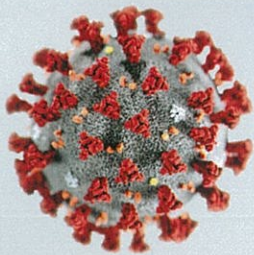


THE IMPACT ON SCHOOLS



For many students, an extended spring break turns into an early summer "staycation."

Just as we are looking forward to going on spring break, the world realizes that it's facing a pandemic, the likes of which hasn't been seen since 1918. Many schools' first response is to extend their spring break from one week to three weeks. But as the contagion spreads, educators decide to close for the year and/or switch to an entirely online curriculum. As the outbreak of COVID-19 accelerates, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises that closing schools for eight weeks or more will have a greater impact on containing the virus. Kansas is the first state to order all K-12 schools closed for the rest of the year, followed by Virginia. California Gov. Gavin Newsom closes schools "indefinitely," and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis cancels all remaining testing for the school year, saying grades won't be calculated.

Canceled school also means canceling school functions, and now millions of students are faced with the possibility of not having spring sports, prom, graduation and other milestones of the academic experience. "The Class of 2020" becomes "The Class of COVID-19," losing what's left of their senior year and missing the traditional rites of passage that they have worked towards for the last 12 years.

Source: ImYanis / Shutterstock



School Lunch Stays Open

Nearly 30 million children in the U.S. count on schools to provide one or more meals each day. When schools across the U.S. close their doors to try to prevent the spread of COVID-19, many make arrangements to provide grab-and-go lunch bags or set up meal delivery routes.



Source: Paul Laubach / Shutterstock

Spring Break Gets Broken

Students look forward to spring break all year long, and plans to gather with friends and exploit the warmer weather are made well in advance. But the coronavirus has other ideas. Vacation hot spots become closed to the public indefinitely. Airlines reduce their number of flights by 30-70%, leaving travelers with few options to get to their vacation destinations.

Many students are already on spring break when the threat of COVID-19 becomes severe enough to mandate social distancing, while others downplay concerns about the outbreak. Those that keep their vacation plans force officials in Florida and other coastal hot spots to officially close public beaches at the height of the spring break rush.



Source: Adam Calaitzis / Shutterstock

The Show Must Hold On

The end of the school year is when everything culminates in one final show, but COVID-19 upends performances, tournaments and entire seasons. The theatre department was going to bring you an amazing production. The band and choir won't get to perform their end-of-year concerts. Leadership conferences are canceled. FFA conventions are postponed. The journalism staff has no idea how they are going to get your yearbooks out. Baseball, softball, lacrosse, soccer, track, golf and tennis seasons will not be played in their original form.

The end of the school year is when teams and organizations of all disciplines—athletic, academic and creative—showcase what they've been working on and compete at the state or national level for coveted titles. With social distancing measures put in place, everything suddenly becomes "on hold," another giant question mark in our academic calendars caused by the coronavirus.

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