STATE OF UTAH

GARY R. HERBERT
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
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SPENCER J. COX
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For Immediate Release

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Gov. Herbert announces two-week dismissal of Utah's public schools

State Superintendent Sydnee Dickson commits that services will remain available to students

SALT LAKE CITY (March 13, 2020) - Gov. Gary R. Herbert announced today that Utah's public schools will implement a two-week dismissal, or "soft closure," starting Monday, March 16. The dismissal is designed to help implement social distancing and slow the spread of novel coronavirus in our communities.

Teachers have up to two days to make plans to continue instruction. Remote instruction will resume on Wednesday, March 18, at the latest, and may take many forms. Parents and students can expect more information from their school districts and charters.

Gov. Herbert stressed that the school dismissal is a preventative measure, and will be reassessed at the end of the two-week period to determine whether or not the policy should continue.

"We feel strongly that the best way to keep our communities healthy is to implement these measures early, rather than late," the governor said. "Acting now to limit community spread will help reduce the number of cases of coronavirus that we see, so that our healthcare community will have the capacity to care for patients who need help."

Superintendent Syd Dickson explained that schools will still provide services to students who need them through the dismissal period.

"To be clear, we are in prevention mode, not reaction mode," Dickson said. "We are not reacting to a confirmed COVID-19 case in any of our schools, rather we are entering a critical new phase in the fight to stop the spread of COVID-19."

Lt. Governor Spencer J. Cox framed the dismissal as a community effort that will help minimize the impact of COVID-19 on Utah.

“There’s nowhere I would rather be right now than Utah,” Cox said. “Our state is prepared for this. We will take care of each other. We will mobilize our communities. There is good for each of us to do. Utahns are coming together to care for their vulnerable neighbors. We will get through this, together.”

The plan for dismissal emphasizes the importance of localized decision making in conjunction with local health departments. More information about which services will be provided on campus for your student during the dismissal will be provided by local districts and charters.

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