



March 2, 2020

Dear Yellowstone Families,

Thank you for your patience and flexibility last week as we worked through the Houston water main break. With your help, we were able to ensure that every student arrived home safely and we were prepared to reopen this morning on schedule. Here are a few important updates:

**Black History Program Moved to Monday, March 9 at 8:30**

As part of the water main break, we were not able to host our annual Black History program as planned on Thursday night. With field trips and other activities already planned for this week, we will now be hosting our Program next Monday, March 9 at 8:30 in our cafeteria. While it is not ideal, we do hope that with enough notice, you will be able to join us. Feel free to drop off your student in the morning and then join us in the library for coffee and treats prior to the show starting at 8:30. After the program in the cafeteria, you are invited to walk through the Academy classrooms to see presentations on famous inventors, our wax museum and many other surprises! We hope that you are able to join us.

**Additional Information about the Coronavirus**

You are likely aware of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), a respiratory disease outbreak affecting several countries, including the United States. I want to assure you that Yellowstone is actively monitoring the situation in conjunction with the Houston Health Department. At the time of this letter, **there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Houston or Harris County. There has also been no community transmission of COVID-19 in Texas;** several people who returned to the States after being exposed overseas have been diagnosed and are under quarantine at a military base in San Antonio.

While COVID-19 is a rapidly evolving serious public health threat, the Houston Health Department says the immediate threat to our city and school communities is very low. Should COVID-19 reach our city or school community, we and the Houston Health Department are prepared to protect our families through appropriate control measures.

COVID-19 is believed to be spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes, much in the way the flu and other respiratory viruses are spread. Symptoms are thought to appear within 2 to 14 days after exposure and consist of fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. *At this time, people considered at risk for contracting the virus are those with travel to Wuhan, China, or individuals in close contact with persons infected with COVID-19.*

While there is much that's unknown about COVID-19, we know these following routine healthy habits help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Ideally use a tissue and throw it away. If a tissue is not available, use the elbow of a sleeve.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- As a policy that has always been part of our family handbook, if your child has a fever please keep them home until they have been fever free for 24 hours.

As recommended by the Houston Health Department, we continue routine environmental cleaning such as disinfecting frequently touched surfaces at our campuses.

In situations like these, rumors may cause unnecessary reaction and panic. Therefore, we encourage you to get information from credible sources. The Houston Health Department established a webpage with updates, key messages, frequently asked questions, travel advisories, rumor control and more at [HoustonHealth.org](https://www.houstonhealth.org).

Finally, some perspective from Dr. David Persse, local health authority for the Houston Health Department. While COVID-19 is a serious public health threat, it's important to remember there are upwards of 40,000 flu-associated deaths in the United States each year—and there have been less than 100 cases of the coronavirus in the United States to date.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely and will be sure to let you know if anything changes or warrants additional precautionary measures. If your child is healthy, we need them at school EVERY DAY! This is a critical point in our school year, and it is imperative that you continue to work with us to ensure we can prepare them for academic success. The only way to build on that success is to have them with us at school. Thank you for partnering with us to raise our student attendance and make school a priority.

We look forward to seeing you at our Black History Program next Monday!

Thank you,



**Ryan Dolibois**

Executive Director, Yellowstone Academy  
Superintendent, Yellowstone College Prep