

March 18
5 p.m. Update

RE: Governor Orders School Closures Extended Through **April 28** Statewide

Bend-La Pine Schools Families,

I am grateful for our community's ability to work together and do what needs to be done. Thank you so very much.

As we anticipated, Governor Kate Brown announced an extension of the statewide school closure. The governor's new order means that schools will be closed for students for six weeks, **through April 28**, unless the closure is extended or lifted by order of the governor before that date. The governor also said that school districts may be called on to provide childcare to emergency providers and medical staff. At this time, we are not providing this level of care. We will let you know more about this if we are called on to open schools in the Bend, La Pine and Sunriver areas for this effort or any others, as directed by the Governor.

I want you to know that we have been planning for a closure of this magnitude. Yet, it does not make my heart any less heavy to know that the time has come to implement the plan. I know these next days and weeks will not be easy for our students and families who depend on our schools being open.

Please know that we will continue to provide free 'Grab and Go' meals to our students and are readying our staff to provide supplemental learning materials to you and your student(s), beginning April 1.

Free Meals

As of this afternoon, we have decided to extend our free 'Grab and Go' meals program through April 28. As I mentioned yesterday, we are also opening two sites for free 'Grab and Go' meals during spring break. You can learn more about what schools are participating and meal times [here](#).

Some families have asked how many meals they can pick up for their students. You are welcome to take what you can share with the children under age 18 in your care. Families or caregivers are invited to choose the most convenient location, regardless of where they live or attend school.

Continuation of Learning

Our district has been preparing for the possibility of a prolonged closure since before the initial school closure order was announced. **You can expect to learn more about the plan and to hear from your teacher(s) starting Wednesday, April 1** (the day we were originally scheduled to come back to school, per the Governor's first order), when we launch supports to keep our students engaged and learning during this prolonged closure.

We have a plan to deliver a variety of strategies that will engage our students to continue learning, connect with their teachers and each other, and stay positive. Thanks to the availability of digital devices to students in grades 3-12, use of digital and paper tools for our youngest learners, and learning management tools for teacher use, Bend-La Pine Schools will deliver meaningful experiences for district students so that they can

continue learning outside their traditional school walls. Families who do not currently have Internet access should check with their cable and phone providers in their area for no-cost options for Internet connections as some providers are currently providing these services free to students.

We are committed to embracing this new normal as an opportunity for our staff, students and families to collaborate, experiment, innovate and create as we serve our students, together, in the weeks to come.

Resources

If your children are like mine, they have begun asking questions about COVID-19. I am sharing some resources that I have found helpful for talking to children and youth about coronavirus COVID-19.

- [Deschutes County Health Services](#) – English
- [Deschutes County Health Services](#) - Español
- [Centers for Disease Control Talking with Children](#)
- [National Association of School Psychologists](#)
- [Child Mind Institute English y Español](#)
- [UNICEF English y Español](#)

Please know that we are working hard to help ease the strain as best we can and that together our community will get through these immense challenges. Thank you for your continued understanding and patience.

Best,

Shay Mikalson, Superintendent