any makeup time required from missed time in class. It is our hope, through guidance from TEA, that having distance-learning, as mentioned above, will minimize/eliminate the need for makeup time, though that is still being decided. As details become available, we will keep you informed.

In the interest of slowing the spread of COVID-19, all Graford ISD staff and students/families are asked to avoid travel and large gatherings during this time of school closure. **If you have already traveled or will travel, we ask that you inform us as soon as possible.** Meanwhile, please continue to adhere to health and safety guidelines posted by public officials. Below I am including links to helpful resources related to COVID-19. I am also including links for some online instructional resources.

<https://padlet.com/talvarado4/w2ov77flw13w>

For detailed and up-to-date information, we will continue to keep our district webpage and Facebook page updated. At this time, students should plan on returning back to campus on Monday, April 6th, at the regular time unless informed otherwise. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this very trying time.

Dennis Holt, Superintendent
Graford ISD

