



REUNIFIED COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



## A Message from Lenawee County Superintendents Michigan Governor Whitmer Announces Statewide School Closings Due to Coronavirus March 13, 2020

Last night, Michigan Governor Whitmer announced the mandatory closure of all K-12 public, private, charter, and boarding schools within the State from Monday, March 16, 2020, through Sunday, April 5, 2020, in order to slow the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). As a result of this decision, **all Lenawee County schools will be closed beginning on Monday, March 16, 2020.**

The Lenawee County Superintendents understand that this decision by the Governor has created a number of questions. Unfortunately, at the present time, there are more questions than answers. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and United States Department of Education are continually issuing guidance regarding how local schools are expected to respond to this situation.

While school operations may seem simple to some, the reality is that these are complex systems subject to numerous State and Federal laws, rules, regulations, and contractual obligations. The immediate and unplanned closure of school for an extended period of time is unprecedented, and, for that reason, there are more questions than answers today. However, Federal, State, and local officials are working hard to provide guidance and make decisions that will assist in answering your questions and ours. As these answers become available, we will share them with you. Thus, please continue to monitor your email, Blackboard Connect instant messaging system and your school district's website and social media pages for informational updates. School district staff should expect to receive additional information from your supervisor and/or other district administrators.

Because we know that everyone has questions, we've attempted to provide responses to common questions that our schools have received.

### Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Lenawee County is scheduled to be on spring break beginning on Monday, April 6, 2020, and continuing through Sunday, April 12, 2020. The Governor indicated in her message that she hoped that schools would consider adjusting the spring break week so that all students were back in school on Monday, April 6, 2020. Are Lenawee County schools changing spring break?**

Response: At the present time, there are no plans to adjust the scheduled spring break. Thus, spring break in Lenawee County is still scheduled for Monday April 6, 2020, through Sunday, April 12, 2020. Should the Governor and/or Legislature take action that obligates schools to return to session beginning on April 6, 2020, this may change.

**2. Does this mean that school buildings are closed and unavailable for student, staff, and/or community access during the closure period?**

Response: Although this will be an individual, district-level decision, at the present time, only those staff members whose essential duties require on-site performance will be allowed in school buildings. A determination of what constitutes essential duties and required on-site performance will be made at the individual, district-level. Students, parents, and community members are prohibited from being in school buildings unless such has been pre-authorized by the school district superintendent.

**3. Will schools be required to make-up this time resulting in an extension of the school year?**

Response: Michigan's State School Aid Act stipulates certain day and hour requirements subject to a number of exceptions for student school attendance. In the past, the Legislature and/or Department of Education have adjusted legislative requirements or granted waivers that provide additional flexibility. At the present time, we have not received information from the State regarding whether or not there will be any flexibility to the student attendance day and hour requirements.

**4. What will happen to students who rely on school-provided food service, including free and reduced meal eligible students?**

Response: As school leaders, we recognize the importance of providing meals to many of our students. We are awaiting guidance from the Michigan Department of Education and the United States Department of Agriculture (administers the Federal free and reduced meal program). Lenawee school districts are actively planning ways to provide food for students, although specific details have not yet been determined.

**5. Will students be expected to participate in provided at-home, on-line, or other learning opportunities?**

Response: For a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, internet accessibility and capacity issues, unavailability of technology, contractual obligations, and concerns about providing equitable services to all students, there are no current plans to require students to participate in learning opportunities during the closure period. In some instances, individual districts may provide optional enrichment or supplemental learning opportunities or resources. As you may know, March is National Reading Awareness Month, and students are always encouraged to read.

**6. Will school athletic teams and other extracurricular activities continue during the closure period?**

Response: No, at the present time, all school-sponsored activities are postponed indefinitely. The Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) has suspended all winter team tournaments, and we anticipate additional guidance will be forthcoming for spring sports. There will be no practices, rehearsals, or other activities during the closure period.

**7. What will happen with kindergarten round-up?**

Response: All Lenawee County districts, who have not already held kindergarten round-up, have agreed to postpone such until after spring break. Additional information will be shared once those dates have been scheduled.

**8. Will school district board of education meetings continue?**

Response: This will be an individual, district-level decision, however, most districts have indicated they intend to continue to hold school board meetings in accordance with Michigan’s Open Meetings Act during the closure period. Board meetings are likely to focus on essential business only, and, to the extent practicable, social distancing measures will be encouraged.

**9. Will school district employees continue to be paid during the closure period?**

Response: This will be an individual, district-level decision, however, Lenawee districts have indicated that they intend to provide continued compensation and benefits to their employees during the closure period in accordance with Governor Whitmer’s request. It is important to note that this may be subject to contractual obligations, and district staff should expect further details from their district leadership.

These are extraordinary times, which require significant understanding and cooperation. These decisions, while difficult, have been made with the intent of protecting the health and safety of all Michiganders. We request your continued patience and understanding as this situation evolves.

Please continue to monitor your email, Blackboard Connect instant messaging system, and your school district’s website and social media pages for informational updates.

Thank you for your cooperation, and please take care of yourself and your family.

Steve Guerra, Superintendent  
Addison Community Schools

Michael Osborne, Superintendent  
Hudson Area Schools

Richard Hilderley, Superintendent  
Tecumseh Public Schools

Robert Behnke, Superintendent  
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Scott Riley, Superintendent  
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