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Pennsylvania Department of Education Extends School Closures through at least April 6

Harrisburg, PA - The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) announced today that all schools in the commonwealth will remain closed through at least April 6 as a result of the COVID-19 response efforts. The closure order could be extended beyond April 6 if necessary to save lives and stop the spread of COVID-19. When it's determined that students can return to school, administrators, teachers and other staff will be given two days to prepare classrooms, set up cafeterias, schedule transportation and arrange other business operations. Students would return on the third day.

Secretary of Education Pedro A. Rivera said his decision to close all schools for the additional period aligns with the governor's stay-at-home directive announced today for seven counties – Allegheny, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Monroe, Montgomery and Philadelphia.

"Protecting the health and safety of students, families, teachers and all employees who work in our schools is paramount during this national health crisis and we must continue our efforts to mitigate the spread of the virus," he said. "The number of positive cases increases daily and we're seeing it spread to more counties. We must adhere to the social distancing guidelines. Extending the closure will help every community in its efforts to mitigate the spread."

Today's additional school closure will be for 14 days, beginning Tuesday, March 24.

To assist schools during the extended closure, Secretary Rivera said the state's 29 intermediate units are ready to provide technical assistance to help develop continuity of education plans for all students.

"We know students are eager to engage with their teachers and return to learning," he said. "Beginning tomorrow, all schools will be able to work with their local intermediate unit to develop instructional plans for all students, including those with disabilities and English language learners."

Also today, Secretary Rivera cancelled standardized testing for students in career and technical education (CTE) programs for the 2019-20 school year. These include exams from the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) and National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS).

Last Thursday the department cancelled all PSSA testing and Keystone exams for the 2019-20 school year, as well as the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA). The U.S. Department of Education approved Pennsylvania's waiver request the following day, and further waived accountability and reporting requirements for the 2019-20 school year.

The department has been providing ongoing guidance to school communities in the form of FAQs. The guidance information is available at education.pa.gov/COVID19 (https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/Pages/AnswersToFAQs.aspx)

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For more information about Pennsylvania's education policies and programs please visit the Department of Education's website (https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https://u7061146.ct.sendgrid.net/ls/click?upn%3DTeZUXWpUv-2B6TCY38pVLo9oD-2FjjPiw7AE8Syh5q2pAkiqoiOylGZcJFx0P2xruS9B6DJr_hdLF3rLJhzTRPT2w-2FGfeA8E2Ufo9uchaw2FUkqw0VAAtxwI3imaVW2pcEabk6UbHNkwk42E4T0jUmxuJYF34ZSMKCTuYxwgyF1dWXo6bwk57m55qUnZtiK9QaQDEav-2F-2FdimIcQA7tcH-2FkE6zhcPxFx2XAOrj5lE1nmHAoMEbknwDkKE1lTWR3KkhVFva3r7O-2BghaZkC3-2BsmbqYxNMQktr9vu3RZRiLsOW2ezZVBjxCy1o0D-2F8tqy-2Ff-2B1cDEBD9E85pPzlqWd9BORNbboiOk6f3ObS4Z2cf83urnk2WiHz7mb4x8jHza3prwuY5OLrhX4m9wo91tQrTZm-2Bym0PjGJTQ-3D-3D&data=02%7c01%7ckhensil%40pa.gov%7cfff5566668214bd260a608d7b9770cc8%7c418e284101284dd59b6c47fc5a9a1bde%7c0%7c0%7c637181793276465814&sdata=mE6fv6ETCJOrAtg2eOMRYz1EK7XvTP0cD9gdFqDJ7q8%3D&reserved=0)

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