



March 16, 2020

Good afternoon everyone,

This morning, the central office team and I participated in a session with our solicitors and other area school districts. After reviewing the guidance of numerous federal and state agencies and considering the evolving nature of this situation, **we have decided to suspend all educational assignments and activities minimally through Friday, March 27, or until such time there is additional guidance for schools to ensure we can provide all students with a free appropriate public education.** Given the timeframe provided, we could not ensure that all students would have equal access to curriculum and resources.

However, we can ensure our students have access to meals. Starting tomorrow, the District will be offering free Grab-and-Go bagged meals including a breakfast and lunch at four sites (Allen, Hillside, Newberry, and Washington Heights). The program will run Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Like the summer meals program, these sites are open to all children 18 and younger. If you are interested in volunteering to distribute bags at any of these sites, please contact Dr. Argot at rargot@wssd.k12.pa.us with your availability.

I will be sending a separate email to our families later this evening. Below are more specifics to assist staff as we move forward.

Reporting to Work

After lengthy discussion, we have evaluated the operational needs of the District to determine essential staff and essential functions.

Essential employees will be expected to report to ensure necessary District operations are able to continue throughout the closure. At this time, designated essential staff include administration, custodial staff, maintenance staff, and in some instances food service and secretarial staff (supervisors will communicate directly with those individuals). Based on future needs and/or additional guidance, these designations are subject to change. In other words, while you may not be deemed as essential staff today, you may be required to work in the future.

Regardless of whether you are designated as essential staff or not, during this two-week closure we ask that all employees remain available, monitor District email, and respond in a timely manner to requests from fellow staff, students, and families needing attention. As a reminder, District email can be accessed by logging in at <https://outlook.wssd.k12.pa.us/owa/auth/logon.aspx>.

Compensation

All staff will continue to be paid their Board approved hours through March 27. Direct deposit payments will continue as normal. All printed paychecks typically distributed to staff at the building will be mailed via U.S. mail to your home address and will not be available for pick up.

Leave

All previously entered sick, professional, and vacation leave during the closure will be cancelled. If you are already on a scheduled, unpaid leave, you will not be paid.

Access to Buildings

On Tuesday, March 17 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., access to all District buildings will be available for staff, students, and/or parents who need to retrieve items and medication. Building administrators will be onsite to assist. Please limit the time spent in the schools to minimize possible exposure to other families.

Beginning Wednesday, March 18, all schools will be closed to non-essential staff. All access to schools after March 17 must be approved by building administration.

Things You Need to Know

Grading and Assignments – As mentioned earlier, no new assignments or activity suggestions are to be given during the closure. Work previously provided to students can be graded following their return to school. Students and staff in dual enrollment courses should follow the expectations set by the college or university.

At this time, PSSA and Keystone Exams are still slated to be given during the 2020 administration dates. The Advanced Placement (AP) exam remains as scheduled for schools that will be open on May 4–8 and 11–15, with late testing scheduled for May 20–22. Additional information can be found on their website ([click here](#)).

For those who may have posted and distributed assignments in advance, please communicate with your students that these assignments are not required to be completed during the closure.

We all value the continuity of learning for students and do not want you to feel discouraged by the direction to suspend educational assignments and activities through March 27. However, we are in a difficult position to ensure all of our students, particularly those with IEPs, have access to the same opportunities for instruction. We appreciate your cooperation and will continue to closely monitor the situation for any additional flexibility provided to districts in meeting federal and state regulations.

Calendar Adjustments – The end of the marking period, parent conferences, kindergarten orientation, etc. will be adjusted accordingly and are highly dependent upon the duration of the school closure. It is too soon to consider any impact the closure may have on end-of-year activities such as prom, field trips, concerts, graduation, etc.

IEP Development – We are working to clarify expectations regarding IEP paperwork for both special education and regular education teachers during this closure, particularly for those IEPs that are expiring in the next two weeks. However, you should continue working on those documents, as we are not free from our obligation in this regard.

Thank you for your help, support, and continued dedication to our students and their families. As this situation continues to evolve, I will provide additional updates.

Sincerely,

Todd

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