

SOUTH KITSAP

South Kitsap schools closing due to coronavirus fears

SKSD to be closed March 16-April 24

By Bob Smith

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PORT ORCHARD — Student families and staff members were informed Friday morning that South Kitsap School District is suspending classes and closing schools beginning Monday, March 16 through Friday, April 24, due to concerns about the spread of COVID-19.

The school district told community members in an email letter that “conditions and responses are evolving rapidly, and districts have announced school closures following state and health agency recommendations.”

The school district stated: “To support social distancing and do our part in slowing the spread of COVID-19, South Kitsap schools will be closed starting Monday, March 16, 2020. ... South Kitsap Administration Offices will remain open during the closure. School offices will be open through March 20 to allow for families to pick up medication and personal items.

“This is not an easy decision. We recognize that schools provide vital support to our community beyond education and know that closure will have a major impact on our families. We will continue to monitor developments and provide updates during the closure.”

SKSD officials were not immediately available for comment Friday morning.

Superintendent Tim Winter told students, parents and staff that during the school closure, boxed meals will be provided by South Kitsap Food & Nutrition Services at no charge and will include breakfast and lunch items. He said meals will be available starting March 18 to all students under the age of 18. No forms or registration are required.

Winter noted that district teachers have developed learning packets and will provide paper copies to students.

“These are not meant to be a substitute for classroom instruction but will help students practice their skills and learn independently during the closure. Our teachers and administration team are also working on

support for our 12th-grade students to ensure they complete graduation requirements.

“We know any school closure is difficult for families to manage and recognize that extended closure will be even more challenging. We are in contact with Champions, Boys & Girls Club and YMCA Child Watch to coordinate options for our families. We will share information on child care options as soon as planning is complete.”

Winter said the district plans to send out frequent updates with information and resources via email and text messages. SKSD, he said, has started a phone hotline for community information at 360-874-6499.

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