

NEWS RELEASE

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County School Districts Extend School Closures Through May 1

SAN BERNARDINO –In a unified effort to protect the health of students, staff and school communities, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools Ted Alejandre and school district superintendents countywide, in collaboration with the Department of Public Health, made the collective decision to extend public school closures at least through Friday, May 1.

“Because of the increasing spread of the novel coronavirus in our region and across the state, we are taking a proactive and aggressive approach to maintain the health, safety and well-being of our schools and communities,” Alejandre said.

“These are very difficult circumstances for our education leaders, since developments with this virus are happening so quickly,” he added. “I fully support our district superintendents’ collective decision to do what is best for our students, employees and families across our county.”

Most districts in the county decided on March 13 to close schools as a preventative measure to slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Since the closures, confirmed cases of COVID-19 in San Bernardino County continue to rise.

On March 17, the Board of Supervisors issued a countywide order to help stop the spread of the virus by cancelling gatherings of people through April 6. Combined with guidance from the state and county departments of public health calling for “social distancing” of individuals to more than 6 feet to help stop the spread of COVID-19, county school district superintendents determined that an extension for closing schools through May 1 would help to flatten spread of the virus.

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“The Department of Public Health appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with the County Superintendent of Schools and district superintendents countywide to address the impact of COVID-19 on our public schools. I support their collective decision to extend public school closures in San Bernardino County,” said Dr. Erin Gustafson, acting health officer for San Bernardino County.

“These are extraordinary circumstances concerning public health that many of us have never experienced,” County Superintendent Ted Alejandre added. “These proactive steps will help students, staff and our families in the region understand that public education is committed to seeing that our communities stay healthy and safe through these challenging times.”

School districts countywide also are following Gov. Gavin Newsom’s executive order to support students – to the extent feasible -- with instruction, nutrition and childcare. San Bernardino County Schools has established a portal of resources and tools that districts and families can access on its website (www.sbcss.net) in the areas of distance learning, access to meals for students and childcare.

“It’s very important that we continue to provide educational opportunities and equitable access for all of the 406,000 students who attend public schools in our county,” Alejandre said. “We recognize the impact of COVID-19 on our schools and communities is changing daily and these decisions are subject to change given guidance from state and county officials. We will continue our efforts to work with our districts, as well as our educational community leaders and public health officials, to see us through this public health crisis.”