



Linda Savastano
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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IMPORTANT LINKS

- [!\[\]\(b1b781be830eb908d845c527ab08d5f8_img.jpg\) **SKSD COVID-19 Information Website**](#)
- [!\[\]\(2176a4ba510fa27404d783166e891577_img.jpg\) **SKSD Main Website COVID-19 NEWS**](#)

March 14, 2020 (UPDATED March 15, 2020)

An Important Message for Our South Kingstown Learning Community (update #6+)

*I wanted to reach out to reassure our entire learning community that we are working day and night to be sure that we are doing all we can for our children. **We will continue to be in constant communication with our learning community.** The communication goal yesterday, March 13, was to quickly notify families and staff that would not have regular school sessions next week so that they could properly begin to prepare. **I did want to provide another update to share more details as we move forward during these unprecedented times.***

First, it is critical that we all do our part. We ALL have a part to play. I know that we are asking families and staff to sacrifice. This is a small price to pay for the larger good. Please, please reach out if we can help you. We are all here to support one another.

I would like to share my deepest gratitude for all of the kind words of support. They have been my source of strength and reassurance. I also need to publically thank my Leadership Team and our School Committee. The entire community needs to know that you are being guided by an amazing, self-sacrificing group of people that would do anything for our children and staff.

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

Sincerely,



Linda F. Savastano
Superintendent of Schools

Friday

Below is the information that unfolded yesterday (March 13):

- We will **NOT HAVE SCHOOL IN SOUTH KINGSTOWN** during the week of March 16 through March 20.
- The Governor, RIDE, and RIDOH have **moved the Spring Break**. This is to give school staff and central office time to finalize their distance learning plans.
- Additionally, until further notice, **all extra-curricular activities are suspended**, including Interscholastic athletics.
- The Commissioner & the Health Director indicated that the **decision to close schools will be made on a week to week basis**.
- It will also allow schools and districts to prepare to make meals available to at-risk students where possible, in the event we need to move to distance learning. Schools



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should also use next week to clean and disinfect all surfaces in their buildings. A decision will be made at the end of next week about what to do the following week.

- **Families are asked to help us. PLEASE DO NOT HAVE YOUR CHILDREN congregate or attend gatherings.**
- We also ask **our educators and staff** to help us. We will need their support. We are also asking them to avoid travel and large groups. If possible, please use this time to help create how to have rich virtual learning experiences. A message to staff will be sent over the weekend but they should have already received an initial update from their principal on March 13. Please make sure your school messenger account is working. You should have received an email from the Superintendent on March 13 via this account.
- Our **leadership team is working on our virtual learning plan.** We will be rolling this out to our staff and families in the coming week. Additional information will be communicated to all.

!! Recently Updated Precautions

- All Rhode Islanders are being urged to avoid all crowded places, large events, and mass gatherings. This is **social distancing**. However, people should continue doing essential errands (such as going to the grocery store).
- **All people who have traveled anywhere internationally in the last 14 days** (and going forward) are required to **self-quarantine**. That means not going to work, not going to school, and staying home. (executive order from the Governor)
- **Nursing home** administrators have been directed to **not allow any visitors**
- **Childcare facilities** are urged to ~~remain open at this time~~ closing per the Governor's Press Conference on March 15, 2020.

! Continued Precautions

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

- **Wash your hands often throughout the day.** Use warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Viruses can spread by coughing or sneezing on other people or into your hands.
- Stay home from work or school if you are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- There is still time to get your flu vaccine to protect against the seasonal flu.
- Everyone is being asked to avoid travel and large groups.
- Pay attention to potential COVID-19 symptoms including, fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor.



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- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- When greeting people avoid handshakes and hugs.
- If you have traveled anywhere internationally in the last 14 days, self-quarantine for 14 days. That means do not go to work or school and stay at home.
- Keep a healthy mind. If you are feeling overwhelmed reach out for assistance (see below).



Important Contacts & Information

- People with **general, non-medical questions about COVID-19** can visit www.health.ri.gov/covid, write to RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov, or call **401-222-8022**. This is the COVID-19 Hotline that RIDOH has available to the public. The Hotline will be staffed this weekend from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm both Saturday and Sunday. (After hours people are being directed to call 211.)
- People in need of **any type of mental health supports** are encouraged to use the one-stop, statewide 24/7 call-in center that connects people to appropriate care and resources (for you or someone that you care about is experiencing a behavioral healthcare crisis) **401-414-5465**
- Please take a minute to **view this great resource about managing Coronavirus / COVID-19 anxiety**. <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/pandemics> It is something that we ALL should think about. **This includes how we should speak to our children about it.**
- Please take the time to visit **our website for more helpful resources and information** at https://www.skschools.net/departments/health_services/c_o_v_i_d-19_information



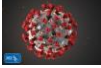
The Jonnycake Center will be providing meals during this vacation week.

The Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale helps households put food on the table when they are struggling to make ends meet. The main office is 1231 Kingstown Road, Peace Dale, R.I. The website is <http://www.jonnycakecenter.org/>



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More Information About the COVID-19 in RI (as of March 14)

- Testing in Rhode Island is being done at RIDOH's State Health Laboratories. Confirmatory testing is being done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Positive results are considered 'presumptive' if they still need to be confirmed by the CDC.
- Although Rhode Island has the testing capacity it needs, people without symptoms should not be tested for COVID-19. Testing individuals with no symptoms is not recommended by CDC.
- People who think they have COVID-19 should call their healthcare provider. These people should not go directly to a healthcare facility without first calling a healthcare provider (unless they are experiencing a medical emergency). Healthcare providers have a dedicated number that they are then using to consult with RIDOH on potential COVID-19 cases.
- Early data suggest that older adults are twice as likely to experience serious COVID-19 illness. RIDOH is reiterating CDC's guidance for people older than 60 years of age:
- Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person.

The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Please Stay Informed

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