

Dear SLCS families,

Over the weekend, we learned, as did many of you, that a patient with COVID-19 was securely transported to Intermountain Medical Center here in Utah. This person contracted the virus outside of Utah and is currently quarantined as part of a transition plan back to his home in southern Utah. We've also learned today that the Utah Department of Health has tested at least 17 community members for COVID-19 and is monitoring several others for symptoms.

We know this news is alarming. We have received questions from many of you and want to provide some additional information and resources. Below are some frequently asked questions.

Q: How concerned should we be about COVID-19 in Salt Lake City?

A: According to the Salt Lake County Health Department (SLCHD), the risk of Utahns contracting COVID-19 locally is still low, but they still encourage everyone to practice good hygiene, including thorough and frequent handwashing, avoiding contact with those who are sick, and staying home from work or school if you or your child has symptoms of flu-like illness.

Q: What is the district doing to prevent the spread of illness?

A: Before flu season began, our custodial and transportation teams were trained in proper protocols for combating pathogens and for disinfecting our schools and buses. Special emphasis is given to touch points, communal spaces, and high traffic areas inside our schools. We use electrostatic sprayers that deliver an environmentally responsible and health department-approved chemical with a very high efficacy (quick kill time) for viruses. Spraying applications are typically done daily throughout the flu/cold season, but we adapt our processes as the need arises.

Q: At what point would school be cancelled?

We continue to check in daily with our county and state health departments.

SLCHD has informed us that if Salt Lake County begins seeing widespread community transmission—which means a scenario in which many of the respiratory illnesses in our community are due to COVID-19—that means that isolation and quarantine measures aren't doing enough, and we would need to consider cancelling school and other mass gatherings. We will communicate with parents as soon as possible in this unlikely event.

In addition, this afternoon, Utah Governor Gary Herbert today created a task force to monitor COVID-19 and to consult with the health department and community leaders on decisions such as school closures and changes for other mass gatherings.

Q: What can we be doing to keep our families healthy?

The following suggestions come from the Salt Lake County Health Department:

- *Stay home if you are ill.*
- *Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly: scrub with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.*
- *Avoid close contact with ill people.*

- *Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow; do not cough or sneeze into your hands.*
- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.*
- *Avoid sharing food and personal items.*
- *Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a bleach-based cleaning product.*

What can we do to prepare for a possible outbreak of COVID-19 in Utah?

SLCHD is encouraging community members to keep on hand at least a two-week supply of food, as well as prescription and nonprescription drugs (in case of quarantine). They've also admonished that "While it is always good to ensure your 72-hour kits are stocked, it is not necessary to purchase water or most other emergency supplies in response to COVID-19; this is not a natural disaster and our utility systems, including water and electricity, will continue to function normally during an outbreak."

We will continue to communicate with you if we receive any urgent updates from our local health departments or if there are any changes to district protocol. For more information, you can visit the following resources:

- State of Utah website: <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/>
- Salt Lake County Health Department website: <https://slco.org/health/infectious-disease/COVID/>
- Utah Department of Health website: <https://health.utah.gov/coronavirus>
- CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Sincerely,

Dr. Lexi Cunningham
Superintendent
Salt Lake City School District