

Dear Oregon Conference School Families and Staff,

With the number of confirmed COVID-19 coronavirus cases in Oregon increasing, [Governor Brown announced new guidance](#) last night regarding group gatherings and social distancing. This follows a recent similar statement given by Washington State Governor Jay Inslee. We remain committed to keeping our schools open and safe. In accordance with these announcements and in order to minimize potential opportunities for the virus to spread, **we have decided to proactively begin suspending events that bring large groups of students, adults, and community members together as well as canceling all field trips including our mission trips.** This action is not related to a presumptive case. At this time, there are no presumptive cases in our schools.

Suspension of non-essential school-based activities begins immediately, effective Thursday, March 12, and will remain in effect for 30 days. This includes **the suspension of all school-based assemblies and events, off-campus field trips, and professional development meetings and events.** With regard to athletics, we are following new state guidance denying audience admission at all school-based events, with the exception of essential personnel and credentialed media. The list of affected activities will grow as we work with partners and stakeholders over the coming days. We will update you as we make those decisions.

To be clear, we are taking every step possible so that we can continue to provide high-quality education for all of our students and keep our schools open.

We realize that this decision will impact every school community, and we know that many of the events, student performances, and other gatherings that we are suspending are those that schools, students, and families look forward to all year long. Suspending these events is consistent with guidance from health authorities, and we believe it is a prudent and responsible step to take at this time. We will be working with trip planners, event organizers, and others who are responsible for the affected activities.

The safety, health, and well-being of our students and staff is our highest priority. We will continue to work in close partnership with public health authorities to minimize both the spread of coronavirus and disruption to schools and students. We will continue emphasizing the importance of handwashing at school. We will continue to prioritize the cleaning of high-touch surfaces in classrooms and common areas. And we are making sure schools have adequate cleaning supplies.

Students, families, and everyone in our community can best support our efforts by washing hands frequently, covering mouths when coughing or sneezing, and using hand sanitizer. Those experiencing symptoms of the cold or flu should stay at home, only returning to school or work when symptom-free for 24 hours. If you are concerned about symptoms, please consult with a doctor.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding during this difficult time. We all collectively share the utmost concern for the health and safety of our students, employees, and communities. Please know we all are in the hands of Jesus and it is reassuring to know that He is in charge.

Gale Crosby

VP Education

Oregon Conference of SDA