

Colleague,

This morning, I issued an order under [Act 13 of 2020](#) to close all public schools through the end of the 2019-2020 academic year, as defined by the local school calendar.

Additionally, Governor Wolf is ordering all K-12 schools and programs, public and private, to be closed through the end of the 2019-2020 academic year. Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, Head Start Supplemental Assistance Programs and Preschool Early Intervention programs will also remain closed, and institutions of higher education are prohibited from offering in-person instruction.

All of these decisions were made in consultation with the Secretary of Health, based on the most recent information regarding COVID-19 as it relates to the health, safety, and welfare of students, school staff, and communities.

While I am sure this announcement may provoke additional questions, it is my hope that this order provides you clarity as you plan the remainder of the school year, and will allow you to redouble the innovative, collaborative work you've been doing, recognizing that energies that would be devoted to re-opening schools will need to come later.

To continue our efforts to support you and all education professionals statewide, my order under Act 13 also waives a series of state-level requirements to ensure crucial stability of education programs. This action will:

- [Ensure that more than 125,000 Pennsylvania educators receive timely, meaningful professional evaluations for the 2019-20 school year](#);
- [Protect roughly 4,500 student teachers—a cohort that is vital to staffing classrooms next fall—by allowing them to complete a competency-based alternative to the 12-week student teaching experience](#); and
- [Pause other statutory and regulatory requirements that may not be possible given the shortened school year](#).

By taking these actions, the Department is providing flexibility in the near term, while signaling that core functions of public education can and will continue.

As always, PDE will provide you updates and guidance as they become available—and will continue to advocate on behalf of our schools and students as we travel this unprecedented path.

-Pedro

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