



# SOUTH KINGSTOWN SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

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## IMPORTANT LINKS

[!\[\]\(e3f8612927870f2e0f9f5989e6dd3064\_img.jpg\) \*\*SKSD COVID-19 Information Website\*\*](#)

[!\[\]\(003082e50e3009141f59bd5df831749f\_img.jpg\) \*\*SKSD Main Website COVID-19 NEWS\*\*](#)

March 12, 2020

### **An Important Message for Our South Kingstown Learning Community (update #4)**

I want to begin by saying that **we are doing everything in our power to ensure our learning community is safe and we are implementing the best precautions and practices available.** Thank you for your continued patience and support as we work through Coronavirus planning and preparation.

As I shared in last week's message, RI Superintendents have a weekly call with RI Department of Health (RIDOH) and the RI Department of Education (RIDE) on Wednesday. **Unless there is a local and specific reason to do otherwise, I will provide an update after that weekly call.** Our website (under NEWS on the main page) will continue to be the primary location to view information from the district. Yesterday afternoon, we participated in this weekly conference call with the RIDOH to discuss a number of decisions that we need to make in relation to schools staying open and events being held on and off school grounds. We also watched the Governor's press conference which provided specific guidance that is being rolled out by the RI Department of Education.



Below is a **summary as to where we stand as of today:**

- **At this time the Governor's Office, RIDOH and the RIDE are NOT closing schools.** They have found that schools are a very controlled environment and children have NOT been at a higher risk. They know that closing schools can be problematic through the burdens that it can cause.
- We have received guidance that **we are NOT to hold large events or assemblies.** We have been given strict guidelines to NOT hold events over 250 for at least the next two weeks.
- At this time **South Kingstown School District is going to look at each and every public event on a case by case basis.** We consider a large group event over 50. This means that we are currently reviewing ALL events, not just those that are going to involve over 250 people. The environment that is being utilized is also considered as being able to have significant space between participants is critical. In other words, we must be able to social distance ourselves from each other. **This means that for now, in most cases we will be canceling or postponing MOST, if not ALL events. Some athletic events will continue to take place but fans will not be allowed to attend.**
- **Why can we have school when we cannot have events over 250?** The Director from RIDOH and the Governor have both shared that this guidance allows us to get as close as we can to the ideal. Our schools have a more controlled environment. Students benefit from meals and the actual educational attainment. They have found that children have a milder illness and have not been at a higher risk. We also know that closing school can be problematic through the burdens that it will cause. They are making their decisions based upon research and have found that at this point in time we need to focus on avoiding large group events in close quarters. We should be able to support our students in their classrooms while adhering to this requirement.



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- We are also going to **continue our strict visitor policies**. We will verbally assess the sickness of everyone upon entering schools.
- We are **continuing with more frequent, deep cleanings of the schools and buses**.
- We **continue to work through recommendations for online learning and how to gain RIDE approval for this**. These contingency plans would be used in the event the district needs to close or alter how we educate and provide services to our students. For example, we will need to consider alternatives to traditional classroom learning resources and how we can provide guidance to our learning community.

**It is important that you continue to take precautions to stay healthy.**

Hand sanitizer is available in dispensers throughout the district, in each building, on every floor, in multiple locations. Our facilities department is continuing to take every precaution including making sure that these dispensers are filled and classrooms and all areas around the district are being disinfected and cleaned well, including our school buses.



**We recommend the following precautions to stop the spread of germs:**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow.
- Anyone that is sick should stay home. Help keep everyone safe!
- There is still time to get your flu vaccine to protect against the seasonal flu.
- Those that are over 60 years of age, have an underlying health concern or are sick should not go to any location where they will be in a large group.
- Keep a healthy mind. If you are feeling overwhelmed reach out for assistance.



People with **general questions about COVID-19** can visit [www.health.ri.gov/covid](http://www.health.ri.gov/covid), write to [RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov](mailto:RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov), or call 401-222-8022. This is the COVID-19 Hotline that RIDOH has available to the public. Please take the time to **visit our website** for more helpful resources and information at [https://www.skschools.net/departments/health\\_services/covid-19-information](https://www.skschools.net/departments/health_services/covid-19-information).

**We are all here to support each other and get through this together.**

Sincerely,

Linda F. Savastano  
Superintendent of Schools