Arkansas Department of Education
Division of Elementary and Secondary Education
Johnny Key, Secretary
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All Arkansas Public Schools to Remain Closed Through April 17

Alternative Methods of Instruction Extended During This Time

LITTLE ROCK — Gov. Asa Hutchinson announced today that all Arkansas public schools will remain closed for onsite instruction through April 17 due to the increasing spread of COVID-19 across the state. The decision to close schools will be re-evaluated in a few weeks based on public health conditions at that time.

With this latest announcement, the Arkansas Department of Education is expanding the use of Alternative Methods of Instruction days during this additional three-week period, which will begin after Spring Break next week. Under the authority granted by Governor Hutchinson's amended emergency proclamation, the department is waiving the 10-day limit on AMI days, with the department automatically approving the additional 15 days for each district.

"I trust that educators and parents will understand this is not perfect, but we can't let the perfect be the enemy of the good," ADE Secretary Johnny Key said. "While the suspension of onsite instruction is necessary to protect our students, the extension of AMI is a responsible way to continue education delivery. I have been encouraged and inspired this week by the creativity we have seen from teachers in posting engaging lessons and activities for their students across a variety of platforms. I appreciate the efforts of our educators, and I look for this dedication and creativity to continue as we work through this difficult time."

Districts that have the capacity to plan for and deliver additional instruction allowed through their AMI plans may continue to do so. For districts with limited capacity, ADE is working in partnership with Arkansas PBS to develop AMI lessons and resources for students in grades K-8. ADE also is working with Virtual Arkansas and the Arkansas Public School Resource Center to develop options for students in grades 9-12.

Details about these efforts will be sent to education leaders in the coming days, but districts should plan for the continuity of learning using a blended approach with digital, virtual, or additional delivery of educational packets to students. Special considerations are needed for special populations.

Communities are encouraged to engage with school districts to create safe learning zones where students can access the Internet and technology support or pick up educational packets while adhering to Arkansas Department of Health guidelines.

To view Governor Hutchinson's press conference, go to https://bit.ly/2Uk9LeG. To learn more about Arkansas' efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19, visit https://bit.ly/2Qx1qTE.

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