



NEWS RELEASE

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Seattle Public Schools to Close for 14 Calendar Days

All Schools Closed Beginning Thursday, March 12, 2020

****Superintendent to hold news conference at SPS central office today at 2:30 p.m.****

Seattle -- Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Denise Juneau today announced the closure of all schools in the district.

Beginning tomorrow -- Thursday, March 12, 2020 -- all schools will be closed for a minimum of 14 calendar days.

The decision to close was made because a growing number of factors have made it impossible for the district to operate normally. These factors include:

- The increasing number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Seattle, King County, Snohomish County, and Pierce County.
- An increasing number of our schools that need to be deep cleaned each day because of the potential of some sort of COVID-19 contact.
- The announcement today from Governor Jay Inslee to increase social distancing and to limit large group gatherings.

The decision to close for a minimum of 14 calendar days follows guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The emphasis is to take the strongest possible measures to disrupt the possibility of widespread infection from coronavirus.

Additionally, the decision to close follows the urgent directives announced today by Washington Governor Jay Inslee. Governor Inslee's directives focus on social distancing, which includes limiting gatherings of 250 people or more.

Because of the size of virtually every SPS school's student population, SPS cannot meet those limits and continue to effectively operate.

The Superintendent and SPS leadership will work with CDC, Public Health – Seattle & King County, Governor Inslee’s office, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to determine a plan for reopening.

“Closing schools is the last thing we ever want to do, but, obviously, this is an unprecedented situation for Seattle Public Schools, the city and the world,” said Superintendent Juneau. “The health and well-being of our students and staff is one of our top priorities and that’s a primary reason for the decision, but it’s also because of the potential wide reach COVID-19 can have given the size of our school district.”

Since SPS began taking precautions against coronavirus in late February, the goal has been to keep schools open as long as possible, both to continue providing educational services and the social services that many students access through schools.

Moving forward, SPS will continue to provide nutritional services for students who access these services through their school. This includes providing meals to those students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals.

Plans are being finalized for these services and will be announced as soon as possible, likely in the coming days.

Anyone with questions or concerns can access more information on the [SPS website](#). Public Health – Seattle & King County’s [website](#) provides information about coronavirus and precautions for the public.

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