

SMSD Facilities Closed Through the End of the School Year

SMSD Facilities Closed Through the End of the School Year

(<https://www.smsd.org/about/news-post/~board/district-news/post/smsd-facilities-closed-through-the-end-of-the-school-year>)

SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT | MAR 13 2020 4:45 PM

March 17, 2020

JOCO superintendents support the Governor's order to close schools through the end of the school year.

Click here (<https://www.smsd.org/about/news-post/~board/district-news/post/mensaje-importante-para-las-familias-de-smsd>) for the Spanish translation.

In order to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus in Kansas, on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, Kansas Governor Laura Kelly ordered all public schools in Kansas to remain closed through the end of the school year.

"The steps we're announcing today will create the space we need at the state level, to develop a more strategic resilient infrastructure, so that we can get ahead of this threat and limit its long-term impact," Governor Kelly noted.

Dr. Randy Watson, Kansas Commissioner of Education, joined the Governor for the announcement, and noted that top educators from around the state are already working on how to provide educational resources for students, and schools districts are planning for how to ensure that students can continue to receive breakfast and lunch while schools are closed.

"We have entered into a new reality," said Dr. Mike Fulton, superintendent of schools, "and it requires all of us working together in support of our community."

"Moving forward, we will provide our community with regular updates on our plans as they develop," Dr. Fulton noted. "I would ask that we allow each other a measure of grace, as we develop plans for what school looks like in the weeks ahead. We are a uniquely gifted community, and we must use our many talents and strengths to support one another."

"Now, more than ever," he said, "we must work together for the benefit of our children and our community."

You can view the Governor's press conference **online (<https://www.facebook.com/282821075751007/videos/222179228889262/>)** or read a press release issued by the Governor's office.

March 16, 2020

SMSD Schools Closed Through April 3, 2020

At the direction of the Johnson County Department of Health and the Environment, all schools in the Shawnee Mission School District will be closed through April 3. Schools are being closed to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The district is engaged in planning on how to manage this closure, including contingencies for how to respond if the closure extends beyond April 3. In the meantime, we are currently working on meal distribution for children in need and will share that in a future communication. Staff will continue to be paid and will receive expectations for work after the conclusion of spring break.

There is much we do not know, but we will be working tirelessly over the next few days to prepare for the possibility of an extended closure and will continue to communicate regularly as plans develop. We recognize the challenges that this closure presents for families and students but are in agreement with JCDHE that this closure is in the best interest of students in our district. Meanwhile, please follow all advice from public health advocates in order to keep yourself and your family safe. This includes taking the idea of social distancing seriously and keeping yourself and your children away from group gatherings.

There will be a press conference at 11 a.m. tomorrow where additional information will be shared.

March 15, 2020

Johnson County superintendents release joint statement following KSDE recommendation

The Kansas State Department of Education issued the following statement on Sunday, March 15:

As of Sunday, March 15, Kansas Education Commissioner Dr. Randy Watson strongly recommends that those schools currently coming off of spring break, suspend operations for the week March 16-20. All schools scheduled for spring break the week of March 16-20 will continue as planned.

Closing all schools during this same period of time provides Kansas officials the time needed to finalize a comprehensive plan for how to address COVID-19.

It is critical that we all follow a coordinated response to this situation.

This announcement does not directly impact districts in Johnson County, as all districts are on Spring Break from March 16-20, 2020; however, we commend Commissioner Watson on making this important recommendation.

As we are all well aware, proactive measures to combat COVID-19 are important to community health and safety. All Johnson County school districts will continue to work closely with Johnson County government, including the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment, to take proactive steps to address student, staff and community safety. Families should continue to proactively make plans for the very real possibility of a school closure beyond Spring Break.

As this remains a fluid and evolving situation, we will keep families updated as more information becomes available from Johnson County officials and the Kansas State Department of Education.

March 13, 2020

As partners in community health, the six school districts of Johnson County, Johnson County Government and the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment are in the process of collaborating and accumulating data regarding the continuation of school following spring break.

All Shawnee Mission School District facilities will be closed during Spring Break (March 16-20), with no keycard access. During this time, the buildings will undergo deep cleaning and disinfection. The closure and cleaning are being implemented to mitigate exposure to the COVID-19 virus and protect the health and safety of students and staff.

All athletics, facilities rentals, and other extracurricular activities have been cancelled through Spring Break.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas Department of Education advised against school closures at this time. Although they have advised against a closure, we would like parents to be aware that a closure may become necessary in the future.

We will continue to evaluate the implementation of the advice from the Kansas Department of Health and the Environment Kansas Department of Education.

As we collaborate with local health officials, we will provide additional information as soon as it becomes available.