

Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota: Governor's decision on distance learning 'heartbreaking,' but correct for student safety



For more information, contact:

[Chris Williams](#)

651-292-4816 (work)

651-247-5539 (cell)

ST. PAUL, Minnesota. April 23, 2020 – Gov. Tim Walz made the right decision to close school buildings for the rest of the school year to most students while continuing distance learning, said Education Minnesota President Denise Specht Thursday.

“This is a heartbreaking decision for educators who miss their students. We will always regret missing our seniors walk across the stage at graduation and not being able to say goodbye to our students face-to-face at the end of the year,” Specht said. “However, the governor made the right decision for the wellbeing of our students, their families and Minnesota educators. Social distancing will never work in Minnesota’s crowded classrooms.”

“Now educators know what they have to do,” Specht said. “We will keep educating students and building relationships in every way we can. We will make sure students have healthy food and the children of essential workers have a safe place to go during the day. We will take care of our students’ physical and mental health as we have in the past. None of this will be easy, but the educators of Minnesota are up to the job.”

“However, we need to be honest about what this decision means,” she said. “Distance learning is putting incredible stress on parents, students and educators. It’s widening disparities by wealth, race and geography. I hope educators can use these last few weeks to wind down the academics while increasing attention on the mental and emotional health of our students. At the same time, we need to plan for addressing the inequities this crisis has made even worse.”

Specht said she would make additional comments about the plan for distance learning for the rest of the year as more details become available in the next few days.

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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