



In this together

School Closure Update Due to COVID 19

March 13, 2020

Dear South Whidbey Staff, Students, Families and Community

Today, in a press conference with Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chris Reykdal, Governor Inslee closed school districts across the state. Please take the time to listen to his press conference (not available online to link at the time of this writing). Oregon, Ohio and Washington, DC, and others are doing the same. Again, we are in unprecedented times and will be doing our work on behalf of our children very differently in the near future.

In listening to Superintendent Reykdal, he very clearly said that what we do in the near term to keep learning going will never substitute for what happens in our schools everyday. We will get back to normal. It is critical that we remind our children of this truth. We are coming together as a community during very difficult times and yet we must maintain our social distance and figure out how to do our work differently. There is no substitute for our teachers and staff and their interaction with students. In the meantime, we must flex and stretch and keep moving ourselves forward.

We are now in a national state of emergency. I know that it has been a very difficult month. I really appreciate your patience as we navigate the rough water we are all currently experiencing.

This morning the ESD and the ESD's legal council, provided additional guidance to the school district on staff work. South Whidbey has a sound plan to move forward with our staff. During the next week we will be creating the infrastructure for child care for our essential health care, first responder and military parents. We will develop a plan to provide nutritional services for the students who need it. We will provide updates to you as they become available.

For now, please see our [updated instructional calendar linked here](#). Our planned student return date is April 27, 2020. However, this may change depending on the instructions of our Governor and the status of our district. We will reevaluate before this date.

Additionally, we have put together a list of [Frequently Asked Questions that is linked here](#) and will be on our website. We will update this FAQ list as more information becomes available. The new questions/answers will be listed at the top.

For now:

- We are viewing next week (March 16-20) like we would a snow emergency closure. Thus, our planned last school day has now become June 19, which aligns with the state mandated minimum (amended school calendar linked here).
- We will use next week to prepare to begin food service and childcare on March 23..
- All hourly staff will engage in meaningful work during the closure and receive their regular wages. This work may be different than the normal work they engage in but it is designed to support our work as a district and our community.
- We will be working on accomplishing instruction and what that looks like at various levels. More information will follow on the specifics. We will have technology available for those who need it and teachers will be in contact with students and families. It is too soon to provide details but they are forthcoming.
- We will have spring break as originally scheduled from April 6-10 (so childcare, food service, etc. should not be expected that week).
- We will return to school as far as we know now, on April 27.
- State testing has been cancelled so that is a week of instructional time instead of testing time.
- Our understanding, given the gravity of this across the Country is that the College Board service is considering moving the AP test dates later and changing SAT dates, etc.
- All school related events are cancelled during this closure.
- All sports are cancelled, including practices until at least April 27.
- After March 23rd, the only building open to the public will be the district office to process essential business operations and for planning purposes. School buildings will be open for staff and scheduled appointments.
- Teachers will provide parent resources for students to help maintain skills. Please see our [Students Tools](#) and [ideas for schooling at home](#) linked on the website.

- We will be working with teachers to develop/implement alternative methods to meet instructional goals.
- Principal Patton will be working with seniors to assure graduation requirements are met.
- Students and parents can email their teachers to communicate about learning resources.
- All work from home during this closure will not be graded.
- Grades will freeze as of March 13 until we are back in school.

Local basic need resource agencies are working together to ensure families will have access to food and other needed resources throughout the pandemic - at least to the best of everyone's abilities. We will provide updated information on our website as it becomes available. Readiness To Learn is putting together an online resource guide that includes the extended services being offered specifically due to COVID 19. A link to the [Readiness to Learn](#) resource guide is available on our [website](#).

As mentioned previously, most children are not ill, however, they are likely the carriers of the Coronavirus (COVID 19). Many of our staff at South Whidbey School District are in the high risk categories. We still recommend staff, families and community members practice good hygiene skills. Social distancing (keeping at least 6 feet away from unknown persons) is still the best defense. Please understand that as a community we need to protect ourselves and others. This is to ["flatten the curve"](#)

Please check out the SWSD website often for updates (www.sw.wednet.edu). We will continue to communicate through this closure as new information becomes available. At this time, reducing the spread of this disease is the best strategy for all.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jo Moccia, Superintendent