



## EL PASO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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To: El Paso ISD parents

From: Dr. Marta Carmona, Deputy Superintendent Academics  
Vince Sheffield, Deputy Superintendent Administration  
Manuel Chavira, Chief of Police Services  
Manny Verduzco, Assistant Superintendent Information Technology

Subject: Extreme Temperatures and Beginning of Year Operations

Date: July 28, 2023

The first day of school is Aug. 7, 2023, and we are looking forward to welcoming back your children for another great year. As always, our plans for the 2023-2024 academic year include the safety and security of our students as the highest priority. In that vein, the month of August typically comprises some of the highest temperatures we experience in El Paso, coupled with the highest levels of humidity. This year, we begin school on the heels of a historic stretch of extreme heat. It is critical that, as a district, we consistently follow guidance and recommendations on how to deal with extreme temperatures while proactively managing our learning environments for the safe and successful education of students.

These high heat conditions create a challenge for the evaporative cooling systems, or “swamp coolers,” that are present in nearly all of our schools. Our Maintenance Department has been working diligently for the past two years, particularly throughout this summer, to ensure that our air-conditioning systems are working to their best possible capability. Here are some things we are conveying to campuses about swamp coolers:

1. While a refrigerated air conditioner is most efficient in a sealed and insulated environment, evaporative coolers actually do best with a steady stream of fresh air. As an evaporative cooler runs, it is best practice to keep a few windows cracked (1 to 2 inches) to let dry air in and damp air out and create an effective cross breeze. Too much of an opening can also be counterproductive. This is crucial in making sure classroom spaces don't start to feel clammy.

NOTE: The 1–2-inch window opening is NOT a violation of the school safety requirements mandated by the governor of Texas. However, classroom doors must continue to be closed and locked per the visitor management guidelines.

2. Diffusers work to create air volume in the designated space. They must remain open. Closing or redirecting the diffuser will minimize air flow and thus affect indoor temperatures negatively. We have asked campuses to work with their head custodian if they note any concerns.
3. The addition of independently attempted cooling measures, such as fans, portable coolers, etc., adds to the electrical load and impairs the efficiency of the cooling system. We are asking campuses to not deviate from the heating and cooling procedures without any prior approval from the Department of School Leadership and Maintenance and Operations.



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To manage the learning environment during extreme temperatures, such as the high heat currently experienced, we are asking teachers/coaches/sponsors to adhere to and follow the following guidelines:

1. Allow students to bring a water bottle.
2. Frequent hydration breaks.
3. Commensurate restroom breaks associated with hydration breaks.
4. A brief cooling down period before entry into the classroom after outdoor activities.
5. Be cognizant of the signs and symptoms of heat-related conditions, such as cramps, syncope, exhaustion, and heat stroke.
6. Make sure your campus has contingency plans in place in the event buses are impacted by extreme weather or other extenuating circumstances.
7. Campus leaders will be notified when to enact heat advisory protocols due to extreme temperatures. Please follow the published 2023-2024 guidance document.
8. All campuses should follow the UIL health and safety recommendations for outdoor activities. The district will provide a 2023-2024 guidance document.

Campuses also know that if they experience any mechanical failure or severe issues, they will follow emergency management procedures and protocols. El Paso ISD continues to be committed to creating the safest and most effective learning environments for all students. While there will be unexpected situations that arise, together through communication and cooperation, all students, faculty, and staff will find a suitable resolution. It starts with us as we collaboratively begin the school year in the most effective and positive way!

