

YOU ARE essential:

A message from Dr. Charles Dupre, *FBISD Superintendent of Schools*

Modified from an email sent to all staff March 24, 2020

My heart is heavy as I write this message because many in our community are ill, and members of our FBISD family are worried about being exposed to the COVID-19 virus. That is a real fear. We are dealing with something that is much bigger than we imagined it would be. And, honestly, it's the sort of issue we do not expect to face in the United States. So we are having trouble getting our mind around how serious the virus is. At the same time, we are fearful we might get sick.

Today, Fort Bend County Judge KP George issued an order that requires citizens to stay home. This order is intended to protect citizens by making them stay home, away from others, unless they have an essential reason to be out and about. This order also affects restaurants and other businesses that are not deemed essential. The order is important and we must take it seriously.

I am writing to make sure you know that your job is essential. I talked to Judge George on Monday, March 23 and again today to confirm that our district operations are exempt from the order. This means that the work we are doing will continue – feeding students, preparing to launch online learning, and any other important work you are doing. This also means that we need our team members to come to work when asked, if at all possible.

By working in FBISD, you have chosen a career that is service oriented and community focused. Just like a police officer or fireman, you are a first responder – you play a critical role in our community by serving our children. They are depending on you to show up when they need you most.

Some FBISD staff have been able to do their job at home and others must come to a district building to do their job. I know that this does not feel fair to some, and some have expressed concerns that they might be exposed to the COVID-19 virus by coming to work. I understand these very real concerns, but we rely on your support and sacrifice to help us meet our students' needs. Therefore, I want to assure you that we will continue doing all we can to protect you from exposure:

We will

- **allow all staff to work at home, if at all possible.**
 - **not ask you to leave your home to come to work unless it is absolutely necessary.**
 - **enforce appropriate social distancing while you are in a district building.**
 - **make every effort to protect you from exposure to COVID-19 while you are in a district building. This includes providing protective equipment, when appropriate, and maintaining a clean workplace.**
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Your job is essential. You are essential. If you do not do your job, children will be hungry. If you do not do your job, children will not be able to finish the school year. It takes each one of us to feed and educate our students.

I truly appreciate you and all you do to support the success of our students and our district. FBISD is special and unique because of team members like you. I am proud to work with you, and I am praying for your health and well-being during this challenging season.

With heartfelt appreciation...

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