



# SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT

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**Joseph Onofrio II**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Kim Gadaree**  
Business Manager

**Donna Gittleman**  
Director of Student Services

March 13, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

**I am writing to inform you that the Salem School District and East Lyme Public Schools will be closed effective 5:00 p.m. today.** On the advice of our local health departments, the school superintendents in southeastern Connecticut have come together to make a decision to put the health of our community at the center of this important decision. We have been advised that the implementation of social distancing measures is a proven science-based intervention that has been shown to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with communicable disease outbreaks. In the past, communities in which schools closed during a pandemic were able to positively impact and reduce the spread of disease. We felt compelled to make this decision to prevent the spread of illness among our students, staff, families, and our communities.

We have been apprised that we cannot confirm that COVID-19 will run its course and be over in two weeks. In fact, it is not likely that it will. **We made the determination to make this closure 'indefinite' with a minimum two-week closure to start based on that information.** This decision was made in consultation with and with the support of the health departments and emergency management professionals. Also, please be advised we will not have any formal distance learning in place at this time. *(It is important to note that the last day of school cannot go past June 30, 2020 based on the executive order issued by the Governor.)*

It would be our hope to have schools only closed for a two-week period, but the reality with this is that we could be closed for a much longer duration. We will provide information on how you and your child can potentially access learning activities our teachers and staff have compiled so that your child can remain engaged in learning.

You will receive follow-up correspondence from me a minimum of each week but sooner if we have any new information to share. Many questions are being raised and discussed with the appropriate authorities. We are currently in unprecedented times, and I know that this situation creates hardships for all of us parents and guardians. This decision is being made out of the utmost concern for the safety of all of our students, staff, and community members.

We will remain in contact with the our Salem Town Government and Emergency Services, CT State Department of Education, CT Department of Public Health, Uncas Health District, and the Governor's office as we make future decisions based on the health and education of our students. Please monitor your emails and refer to our district's website for additional details and updates. We appreciate everyone's patience, understanding, and flexibility in what will be some difficult weeks ahead. Please do all you can to keep your families safe, and we will do our best to maintain ongoing communication.

Sincerely,

Joseph Onofrio II  
Superintendent  
Salem School District

Salem School District's Mission Statement

*"Salem inspires learning, creativity, critical thinking, personal integrity, and citizenship."*

JO/jlk