



WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
6820 MARKET STREET
RUSSELL PA 16345-3406

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SUPERINTENDENT

FAQ REGARDING COVID-19 SCHOOL CLOSURE FOR EMPLOYEES

Please take the time to thoroughly read this document. We intend to reissue the document as we receive new information. This document reflects the most up to date information we have on 3/19/20.

1. When will the school closure start?
 - Governor Tom Wolf announced on Friday, March 13th at 3:00 pm that all K-12 Pennsylvania schools will be closed for 10 business days effective Monday, March 16th.
2. How long will the closure last?
 - At this point, the Governor has determined schools will be closed for 10 business days. If nothing changes, March 30th will be the next day school is in session.
3. Who will be expected to work during the school closure?
 - The district, in this type of situation, is expected to identify employees essential to the operation of the district. The same set of employees expected to report on a snow day are expected to report during the school closure to continue the operation of district functions. In addition, in order to provide food for students and to continue the cleaning effort needed for the safety of students and staff, some cafeteria employees and all class B custodians will need to work as well.
 - All employee work schedules could change at some point as further information becomes known.
4. How will the district address and resolve the unprecedented labor issues and questions related to this mandatory school closure?
 - The district met with WCESPA leadership on Friday, March 13th, and will continue to meet, as needed.
 - The district spoke with WCEA leadership on Friday, March 13th, and will continue to meet, as needed.
 - If it becomes necessary to deviate from the collectively bargained agreements, the district and the bargaining unit leadership will work together to address and resolve unforeseen circumstances.

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5. Will students be able to obtain breakfast and lunch from the school during the school closure? **(Item updated on 3/19/20)**
 - The district will have grab and go breakfast / lunch ready for pickup at ten locations across the county starting on Tuesday, March 17th. Information will be going out this afternoon with specific locations and times.
 - **The list of sites has increased. Please see the district website for those additions.**
6. What is the status of athletics and school activities?
 - All school activities are either cancelled or postponed during the duration of this closure.
7. Are coaches permitted to practice with teams if the practices are off school property?
 - No, this is absolutely not permitted.
8. What will happen to the school calendar? **(Item updated on 3/19/20)**
 - The Governor has stated the following: Be aware that no school district will be penalized if it fails to meet the 180 day or school hour requirements.
At this point, we do not believe we will be required to revise the school calendar, but we are not positive. In other circumstances, we would be expected to make efforts to fit in more days of instruction, so we are seeking clarification on this issue.
 - We have been told all day “they” were meeting at the state level to resolve the ambiguous 180 day language. I just received today’s updated guidance, and they did not provide us with any additional information. We are promised another update on Wednesday, March 18th. I can only assume they are wrestling with this very difficult legal clarification. I am also assuming the unknown period of time we may be closed is complicating matters. (3/16/20)
 - **We were told last night that it will be a district decision as to whether we attempt to make up days by going to school through June 30th. That is a Board decision, and one we will not be able to make yet. (3/19/20)**
9. Is it possible that graduation will be on a later date? **(Item updated on 3/19/20)**
 - This question is linked to #8. At this time, we do not believe there will be a change to graduation.
 - **Now we are aware this will be a local decision connected to the decision to make up or not make up days. This will be an issue we discuss at the Board level.**

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10. What is known about PSSA / Keystone / Attendance requirements at this time? **(Item updated on 3/19/20)**

- The district has no information about these topics, to date. The district is getting communications from the state, and we expect to continue to get more clarification as they have time to work through this situation.
- Additional information was provided in today's update. The State Government is waiting on direction from the Federal Government. I have provided a screen shot of the exact language below... sounds like they are going to try. (3/16/20)

- Administration of statewide assessments (PSSAs, Keystone Exams, Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment) is required under Federal law.
- As of March 14, the Federal government (U.S. Department of Education (USDE)) has not waived statewide assessments that would typically begin later this spring.
 - PSSA testing is scheduled to begin April 20; Keystone testing is scheduled to begin May 11.
- USDE has acknowledged that certain assessment requirements might not be practical given this unique national situation; as such, USDE will consider waivers such as:
 - A one-year waiver of the assessment requirements for those schools impacted by these extraordinary circumstances.
 - A one-year waiver for an impacted school to not factor the 95% participation rate into its Academic Achievement indicator.
 - A one-year waiver to exclude the Regular Attendance indicator from Pennsylvania's accountability system.
- PDE is monitoring emerging Federal guidance, working with other states to advocate for flexibility, and will pursue appropriate waivers to the **fullest extent allowable** as soon as USDE guidance is clarified.
- PDE will continue to provide updates as they are available.

- **The following statement was just released 3/19/20 3:52 pm: Later today, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will be announcing a cancellation of statewide assessments for the 2019-2020 school year. This cancellation includes the PSSA, PASA, and Keystone Exams.**

11. Will 21st Century programs run during the closure?

- Warren County School District 21st Century programs will not be in session during the school closure.

12. Will Warren County School District offices and school main offices be functioning during the school closure?

- The offices will be staffed, but will not be open to the public to support the Governor's efforts to slow down the spread of COVID-19.

13. Are teachers permitted to work in their rooms during the closure? **(Item updated on 3/19/20)**

- At this time, teachers are permitted to make arrangements to come into the building to get materials, but cannot stay and work in their rooms.
- **After 3/20/20, teachers will no longer be able to access their rooms. (3/19/29)**

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14. If I am a parent or student, will I be able to access school property during the school closure?
- In general, students and parents are not permitted to be on school property.
 - Parents may call the school office to make arrangements to pick up something medically necessary for their child.
15. Will prom still occur, as planned, for each high school? **(Item updated on 3/19/20)**
- At this point, the district has no information causing the plans, already in place, to change.
 - **It would be wise, at this point, to have conversations with any vendors to see how flexible they will be if we have to reschedule. (3/19/20)**
16. Is the district offering on-line learning for all students during this school closure? **(Item updated on 3/19/20)**
- The district, due to the lack of Internet access to many students, cannot proceed with on-line learning for all students. Any effort to educate students during a closure must be equitable for ALL students.
 - A call blast went out today to further clarify this for professional staff. No suggestions or recommendations are to be given for any work to be completed while school is closed. Please understand there are state, federal, and special education implications if you, as a representative of the district, are recommending learning opportunities to students in a public manner. I recognize this is difficult as we think about our students, but the law is clear, we are either educating ALL students, or we are not educating students at all. Right now, we are not at all able to educate ALL students. (3/16/20)
 - **We have asked our legal team to draft a letter to make sure you can do what you want to do personally, while not getting the district into serious legal trouble. There is a fine line, and I know you are all simply trying to help. I anticipate being able to get this to you tomorrow. (3/19/20)**
17. If the school closure is limited to 10 business days, how will the district handle determining when the 4th marking period begins?
- If the closure is limited to 10 business days, we will use the first week back in class to complete the 3rd marking period, then shift, after the 5th day, to the 4th marking period.
18. Is it possible the school closure will go beyond 10 business days? **(Item updated on 3/19/20)**
- At this point, the district has no idea if the closure will be extended.
 - I do not know any more than any of you do at this point, but I do think we have to be open to the possibility given everything going on around us. (3/16/20)
 - **They are telling us we will likely be updated tomorrow. (3/19/20)**

19. How will the district manage the return to school?
- The district has been and will continue to monitor COVID-19. The goal of this closure is to slow the spread on the virus. The closure is not going to eliminate the virus. The district will be following State and Federal guidance regarding when to be at school and when not to be at school. The district has been and will continue to communicate that guidance to parents and students.
20. Are there plans to reschedule events that had to be cancelled?
- The district is not able to reschedule anything at this time. Information about the spread of COVID-19 and the local, state, and federal responses attempting to manage it are moving too quickly to commit to rescheduling any events at this time.
21. How can families get additional information as it becomes available?
- District and school offices will be available to call with any questions.
 - The Warren County School District website will be updated regularly at www.wcsdpa.org
 - District and school Facebook pages will be updated regularly.
 - Call blasts will be utilized, as needed.
22. Are the school buildings open for non-school related activities? **(Updated 3/19/20)**
- No, the buildings are not open for any use.
 - **I was asked yesterday to make a gym available for a blood drive, as our area is in critical need. We will allow a blood drive in the WAHS gym, but I do not have details at this point.**
23. Are we aware of any positive cases in Warren County at this point? **(New item as of 3/19/20)**
- No. The district is part of the Emergency Management Planning meetings, and it was confirmed today that all tests from Warren County have been negative. (3/16/20)
 - **All tests that have come back have still be negative as of today, 3/19/20. We are being told the tests are going to California, so the exact number of days it takes to get a result is not known to me right now.**
24. How will the district be handling PSERS during this time? **(New item as of 3/19/20)**
- **The district, as of today, 3/19/20, has been directed to handle PSERS in a manner that reflects you are currently not working (for those of you not working).**
 - **PSERS is on the top of the list for legislators to provide guidance this week. Stay tuned.**
25. What do we know about the spring SAT's?
- **The makeup session for the March 14th exam scheduled for March 28th is cancelled. In addition, the May 2nd exam is cancelled.**

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26. I am a “non-essential worker” who is not typically paid for school closure days. How do I apply for unemployment, as things are still unknown at the district level? (New item as of 3/19/20)

<https://www.uc.pa.gov/unemployment-benefits/file/Pages/File%20an%20Initial%20Claim.aspx>

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