

Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota: Educators will be ready for weeks of distance learning

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ST. PAUL, Minnesota. March 25, 2020 – Providing five weeks or more of distance learning will be a challenge for Minnesota’s public school system, but Education Minnesota President Denise Specht said Wednesday that Minnesota educators were up to the job.

“The educators of Minnesota will meet this challenge with the same courage, ingenuity and grace they brought to their classrooms before the outbreak,” Specht said. “There’s no script for what comes next, but educators, parents and students will get through this if we stand together with compassion and empathy for each other.”

Gov. Tim Walz announced Wednesday that schools would be closed to students from Monday, March 30, until Monday, May 4. Educators will provide distance learning to students during that time.

Specht said there remain serious issues about the safety of educators who will still be working in school buildings with the children of medical personnel, first responders and similar people with jobs that make them essential for the state’s response to COVID-19.

“Educators are stepping up to do their part to take care of essential workers’ children. It’s time to take common-sense precautions to protect them, such as appropriate training, equipment and safety protocols,” Specht said. “We will be working closely with the departments of health and education and with school district administrators to ensure that educators are safe.”

Specht said the outbreak of the virus that causes COVID-19 has demonstrated the key roles that public schools, and the educators who work in them, play in Minnesota communities and for the state’s economy as a whole.

“Minnesota’s educators not only teach students who come through the doors with all sorts of talents and challenges,” Specht said. “Our schools are often students’ best places to get food, medical care, counseling and shelter. When we get through this time of uncertainty, I hope our elected leaders will see our schools more clearly and start funding them appropriately.”

About Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota is the voice for professional educators and students. Education Minnesota’s members include teachers and education support professionals in Minnesota’s public school districts, faculty members at Minnesota’s community and technical colleges and University of Minnesota

campuses in Duluth and Crookston, retired educators and student teachers. Education Minnesota is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association and AFL-CIO.

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