

# Eau Claire Public Schools

## Office of the Superintendent

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March 13, 2020

Greetings Friends and Families of Eau Claire Public Schools,

As you are aware, over the course of the past few hours, the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has quickly shifted from a story many of us were following in the news, to a pandemic threat impacting all of us on a personal and professional level.

### **Governor Whitmer Announces Statewide Closure of All K-12 School Buildings School building closures will last Monday, March 16 through Sunday, April 5**

LANSING, Mich. -- Today, Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced that in order to slow the spread of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Michigan, she is ordering the closure of all K-12 school buildings, public, private, and boarding, to students starting Monday, March 16 until Sunday, April 5. School buildings are scheduled to reopen on Monday, April 6.

***\*HOWEVER PLEASE NOTE, that April 6 - 10, 2020 is our the Spring Break of Berrien County. In order to mitigate the chaos on staff and out families, we are going to keep that same plan. Therefore, Eau Claire Public Schools will not open UNTIL April 13, 2020.***

### **The Decision to Close Schools**

As of late last night, the number of presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 in Michigan is 12.

“This is a necessary step to protect our kids, our families, and our overall public health,” said Governor Whitmer. “I am working with partners across state government to ensure educators, parents, and students have the support they need during this time, and to ensure our children who rely on school for meals have access to food. I know this will be a tough time, but we’re doing this to keep the most people we can safe. I urge everyone to make smart choices during this time and to do everything they can to protect themselves and their families.”

“Closing our K-12 school buildings is the responsible choice that will minimize the risk of exposure for children, educators, and families and mitigate the spread of coronavirus,” said Michigan State Superintendent Michael Rice. “The Department of Education will continue to work closely with our partners in state government to help our students and educators in each school district get through this time. This is about protecting the most people in Michigan.”

### **What this means for Eau Claire Families:**

Over the past weeks, area superintendents have worked hard to develop plans in the event that a closure of schools would be determined to be the best measure to slow the spread of COVID-19. It goes without saying that we had hoped that we never had to initiate school closures due to communicable illness.

The determination to close schools across the State of Michigan was made by Governor Whitmer last night, March 12, 2020 during an 11:00 p.m. news conference. In an effort to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the Governor has called for the closing of schools across the state starting Monday, March 16th through April 5th.

### **IMPORTANT MEDICATION INFORMATION:**

If your student will need medications currently on file at school or medical equipment used in the school setting during the closure, please contact the Buildings Secretaries so that arrangements can be made for pick up.

- Certain medications such as controlled substances must be picked up by a parent.
- Medications and equipment not needed during the closure can remain at school.

### **Sports/Extracurriculars:**

- All extracurricular activities and sporting events, including rehearsals and practices, are immediately postponed until school is reopened.
- All activities/performances scheduled are canceled.
- No students will be allowed on campus until school is reopened.
- Re-scheduling of events will be determined on a case by case basis.

### **Field Trips:**

- All field trips are cancelled through Spring Break. Decisions about field trips taking place after Spring Break will be made in conjunction with the Berrien County Health Department.
- A determination on rescheduling will be made on a case by case basis.

### **Community Use of School Facilities:**

- All school facilities, including sports fields, will remain closed to the public during the school closure. Community access to facilities will resume when schools reopen.
- All facility rentals and community education classes are cancelled or postponed until schools reopen.

### **What Now?**

School will be open today, March 13, 2020.

- We ask that students take home all instructional materials, such as textbooks, notebooks and supplemental materials on Friday, March 13th.
- For students who are absent or unable to gather materials to take home, we will post a time when these items can be picked up on the District's website.

### **ECPS learning Plan the next 20 days:**

At this point, **students are not required** to remotely complete the curriculum (lessons, assessments etc). The administration team will be working with local districts and the MDE to develop a plan for eLearning. Our hope is that the Governor will allow us to make up instructional time during this 20-day closure. This will help with us having so many days to make up at the end of the year.

To start Eau Claire Public Schools will use their remaining snow days four (4) for the first four days of the 20 day period to mitigate lost time in schools. After that, we are planning to leverage **eLearning**, where available, to keep students connected to schoolwork. **eLearning** is an opportunity to provide continuous instruction that would otherwise be put on hold due to school cancellation

We will keep you informed as we finalize these plans, but watch our district website for more information. Administration and staff are working to develop an **eLearning** page under the “student” tab of our website. This will most likely be our venue for daily communication with parents and students should the schools close. We also **highly encourage** you to use this eLearning website for activities and learning opportunities even on non-instructional days.

Our online websites and online courses remain active and students should be encouraged to continue working. We will communicate through email and on the District’s website when these will be posted.

**Food Provisions During Extended Cancellation:**

Due to the closure of school, ECPS Food Service is in the process of developing a plan that would allow us to continue providing meal services to our students. Please watch our district website for more information.

**Additional Information to be aware of:**

- Currently, Spectrum Health is offering FREE COVID-19 screening for any MI resident. Call 616-391-2380 or go to [www.spectrumhealth.org/covid19](http://www.spectrumhealth.org/covid19)
- You can stay informed by regularly visiting [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](http://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](http://CDC.gov/Coronavirus).

We thank you for your cooperation during these unprecedented times. During the mandated closure, the District will send regular updates to provide ongoing information to our families and staff. Updates will also be posted on the District website.

**Stay healthy!**

Ann =)

Ann Marie Shell  
Superintendent  
Eau Claire Public Schools

***Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow.***