

March 11, 2020

Dear Bellevue School District Learning Community,

We appreciate your patience as we navigate this complicated situation with COVID-19 (coronavirus). Since mid-February, our Board, district leadership, and our employee associations have been working collaboratively to plan for closure of our schools due to COVID-19. We have been following guidance from Public Health – Seattle & King County to stay open as long as possible. In light of current information shared today by our elected officials, we believe it is time to plan for alternative ways to serve our community and families.

This message is to inform you that Bellevue School District schools will be closed beginning Friday, March 13. At this time, we expect the closure to extend through March 27. We will reevaluate any further closures during that time.

We want to reiterate that there are **no confirmed cases of COVID-19 (coronavirus) in the Bellevue School District at this time.** While public health guidance has not changed, across our district we are experiencing staff shortages that have interrupted our ability to provide high quality instruction to each and every one of our students. Many of our staff fall into the categories designated by Public Health – Seattle & King County as being at higher risk and they have been following guidance and avoiding extended contact with others. In addition, we have many of our educators and staff who have been conflicted with serving our students and ensuring they are safe by taking care of their own health and their families' health. Surrounding districts, including the Seattle Public Schools and Lake Washington Schools, have begun making decisions to close. Many of our staff have children who attend schools in those districts, and we expect those closures to further reduce staff in our schools.

What This Means for Students

Tomorrow, Thursday, March 12, will be a regular school day. This will allow students to collect learning materials that they might need and bring home any personal items they might want while schools are closed. Our educators will also be able to talk with students and to plan for this closure.

Beginning on Friday, March 13 through March 27, our schools will be closed to students. Our school buildings will continue to be open for staff and our district offices will remain open. During this time, students will have limited instructional opportunities. These instructional opportunities will be optional, not graded, and will not be meant as a substitute for learning that is currently going on in our classrooms.

We are finalizing plans to support our families during the closure in the following ways:

- Providing technology resources, including mobile wi-fi hot spots and technology support
- Providing meals to our students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches
- Providing childcare for our families who need to continue working during our closure

In tomorrow's update, we will share a survey with you to collect information on your needs, so we are ready to meet them beginning on Monday, March 16.

We understand that this plan will create hardship for many families, and we appreciate your patience and cooperation.

Public Health Guidance

We encourage you to continue to follow existing guidelines to protect your own health. The Centers for Disease Control recommends:

- Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds; use alcohol-based sanitizer if no water is available
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with those who are sick
- Stay home if sick
- Cover cough or sneeze with tissue, throw tissue in trash, wash hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched object and surfaces

Stay Connected

As part of our COVID-19 (coronavirus) response, we will be sending daily updates with information and resources. These messages will always link back to BSD's [COVID-19 webpage](#). We want to express our appreciation for the patience of our Bellevue community as we work through the daily challenges COVID-19 has presented us.