

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 18, 2020 – 5pm

- **What are my work expectations?**

SPS sent communication today in regards to work expectations. In summary, all certificated classroom staff are expected to continue communication with students/families through methods that you would usually use to check in at least twice a week. This may include correspondence regarding work sent home last week, friendly check-ins, or communication around your school community. At this time, it is not required that you provide new content, lessons, or work.

It is expected to reasonably check and respond to email with your school/program communities including correspondence from your supervisor.

Employees should also access online professional development:

<https://eln.seattleschools.org/pdresources/#/>
<https://www.washingtonea.org/home/events/>
<http://specialeducationsupportcenter.org/news/online-courses-about-inclusionary-practices/>

SEA currently is working with SPS to determine appropriate work expectations for our other staff.

Please review the memo [here](#) for more information.

- **My building still hasn't passed our budget. What should we do? updated from 3/17**

SPS sent communication to all members and principals today (3/18) around accessing digital resources to facilitate the budget process. Budget arenas are being delayed until April 3rd in order to provide additional time for the budget process.

BLT bylaws dictating budget protocols should, to the extent possible, be adapted to accommodate digital feedback from all stakeholder groups.

BLT's should continue to solicit input from stakeholder groups according to BLT bylaws and make every effort possible to reach out to staff who may not have access to digital resources (e.g. phone/text). SEA will provide AR's updates members lists with email/phone #s.

BLT's will make accommodations for online voting utilizing email or other digital methods agreed upon. Recording of the votes must still be compiled by SEA represented staff. Budgets still need 2/3 approval to pass.

- **Are there updates to SEBB Eligibility?**

The Health Care Authority has released guidance on maintaining SEBB eligibility during COVID-19 closures based on SB 6189, which was signed by Gov. Inslee today.

During the COVID-19 state of emergency, school employees who were eligible for SEBB at the beginning of the emergency (Feb. 29) will maintain their SEBB eligibility. During any closures or disruptions of school operations:

- *If quarantined for self or if needed to care for quarantined family member by public health or health care provider, or*
- *To take care of a child when their school or daycare is closed.*

When regular school operations resume, SEBB eligibility will remain if the employee returns to the same schedule or if their new schedule would have resulted in 630 hours had it been in effect for the entire year.

HCA has noted that if school employees access unemployment benefits after being put on standby by their district, that act alone will not end their benefit eligibility. In other words, usage of unemployment benefits will not be considered a termination of employment. We are not expecting many school employees to be placed on standby, but this clarification may be useful for substitutes or other intermittent workers.

- **How can I access unemployment benefits?**

Employment Security is posting Q&As about accessing unemployment benefits. Here is a summary of two relevant questions related to school employees:

Q. The school I work at is closed due to the Governor's order to close. Am I eligible for unemployment benefits?

A. If you are being paid by the school while your school is closed, you can apply for benefits, but you may be considered fully employed and not eligible. If your school is not paying you while it is closed, you may be eligible for benefits. You will have to be able, available and actively seeking work during each week you claim, unless you are approved for standby. Eligibility decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

Q. I am a substitute teacher who is no longer able to secure work with a school because of the closures. Am I eligible for unemployment benefits?

A. You may be eligible for unemployment. You will have to be able, available and actively seeking other suitable work during each week you claim. Eligibility decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

WEA is continuing conversations with the state's Employment Security Department to better understand how they determine eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

- **What happens to my PESB Certificate?**

PESB will issue emergency certificates for aspiring educators to meet assessment requirements

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) has filed emergency rules allowing teachers to be eligible for an emergency certificate while they work to complete their assessment requirements.

OSPI will issue the emergency certificate upon recommendation from a candidate's educator preparation program. Programs may recommend candidates for an emergency certificate if the candidate has completed all program requirements, including coursework and clinical practice, with the exception of one or more of the assessment requirements.

This emergency teacher certificate is valid for one year, and may be reissued for one additional year upon program recommendation. A teacher could practice with this certificate anywhere in Washington State as it is not district specific.

Once a candidate has completed all assessment requirements, their preparation program can then recommend them for residency certification. More information is available [here](#).

- **Do you have any suggestions as to how we could volunteer our time and expertise to help those who are working to protect the community?**

There are several community organizations providing support to students and families during these challenging times. Local food banks in Seattle need monetary support to help keep their shelves full for families. Please visit this page for a map of food banks in Seattle and resources on how you can help:

<http://www.seattlefoodcommittee.org/food-bank-map/>

March 17, 2020 – 5pm

- **My building still hasn't passed our budget. What should we do?**

BLT bylaws dictating budget protocols should, to the extent possible, be adapted to accommodate digital feedback from all stakeholder groups.

BLT's should continue to solicit input from stakeholder groups according to BLT bylaws and make every effort possible to reach out to staff who may not have access to digital resources (e.g. phone/text). SEA will provide AR's updates members lists with email/phone #s.

BLT's will make accommodations for online voting utilizing email or other digital methods agreed upon. Recording of the votes must still be compiled by SEA represented staff. Budgets still need 2/3 approval to pass.

- **What are my work expectations right now? Updated from 3/16**

*All SEA members have been sent 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. **Survey will be open until Thursday 3/19.***

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

UPDATED 3/17 -

- SEA members engage in additional online PD for clock hours
 - <https://www.washingtonea.org/home/events/>
 - [Inclusionary Practices - Offered by Evergreen State College](#)
- **Am I required to complete report cards at this time?**

At this time, teachers are not required to do any work on report cards.

- **Can I access school buildings during the closure?**

At this time, SEA members will not have access to their school buildings nor shall be required to do so.

- **How will the closure impact my certificate renewal?**

Certificate renewal will be extended until June 30, 2021. [Here is the link to PESB announcement.](#)

- **I am a paraprofessional and cannot complete the Foundational Course of Study.**

FCS can be rescheduled for next year. Folks can still complete the 7 online portions.

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 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.