



March 13, 2020

Dear LEARN Community,

I am writing to inform you that all LEARN schools and programs will be closed until further notice effective immediately. At a minimum, schools will be closed for two weeks. Please be aware that as guidance is updated, this may need to be extended.

On the advice of our local health departments, the school superintendents in southeastern Connecticut have come together to make a decision to put the health of our community (both our school community and the community at large) at the center of our decision to close schools. We have been advised by local health authorities that the implementation of social distancing measures is a proven science-based intervention that has been shown to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with communicable disease outbreaks. In the past, communities in which schools closed were able to positively impact and reduce the spread of disease. We felt compelled to make this decision to prevent the spread of illness among our students, staff, and our communities.

We also clearly heard that we cannot confirm that this illness will run its course in two weeks, in fact, it is not likely that it will. We made the determination to make this closure “indefinite” based on that information. This decision was made in consultation with and with the support of the health departments, elected officials and emergency management professionals.

There has been much discussion about the concept of distance learning during prolonged absences. At this time the Connecticut State Department of Education has discouraged districts from utilizing this approach due to concerns over instructional consistency (especially in the early grades), equity of access both intra-district and inter-district, disruption of special education services, and multiple employee contractual issues. We will continue, during this school closing, to seek ways to provide supplemental education to our students. Should we be able to utilize a distance learning model, we will notify parents, students, and staff members of how this will be implemented.

At this time, we have no other information to share but will continue to communicate as we receive updated guidance from our public health officials, the CDC, and state officials. Please continue to monitor your email to ensure receipt of the most current information.

Sincerely,

Kate Ericson
Executive Director, LEARN