

Seattle Education Association Frequently Asked Questions Regarding SPS School Closure - COVID-19 Response

This page will be updated with information regarding the impacts of the SPS school closure on our SEA members and larger school communities. Our goal is to provide our SEA members with up to date and accurate information. This page will be updated as new information becomes available.

This list isn't a comprehensive list of all the issues we are working on (there are many), but rather questions where we have clear answers to at this time.

If you have any other questions, please email sea@washingtonea.org.

March 16, 2020 – 4pm

- **Will I continue to get paid for the duration of the school closure?**

*****Classified and Certificated FTE employees and long-term substitutes will continue to receive their regular paychecks during the closure.*****

All stipends will continue to be paid.

Employees who submit time sheets for regular paychecks will continue to do so.

- **What are my work expectations during the closure?**

All SEA members will be sent out a link for members to participate in a [Thought Exchange survey](#). We are seeking feedback from our members as to what they are able to do to support student learning and to the extent possible continue their individual work.

As SPS work to determine how employees work under these extreme circumstances, SEA is committed to ensuring that educators shape what that may look like.

In the meantime, employees can continue:

- *Safe Schools Training - <http://seattle.wa.safeschools.com>*
- *Tech Time Modules, Digital Learning Schoology Resources*

- **I am a daily sub. How can I access unemployment benefits?**

Visit esd.wa.gov. There is currently a one-week waiting period, so apply ASAP.

- **How can substitutes who are not staffed receive pay?**

Substitutes who are not in staffed positions can use their accrued sick leave while schools are closed. To do this, fill in your regular timesheet to claim sick time and write 'school closure' for the reason. SEA is working on finding a solution for substitutes who use up their accrued sick leave.

- **What happens now that PD is canceled for those who need clock hours / FCS for certification?**

WEA has made a request for an emergency rule change to extend the deadline for certification requirements.

SEA members should still complete and online safe schools training and Schoology teaching resources (cert)

March 13, 2020 – 5pm

- **I am a SEA represented employee working out of the JSCEE. What are my work requirements?**

As of today, staff essential to school district operations will continue to work.

- *Enrollment* - Security
- *Accounting/Payroll* - Customer Service

SPS will make every effort to mitigate contact with others and maximize social distancing (i.e. enrollment services will engage with families enrolling their students via phone/email).

Non-essential staff may telecommute if possible. Understanding that work expectations for SEA members in our schools is currently under development, we advise SEA represented staff members to broadly follow the telecommuting guideline outlined by SPS.

***At this time, there should be no requirement at this time to submit documentation of work, formal clock in/clock out protocols, or updating of workplans. ***

These are our recommendations until there is formal agreement between SEA and SPS on consistent telecommuting guidelines for all members.

- **Where can I get the latest information on COVID-19? updated from 3/12**
 - [SEA Website](#): Continue to check our webpage, we will update regularly as new information becomes available.

- [WEA Website](#): Updates on how WEA continues to advocate with and for you and your students. We are working on a list of questions to address testing, certification and graduation
 - [National Education Association \(NEA\) Coronavirus Resources](#)
 - [Seattle Public Schools](#)
 - [OSPI Guidance and Resources](#)
 - [Seattle - King County Public Health](#)
 - [Washington State Department of Health](#)
 - Washington State [COVID-19 Scenarios & Benefits Chart](#)
 - [Washington State Employment and Security Division](#) COVID-19 Resources
 - [AFL-CIO COVID-19 Outbreak Resources](#)
- ***Staff at my school has asked about Spring Break. Is that being considered for make up time? Should they be changing any travel plans?***

The governor announced all schools in Washington State closed until April 24 the week after SPS Spring Break.

March 12, 2020 – 4pm

*****All schools will be closed until April 24th.*****

- **Where can I get the latest information on COVID-19? *updated from 3/11**
 - [SEA Website](#): Continue to check our webpage, we will update regularly as new information becomes available.
 - * [National Education Association \(NEA\) Coronavirus Resources](#) *
 - [Seattle Public Schools](#)
 - [OSPI Guidance and Resources](#)
 - [Seattle - King County Public Health](#)
 - [Washington State Department of Health](#)
 - Washington State [COVID-19 Scenarios & Benefits Chart](#)
 - [AFL-CIO COVID-19 Outbreak Resources](#)

- **Am I required to complete lesson plans during the closure? Will we be expected to work from home during the shutdown? *updated from 3/11**

At this time lesson plans are not required for the initial 2-week closure. With the closure extended until April 24th, there will be discussions with SPS around work expectations for all bargaining units.

- **What is the impact on federal programs like Headstart?**

Washington State is currently in discussion with the Federal Government to determine impacts.

- **What is the impact on city funding for preschool programs?**

Too early to determine.

- **If I receive paper checks and payroll services is impacted, will I still get paid?**

In the event of an emergency that requires the John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence to be shut down for any length of time, Payroll may not be able to print physical paychecks until the building is re-opened. Our records show that you are not enrolled in direct deposit and are receiving your pay from Seattle Public Schools in the form of a live check. In order to guarantee timely payment in case of building shutdown, Payroll would like to strongly encourage you to consider direct deposit. If you have access to Employee Self-Service, you can sign up by following [this linked QRD](#). If you do not have access to Employee Self-Service, please follow the instructions on the direct deposit form found on the [Payroll website](#) and return it to Payroll Services as soon as possible. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to payroll by emailing us at payroll@seattleschools.org

- **What supports are available for daily substitutes with regards to salary and benefits? Are daily substitutes eligible for unemployment?**

Because substitutes are considered at-will employees and do not have guaranteed protected rights to being assigned every day, in the past they have not qualified for unemployment. Although there have been some modifications to unemployment rules during the COVID-19 state of emergency, the Economic Securities Department has not made that adjustment. WEA staff continue to advocate and lobby for the ESD to address this and provide relief and safety net supports for our daily substitutes. It is not yet available.

Daily substitutes should have been able to earn and bank sick leave time per Washington state Law. This leave should be available for Substitutes to use during these emergency closures. In addition, should a substitute become ill with COVID-19 or some other major illness during the closure, the substitutes may qualify for PFML if they have worked at least 820 hours in all of their combined jobs and should apply to the ESD for potential relief.

Lastly, if a Substitute had qualified for SEBB benefits prior to February 29, 2020 those benefits will remain in place through the closure and as long as the substitute continues to have an employer/employee relationship with the Seattle Public Schools they will retain benefits once school resumes.

- **What will happen to state testing?**

Per OSPI all state testing has been suspended.

- **SPS stated that families will receive meal assistance. Where can I find that information?**

Starting Monday, March 16, these school sites will provide lunches for all Seattle Public Schools students Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. [Follow this link for locations.](#)

March 11, 2020, 4pm

- **Where can I get the latest information on COVID-19?**

- [SEA Website](#): Continue to check our webpage, we will update regularly as new information becomes available.
- [Seattle Public Schools](#)
- [OSPI Guidance and Resources](#)
- [Seattle - King County Public Health](#)
- [Washington State Department of Health](#)
- [AFL-CIO COVID-19 Outbreak Resources](#)

- **With this two-week shutdown, will regular paychecks be affected? Will classified staff get paid?**

Classified and Certificated FTE employees and long-term substitutes will continue to receive their regular paychecks during the shutdown.

- **What will happen to my health insurance?**

WEA lobbyists have worked with legislators to pass legislation that will protect people's benefits during a closure. This legislation SB 6189 has passed both houses and is on the way to the Governor's desk. The legislation will require that individuals who qualified for benefits as of February 29, 2020 (the date of the Governor declaring a state of emergency) would maintain their benefits.

In addition, when the employee returns to work or school is reopened, eligibility would remain if the employee's schedule is the same as before the closure or if there is a change in schedule, if that change in schedule would have reached the 630 hour eligibility standard had it been worked during the absence/closure.

- **How will school closures impact apportionment for districts that close for COVID-19 and are not able to make up the 180 days or the 1020 hours (District wide average) before the end of the school year?**

Through OSPI Bulletin No 013-20 and No. 016-20, OSPI has stated that they will work to review and amend rules as needed in order to make sure that allocations are not reduced due to short- and long-term closure due COVID-19: "...OSPI expects districts to make every effort possible to make-up any days and instructional hours lost due to the COVID-19 outbreak, including extending the school year to June 19 if necessary. OSPI will file an emergency rule to allow the agency to waive the days and instructional hours that districts won't be able to make up after June 19. This rule will be in effect for the 2019–20 school year only. Districts should wait until they know the extent of their closures before submitting an application for a waiver. OSPI will provide more information about the submittal process within the next two months."

- **Will I have to make up the days?**

Per [OSPI](#): OSPI expects districts to make every effort possible to make-up any days and instructional hours lost due to the COVID-19 outbreak, including extending the school year to June 19 if necessary.

- **Are we adding days to the calendar?**

Per [OSPI](#): OSPI expects districts to make every effort possible to make-up any days and instructional hours lost due to the COVID-19 outbreak, including extending the school year to June 19 if necessary. OSPI will file an emergency rule to allow the agency to waive the days and instructional hours that districts won't be able to make up after June 19. This rule will be in effect for the 2019–20 school year only. Districts should wait until they know the extent of their closures before submitting an application for a waiver. OSPI will provide more information about the submittal process within the next two months.

- **I don't have enough sick leave for the duration of the closure. Will I be penalized?**

No member will be required to utilize their own leave for the duration of the closure.

- **Am I required to complete lesson plans during the closure?**

Teachers are not required to complete lesson plans or student material at this time.

- **What happens to field trips?**

All Field trips are cancelled/postponed until further notice.

- **What will happen to high school sports?**

High School Sports are governed by WIAA. The district will receive direction from them.

- **Are staff able to work at schools during the closure?**

No, for the safety of staff and the community, schools will be locked and closed at this time.

- **Will there be food distribution for students?**

Food distribution will resume Monday March 16th. Details TBA by SPS.