

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, March 13, 2020

## **Two-Week School Closure**

As superintendents of schools await further guidance from state and federal public health officials, the Merrimack Valley Superintendents Association has collaborated to make a timely and unified decision about school closure that we believe is in the best interest of students, staff and the larger community.

The following school districts have mutually decided to close schools through at least March 27, 2020:

- Andover Public Schools
- Ayer-Shirley Regional School District
- Billerica Public Schools
- Chelmsford Public Schools
- CREST Collaborative
- Dracut Public Schools
- Groton-Dunstable Regional School District
- Haverhill Public Schools
- Littleton Public Schools
- Nashoba Valley Technical High School
- North Andover Public Schools
- North Middlesex Regional School District
- North Reading Public Schools
- Reading Public Schools
- Stoneham Public Schools
- Tewksbury Public Schools
- Tyngsborough Public Schools
- Valley Collaborative
- Wakefield Public Schools
- Westford Public Schools
- Whittier Regional Vocational Technical H.S.
- Wilmington Public Schools

Our decision has been informed by conversations with local officials to address the concerns raised. We know we can have a greater and more positive impact on public health and safety if we do this together. We collectively believe that this decision will assist with the ongoing efforts of our communities to mitigate the spread of this virus. It is important to understand that closing schools is only a part of the broader solution to prevent community spread of the virus. If students and families continue to meet together in large groups outside of school, this initial two-week closure may not have the desired impact. It is critical that students and families do their best to refrain from meeting in large groups and practice social distancing as recommended by the CDC.

The collective decision to close schools in the Merrimack Valley has been made after multiple and ongoing discussions. We acknowledge that this unprecedented closure will be difficult for everyone involved. Families will have questions and concerns as we move forward and can expect to hear from local district leaders in regard to educational programming and local information. We appreciate your support and patience as we continue to manage this ever changing situation.