



## AUGUSTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

40 Pierce Drive, Suite 3  
Augusta, Maine 04330-9105  
Phone: 207-626-2468 \* Fax: 207-626-2444  
[www.augustaschools.org](http://www.augustaschools.org)

March 13, 2020

**James Anastasio, M.A.**  
Superintendent

**Donna Madore, M.A.**  
Assistant Superintendent

**Kathy Casparius,**  
**M.B.A., M.C.T.E.,**  
Business Manager

**Susan Walters, CAS**  
Director of Special Education

### Board of Education

**Edward Hastings**  
Board Chair

**Staci Fortunato**  
Ward 1

**Christopher Clarke**  
Ward 2

**Vacant**  
Ward 3

**Kati McCormick**  
Ward 4

**Pia Holmes**  
At Large

**Jennifer Dumond**  
At Large

**Kevin Lamoreau**  
At Large

**Amanda Olson**  
At Large

Dear Parent/Guardian and Staff:

We understand that the Novel Coronavirus, now known as COVID-19, is causing much anxiety in our community, country and the world. The Augusta School Department is working to provide you with the most up to date information on this rapidly evolving situation. Following is a brief overview of the current situation. For more information and FAQ's, we recommend you visit <https://www.maine.gov/doe/covid-19>

The Augusta School Department is making the following adjustments out of an abundance of caution and in an attempt to protect students, staff, and the community from the possible spread of the Covid 19 virus. The changes increase the possibility that schools will remain open for the foreseeable future in this quickly evolving pandemic. I realize that you may find some of the adjustments an inconvenience, but what is in the best interest of the majority must be considered. Social distancing is the only effective strategy that is currently available to reduce the impact of the virus. Minimizing use of school facilities by the public and continual cleaning of all School Department facilities is essential. Limiting the public's access to schools will provide the time necessary to complete such essential tasks. As a result the following guidelines will be in place effective Monday March 16th through Monday April 27. We will continue to monitor the quickly evolving situation and make adjustments as necessary.

- All student field trips and excursion out of school facilities are canceled.
- All travel for the school department by employees will be limited and must be approved in advance.
- All community use of School Department facilities is canceled.
- All extra and co-curricular activities are postponed. The Maine Principals Association is delaying the start of spring athletics until Monday April 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Parent pick up of students at the end of the school day will take place outside or in school foyer.
- All booster and PTO activities (including meetings) at schools are canceled.
- Involvement of school volunteers is postponed.
- Meetings that involve members of the public will be reduced and canceled when possible. If it is necessary to hold meetings that involve parents and/or others the meetings must be in a location as close to an exterior door as possible. Such meetings must be held after school is dismissed or prior to the school closing for the evening. Custodians must be notified so the room is thoroughly cleaned after use.
- All school facilities will close every day at 5:00 p.m. and will not be open on weekends. "Closed" applies to everyone including all staff except essential personnel. It is imperative that building be empty to allow for disinfecting and cleaning.
- School events that involve only students and staff from that school may be held with prior permission. Parents and volunteers are not included even if they have students in your school or another school in the school department.
- Events that would mix students and staff from multiple schools are not allowed.
- The agenda for the workshop scheduled on March 20th is changed. The day will be utilized by teachers and administrators to prepare for the potential of school closing.

I hope the adjustments mentioned above and the information attached is helpful, and thank you for your understanding and support.

Sincerely, 

James Anastasio  
Superintendent of Schools

### **WHAT IS KNOWN**

- The virus causing COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified and causes a respiratory illness ranging from a mild cold-like illness to severe pneumonia.
- Similar to influenza, the people who are most likely to have severe disease and complications from COVID-19 are older individuals (>60 years old) and those with other medical conditions like heart and lung disease or diabetes.
- There is no vaccine or treatment currently available for COVID-19 but the National Institutes of Health is evaluating treatments and developing a vaccine already.

### **HOW THE VIRUS SPREADS**

- COVID-19 is believed to spread primarily the same way the common cold or flu spreads—through respiratory droplets that are produced when someone coughs or sneezes.
- People who are most at risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 are those who have been in close contact (within about 6 feet) with someone who has the disease.
- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread of the virus might be possible before a person has symptoms; there have been reports of this with COVID-19, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW**

- Keep children home when they are sick.
  - Students (and parents/guardians) who are ill, especially with acute respiratory symptoms (not allergies or chronic conditions), should stay home.
- Teach your children to always cover their cough and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
- Remind them to wash their hands with soap and water (or use hand sanitizer) after they touch their face, use the restroom and before they eat.
- Tell children to avoid touching their mouth and nose since that is how germs get into the body.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects (everyday household disinfectants are fine)
  - Enhance cleaning of high touch surfaces like door knobs, toilet handles, and sink handles.
- Plan for when community spread occurs.
  - Ensure you have a plan to designate a caregiver, such as a family member or neighbor, for a sick child(ren) if you can't stay home.
  - Know your child's school plan to communicate with you when needed, such as robocalls, email or checking their website.

Because most people with COVID-19 have mild disease, the likelihood that we will be closing schools is low, but not zero. In the highly unlikely chance that a decision to close school due to a COVID-19 outbreak is made, it is important for parents/guardians to have a plan for who could take care of your child.

We are receiving updates as The Maine Department of Education is working directly with Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention to monitor this evolving situation. We will continue to provide new information to the community as things change.