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## **County Manager Orders Schools Closed Through April 3**

Monticello, NY – With cases of COVID-19 (2019 Novel Coronavirus) in every county surrounding Sullivan, County Manager Joshua Potossek, in consultation with BOCES District Superintendent Robert Dufour, is instructing all eight public school districts in the County to close for the next three weeks, through April 3.

This order applies to the following districts: Eldred, Fallsburg, Liberty, Livingston Manor, Monticello, Roscoe, Sullivan West and Tri-Valley. (The four other districts which serve portions of Sullivan County - Ellenville, Pine Bush, Port Jervis and Minisink Valley - have already been closed by their respective county and school leaders.)

"This was a difficult decision to make, considering how disruptive this closure may be to children's education, including my own," Potossek remarked. "But given the circumstances - including the fact that virtually every school district surrounding Sullivan County has already closed for at least two weeks - this is the most prudent choice. We cannot allow coronavirus to rapidly spread through the classrooms and hallways of our schools. That promises to be far more disruptive than a controlled closure."

"I have been in daily contact with the seven superintendents of our eight component school districts, and we are in agreement this is the right decision at the right time," Dr. Dufour commented. "In fact, we have been preparing for this probability, including the possibility of distance learning alternatives. I ask all students, parents and district supporters to be patient with us and to work with us as we continue to respond proactively to the coronavirus threat."

"This is a crucial step, and the County Manager's order to close schools will allow districts to avoid any penalties from not meeting the State's minimum 180-school-days rule," explained Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther. "The districts themselves will be in touch with families about steps moving forward, including who to contact with questions."

Note that while Potosek's order is statutorily limited to five days, he intends to renew it for three weeks, ensuring local schools remain closed through April 3.