

Dear LWEA Members,

This message is about the corona virus and the information I have to date. First, thank you for your patience and communication with me over the last few days. Our goal is to provide members with timely and accurate information. The situation is evolving; we do not want to spread misinformation for the sake of pushing out information.

We have received many questions. I will attempt to break them down into their larger categories. Please see below.

Communication

- The District and the Association are actively working to maintain close communication regarding COVID-19 developments. Your best source of information on these developments are the LWSD Staff Portal, the daily communication that LWSD leadership sends, and the LWEA Update. As needed, we will be publishing additional information through our normal build rep distribution process.
- Additional references include:
 - [OSPI COVID-19 Guidance](#)
 - [Washington State Dept of Health COVID-19 Guidance for School Admin and Nurses](#)
 - [OSPI Guidance on Infectious Disease Control](#)
- King County officials announced new guidance to King County residents yesterday to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and to help slow the spread of this virus. <https://publichealthinsider.com/2020/03/04/new-public-health-recommendations-to-slow-the-spread-of-coronavirus/>

Closing schools

- As of today, postponing or suspending all evening events/activities that bring outside parents/community members into our schools. Some examples of events that need to be suspended are: School reading night, Band/Orchestra/Choir concerts, and School Plays.
- To date, the LWSD is not considering closing schools. They continue to work closely with and follow the Center for Disease Control and Washington Department of Health to determine if closing a school or all schools is necessary.
- Currently the Center for Disease Control and Washington Health Officials is not recommending closing our schools, at this time.
- Public Health is **not recommending** closing schools if there is not a confirmed case of COVID-19. Their statement:

"We know that schools are doing the important work of educating our children. We don't want to disrupt that unless there are known coronavirus exposure risks. We also know that school closures have other impacts on working parents. School closures can be disruptive and costly for families. We consider both the potential benefits and negative consequences of closures when we make recommendations.

For these reasons, Public Health is not recommending closing schools at this time. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, Public Health will work with the school and the district to determine the best measures including potential school closure. As much as possible, children should be allowed to carry on with their education and normal activities.

Public Health–Seattle & King County also respects each individual school's decisions about closures, postponement of activities, or other social distancing measures – as each school knows the needs of their community best."

Remote Learning

- North Shore has closed their schools for remote learning. This was not on the advice of the CDC or health officials. LWSD is exploring the possibility of some online learning options, there are substantial equity and access issues with remote learning. Last Friday, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chris Reykdal, sent a memo to school districts which included in part: "School districts must ensure equal access to education for all students. It will likely make more sense to cancel school and/or district services and make up missed days at the end of the school year, rather than deploying a distance learning model that can be accessed by some, but not all, of your students."
- If we could not provide special education services or Free and Reduced Lunches for students, our district could be considered closed and that day would need to be made up. These are all serious considerations that have not been made clear in the North Shore plan.
- At this time, the district is not planning to provide online learning as an alternative to school.

Cleaning/Learning Environment Cleaning

- The CDC recommends clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe. The district is continuously cleaning and sanitizing buildings.
- Gloves will be provided for those requesting them.
- The District will work with Food Services and Custodial staff to regularly wipe down and disinfection common areas and lunchrooms.
- For the March early release and LEAP day, teachers can opt to use 30 minutes of their time to do a throughout wipe down of their classrooms.
- If you need cleaning supplies or have questions about accessing cleaning supplies, please reach out to your worksite janitorial staff, or your building administration/manager.

Calendar

- School and districtwide emergency closures resulting from efforts to control an infectious disease outbreak meet the definition of an emergency closure due to an unforeseen natural event, allowing OSPI to waive school days under WAC 392-129. The District and the Association will monitor the need for school closures and provide timely information related to school closures or modification to the school day.
- We also have contract language around school closures. Please read the bolded section as it is the most relevant.
 - Section 12.10 Emergency Late Starts and Closures
 - A. The Association and District agree that in the event the District determines the need to delay the start of school teachers are to report one (1) hour before the newly announced start time.*
 - B. The Association and District also recognize that there is an interest to make sure that all staff and students have safe and secure learning and teaching environments. Furthermore, to have the least amount of disruption, there may be times when it is necessary to close schools on a case-by-case basis. When these closures occur, it will be decided at the time of closure if that day will need to be made up by the staff and students. Should the day not be made up at a later date, teachers will be expected to complete their professional responsibilities at a location determined by the teacher.***
 - C. Staff reporting to work on a day when school closures are announced late (after 5:30 a.m. for secondary and after 6:30 a.m. for elementary) shall be paid two (2) hours at their hourly per diem rate. Staff members who are asked by an administrator to remain and supervise students shall be paid their hourly per diem rate for the actual time spent with students; minimum payment shall be for no less than three (3) hours supervision up to seven (7) hours.*
 - D. When these emergency schedule changes occur, scheduled leaves will be processed as previously requested.*

Work for Absent Students

- From the district communication, March 4, 2020, “At this time, staff are expected to provide instruction for the students that are present in their classrooms. When students have excused absences, staff are expected to provide projects and assignments for when they return to school. Staff are not expected to develop additional digital resources for students who are absent, but rather use existing digital tools such as Power School Learning. Students who are absent can access the digital resources that are provided as part of their regular instruction and classroom experience.”
- You do not need to create work and send it home to students. It is also the teacher’s discretion on whether the assignments can be waived or made up.

Pay

- As is the case when inclement weather results in school being cancelled, the District and the Association anticipate little, if any impact on regularity of payroll cycles. Annual certificated staff compensation will not be impacted as a result of changes to the school calendar or work hours.
- See the contract language in Section 12.10 (above).

Sick Leave

- Stay home when you are sick or not feeling well. Do not return to work until you are free of fever (100.4° F or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of fever, and any other symptoms for a min. 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or symptom-altering medicines (e.g. acetaminophen, cough suppressants, etc.).
- If you have questions about whether to stay home or not, contact your manager.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- If you are not showing symptoms but are immune compromised, please use your contractual rights under emergency leave. See the relevant language below.
- Section 19.3 *Emergency Leave Conditions for granting emergency leave, which comes out of sick leave, are as follows:*

A. Situations in which pre-planning by the employee is not possible, is serious, is essentially unavoidable, is of importance, and is not one of mere convenience.

1. Some examples of situations that qualify for emergency leave are: a. Threat to an employee's property (flooding, storm, fire, etc.). b. Attend the funeral service of a non-covered family member or close family friend (limited to one (1) day). c. Other emergency events requiring time away from assigned duties and which are beyond the control of the employee or which cannot reasonably be anticipated or avoided and fall under the definition above.

B. Requests for additional emergency leave, without any deduction from salary, may be determined and granted by the Superintendent or designee in excess of days granted above.

The Association and the District continues to work on language that defines how members who are told by a state or medical professional that they need to be quarantined, can honor that 14-day quarantine requirement without depleting their sick leave.

Again, thank you for your patience and messages. The entire LWEA team, Katie Badger, Katie Bishop, Terri Neely, Lama Chikh, and myself, are here to support you. The full impacts of COVID-19/Coronavirus are unknown, but we are amazed every day by the work of our members to support our school communities. We ask that during this time, all LWEA members work together in partnership with our custodial and nutritional services staff, administration, community partners, and families to support each other as we work through this public health challenge.

We will email an update as new information becomes available.

Howard Mawhinney – President
Lake Washington Education Association