



News Release

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Los Angeles County schools chief recommends school closure in response to COVID-19

DOWNEY (March 13, 2020) — Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools Debra Duardo today announced her recommendation that all schools in the county close effective March 16-27, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“After much consideration, I am making the recommendation that school closure is the most appropriate step at this point in light of the crisis facing our communities and nation,” Duardo said. “Our focus must be on ensuring the continuity of learning as well as the safety and well-being of students, staff and families.”

Closing/dismissing a school is a local decision that will be made by each individual school district. Districts making the decision to close/dismiss schools will need the approval of their elected governing boards unless their policy authorizes the district superintendent to close schools. Districts have the option to designate student dismissal days for professional development to prepare for a closure. They can also collaborate with their labor partners for an option to reschedule their spring break.

In her advocacy, Superintendent Duardo has been working alongside State Superintendent Tony Thurmond and the California Department of Education to support school districts during this public health crisis.

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) has also been collaborating with the Department of Public Health over the past several weeks in their response to COVID-19. Following their direction, LACOE has been providing ongoing guidance, resources and support to the county’s 80 districts to encourage social distancing and other measures to prevent spread of the coronavirus.

The increasing number of COVID-19 cases has increased the anxiety of students and families. In the urgency of taking additional measures to prevent its spread, the current guidance from the county superintendent is for all schools to close from March 16-27. That guidance will be reassessed as the situation develops.

LACOE will continue to work with county departments and other organizations to ensure the safety and well-being of students. “We are committed to supporting all 80 districts with guidance, technical assistance and resources to ensure continuity of learning, meal provision and other critical services during school closures,” Duardo said.

Schools operated by LACOE will close March 16-27. They include the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, International Polytechnic High School and county community schools. LACOE also will work with its partners in the Probation Department to ensure continuity of instruction in its Juvenile Court Schools located at the juvenile halls and camps.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented challenge for public schools,” Duardo said. “But I feel confident that the countywide education community can come together to mobilize resources to support our students, staff and families.”

The Los Angeles County Office of Education, headquartered in Downey, is the nation’s largest regional education agency, providing a range of programs and services to support the region’s 80 K-12 school districts and more than two million preschool and school-age children. LACOE maintains a web page with resources and information at lacoedu.com/covid19.

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