

April 9, 2020

Governor Parson Announces Schools Closed for the Year

Missouri Governor Mike Parson announced in the Thursday, April 9 press briefing that Missouri schools shall remain closed through this school year. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), along with several school superintendents from across the state made the recommendation to Governor Parson on April 9. Learn more about this announcement here in the remarks Commissioner Vandeven shared:

COVID-19 has presented unprecedented challenges for all of us and the education community is certainly no different. The recommendation made to Governor Parson today was not made lightly. This decision was made to continue protecting the health and safety of our students and school staff members. We know, maybe now more than ever, just how important our public schools are....how critical the services are that they provide their local communities....and how important the work is that our educators do each and every day for our children.

To reiterate what the Governor shared, school buildings will remain closed for the rest of the school year...but school services should continue through the last day of school in each school district, as pre-established by the school calendar approved by their local board of education. Those continued services include providing much-needed meals to the students who count on them...as well as alternative educational opportunities. We know remote teaching and learning looks different in every district across our state – so we are simply asking our school leaders to continue to be creative, innovative and persistent in their pursuit to reach students with some kind of academic opportunity. We see some schools mailing or delivering packets to students who may not have access to technology or the internet. While other teachers and students are learning to navigate video conferencing software to deliver and receive instruction. We cannot applaud these educators enough, as well as our families at home, for stepping up to the plate to make learning a possibility amid this new normal.

This announcement brings with it a NUMBER of additional questions. What should districts do about summer school? What will the re-entry to school look like? How will this impact graduating seniors? What can be done to address broadband internet access issues in many areas of our state? Please know that our department is working quickly to address these and many other questions in conjunction with the Governor's office, continuing our efforts to help local school leaders navigate this process...removing barriers, simplifying any processes that we can and waiving the necessary state statutes and regulations.

I've said this many times over the last several weeks – I've never been more proud to be a Missouri educator. My colleagues at our department and in the 555 districts and charter schools across our state are working tirelessly to serve the students we love so much – and we'll keep at it for the weeks to come. Thank you.

For all COVID 19 information from the DESE, visit dese.mo.gov/COVID19