HIDOE extends school closures, implements remote work to maintain essential functions

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The Hawaii State Department of Education will keep all public schools closed for a total of three weeks to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

Instruction is expected to resume April 7 for students, grab-and-go meal service will be provided weekdays at select schools during closure.

The Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) announced today it will keep all public schools closed for a total of three weeks to help slow the spread of COVID-19. In addition, HIDOE offices except for essential functions will be closed for the next 15 days. School and state offices will continue to provide public services remotely.

"Closing our schools will help safeguard the health of our children, teachers, staff and surrounding communities as we fight against the spread of COVID-19," Superintendent Dr. Christina Kishimoto said. "We appreciate the support and commitment of our public school 'ohana as we collectively navigate these uncharted waters."

Board of Education Chairwoman Catherine Payne added, "Our entire state must band together to combat community spread of the virus and school closures are an important part of the response. We will work closely with the Department and our federal partners to ensure that education requirements continue to be met and students have access to such essential services as meals."

HIDOE schools and offices

All public and charter schools will remain closed to students through April 6, following the extended spring break period. Barring any future changes, return dates will be staggered as follows:

- **April 3:** Custodians, principals and administrators return to work.
- **April 4-5 (weekend)**: Custodians continue deep cleaning of campuses.
- **April 6**: Teachers return to work to prepare classrooms.
- **April 7**: Students return to school.

Spring break was originally scheduled to run from March 16-20 for most HIDOE schools. The Department announced last week that the break would be extended by one week through March 27. The state's three multi-track schools — Kapolei Middle, Mililani Middle and Holomua Elementary — were placed on break for the same dates. The latest closure runs through April 6 for students.

Employees will be working remotely and those who need to perform duties at a campus or office during this period will be limited to those tasks before returning to their telework arrangement.

Student meal service

During the extended closure, HIDOE will continue to provide student meals, including providing grab-and-go breakfast and lunch at select schools to children 18 years and under at the following days and times:

- Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 8 a.m. for breakfast.
- Monday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. for lunch.
- Note: Meals will not be served on Thursday, March 26 in observance of Prince Kuhio Day. Some schools may start serving meals later in the week.

A list of the pick-up sites is available here. The locations were selected based on criteria including a high number of students eligible for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program and geography. HIDOE is monitoring the situation and may add additional sites if necessary.

For special diets accommodations, e-mail: specialdiets@k12.hi.us.

Graduation and other school events

Following earlier guidance, the Department canceled or postponed events involving large groups. Graduation ceremonies, which are normally held in mid-to-late May, have not yet been modified and any necessary scheduling changes will be announced at a future date.

Notification of COVID-19 cases

In the event there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 involving an individual in a HIDOE school community, the Department will not be issuing a notification. This outreach will be done by the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) in order to avoid any potential Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability

and Accountability Act (HIPAA) violations. We encourage those who are concerned to consult with their health care provider and continue to monitor the DOH website for updates at www.hawaiicovid19.com.

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