



School Closures in Rhode Island “FAQ”

1. Why are schools closing?

- There are multiple reasons that schools are closing:
 - First and foremost, this will serve as a potential public health tool, preventing the spread of COVID-19 among school-age population and others for one week.
 - This will also give districts the opportunity to clean and disinfect buildings and transportation thoroughly,
 - Finally, it allows district leaders and educators a full week to plan and prepare for potential contingencies should schools face further disruptions.

2. Which schools are closing and for how long?

- Governor Raimondo has declared that all public schools in Rhode Island will observe their spring vacation the week of March 16th instead of during the month of April. All schools are closed from March 16 – 20.

3. Who will determine when schools will reopen?

- The Office of the Governor will work closely with the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and local officials to continue to assess the situation and determine if schools are ready to reopen on Monday, March 23, 2020.

4. If schools are closed beyond the week of March 16th, are there plans in place to ensure students continue to learn?

- District and school leadership will spend the week of March 16th finalizing their distance learning plans in the event of further school closures. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

5. How will families be notified about additional information?

- As the situation will vary from community to community, the best source of information will be consulting your local school or school district’s website and looking for communication from these sources. RIDE’s website is updated on a regular basis. Here is the link:
www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/AdditionalInformation/Covid19.aspx

6. What guidance is the Rhode Island Department of Education providing to school and district leaders about how to plan for coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- RIDE is in regular contact with superintendents to ensure that they are following the proper procedures to ensure that their buildings are clean, that they are constantly communicating with parents and families, and coordinating sites for school meals. In addition, we will take the



opportunity to work with district leaders on their distance learning plans so that districts will be ready to potentially launch a distance learning strategy the following week of March 23.

- Parents and families should continue checking the Rhode Island Department of Education website for updates, resources and tools.

7. Are childcare options being provided during closures?

- Unfortunately, since this week is the equivalent of April break, childcare services are unavailable. However, you may contact your district to see if there are any options available. Please check with your local school district should school closures continue. As of March 16, child care centers are also closed.

8. What happens for students who rely on school meals if schools are closed?

- Please contact your local district for more information on the plan for food distribution. In the meantime, [here is the full list](#) of free food sites across Rhode Island for school children.

9. What services must districts provide if a public school with children with disabilities is selectively closed due to the possibility of severe complications from a COVID-19 outbreak?

- The U.S. Department of Education has provided us with the following guidance:
 - *If districts close their schools to slow or stop the spread of COVID-19, and does not provide any educational services to the general student population, then the district would not be required to provide services to students with disabilities during that same period of time... If the district continues to provide educational opportunities to the general student population during a school closure, the school must ensure that students with disabilities also have equal access to the same opportunities, including the provision of FAPE. See the full guidance [here](#).*

10. Will the amount of required instructional time for the school year be reduced if schools are closed for an extended period of time? [Will students have to make up missed days?]

- The school closure the week of March 16th will count as the April break. Therefore, there is currently no loss of instructional time. This may change should school closures extend further.

11. Will College Board continue administrating the SAT?

- The March 25, 2020 Rhode Island State Assessment Program administration of the SAT School Day with Essay is being postponed. RIDE is reviewing the testing windows for all of our assessments and will communicate any changes soon. If you have questions, please contact assessment@ride.ri.gov.

12. Who can I contact at RIDE if I have any questions?

- Feel free to email us at info@ride.ri.gov or call us at 401-222-8700