



Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District

Office of the Superintendent

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To All in the AWRSD Community:

Thank you for your ongoing patience and support as we navigate through the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) crisis. I have made the decision that **effective Monday, March 16, 2020 the schools of the Ashburnham Westminister Regional School District will be closed for a period of one week (through Friday, March 20)**. Extended Day will also be closed during this time. Before March 20th, I will work with local and state officials to assess the status and efficacy of this closing and should the situation warrant, I will extend if need be.

As you are aware, COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has dominated our conversations in regard to what the District's responsibility can and should be. Since my last communication to you, the District has been part of several conference calls and other discussions that have included local district superintendents, nurses, the Massachusetts Department of Health (DPH), local Departments of Health, and the Commissioner of Education, among others. These calls have yielded information that has been both informative and supportive of communities making their own decisions.

This decision is intended to be proactive and not reactive in a way that supports the health and safety of our community. Many public health experts have stated that we are in a period where there should be "proportional mitigation," i.e., a response to avoid a sustainable community spread. There is a growing body of research that supports proactive measures to stop any potential spreading.

Please realize that school closures are being done on a regional basis, as many superintendents in Worcester County have been in close consultation. Potential infection does not discriminate among borders and we are all in agreement that a regional response is the most effective one. We agree that closing schools will enable us to reassess the depth and breadth of the current COVID-19 threat. We continue to have confidence in the knowledge and leadership of our local and state health officials whose guidance and support we have relied on throughout this ever-changing situation.

I am sorry for the disruptions to your usual routine and the inconvenience that this has or may cause. I also regret the heightened anxiety that this crisis is causing for many. However, these are extraordinary times and they call for proactive measures. I will be in touch with more information as it becomes available.

Sincerely,

Sandra Rehler
Interim Superintendent of Schools