



SCHOOL BOARD ACTION REPORT

DATE: January 31, 2020
FROM: Denise Juneau, Superintendent
LEAD STAFF: Ronald Boy, Senior General Counsel, (206) 252-0114
Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer, (206) 252-0180

For Introduction: February 26, 2020
For Action: March 11, 2020

1. TITLE

Waiver of one (1) school day at Leschi Elementary School due to an emergency closure for an unforeseen natural event

2. PURPOSE

State regulation WAC 392-129-140 requires that the Superintendent submit a signed statement to the Superintendent of Public Instruction indicating that “the school district board of directors have reviewed the application and supports its submittal” to request a waiver for an emergency school closure. On December 13, 2019, there was an emergency closure at Leschi Elementary School. This Board Action Report and the attached letter are the District’s application.

3. RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the School Board approve the Superintendent’s application to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, which requests permission for Leschi Elementary School to not make up one (1) day of missed school for December 13, 2019 when it was closed due to an unforeseen natural event.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

a. Background

Leschi Elementary School, a school of 370 students, began to see signs of the norovirus illness on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 when 52 students were absent and 21 more students came to the nurse during the school day complaining of stomachaches and nausea. Normal absence rates for this school are about 30 students per day.

Then, on Thursday, December 12, 2019, there was a dramatic increase in student absence and staff calling in sick. That day, 83 students were absent and twelve 12 students went home during the day due to illness. In addition, 4 staff members called in sick in addition to 1 substitute. By the end of the day, 9 staff members and the principal of the school were experiencing norovirus symptoms.

Because of the highly contagious nature of the norovirus, the decision was made to close the school for a deep cleaning and to stop student and staff contact in order to prevent the spread of the illness. The one-day closure, combined with cleaning and the weekend

break was determined to be the best way to stop the spread of the norovirus epidemic. The school was closed for deep cleaning on Friday, December 13, 2019.

In the following week, the numbers of students absent for illness dramatically decreased. On Monday, December 16, there were 66 students absent due to illness and 4 staff members. On Tuesday, December 17, 39 students and 1 staff were not at school due to illness showing that the closure and cleaning successfully stopped the spread of the virus.

According to RCW 28A.150.290, an epidemic is an unforeseen natural event that qualifies for a waiver. An epidemic is defined by the dictionary as a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time.

b. Alternatives

Not approve the waiver request and have Leschi Elementary School open one day during the school year when school is not scheduled or after the regular school year ends. This is not recommended. Having only one school open in the entire district disrupts operations and efficiencies gained by operating the district as a whole. It would also require the District to bargain with the Seattle Education Association to extend the work year and determine compensation.

Not approve the waiver request, not make up the day of school lost, and accept an apportionment reduction. This would mean the district would not receive approximately \$24,037.00 from the state.

c. Research

The District has previously requested waivers for similar situations where one school had to close and others did not. In March 2017, John Muir Elementary School experienced a norovirus epidemic and closed for two days. OSPI granted that waiver application. Principal Lisa Moland and the staff of Leschi Elementary School support this waiver request.

5. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE

Fiscal impact to this action will be neutral if both the Board and OSPI approve this waiver request.

The revenue source for this motion is N/A.

Expenditure: One-time Annual Multi-Year N/A

Revenue: One-time Annual Multi-Year N/A

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With guidance from the District's Community Engagement tool, this action was determined to merit the following tier of community engagement:

Not applicable

Tier 1: Inform

Tier 2: Consult/Involve

Tier 3: Collaborate

This is primarily an administrative decision of the District because of the financial and compliance implications.

7. EQUITY ANALYSIS

N/A

8. STUDENT BENEFIT

This action will allow students to receive the necessary instructional hours and remain on schedule for breaks with other District schools and students which is particularly important to students with siblings attending other District schools.

9. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY

Amount of contract initial value or contract amendment exceeds \$250,000 (Policy No. 6220)

Amount of grant exceeds \$250,000 in a single fiscal year (Policy No. 6114)

Adopting, amending, or repealing a Board policy

Formally accepting the completion of a public works project and closing out the contract

Legal requirement for the School Board to take action on this matter

Board Policy No. _____, [TITLE], provides the Board shall approve this item

Other: _____

10. POLICY IMPLICATION

This motion implicates no policy. RCW 28A.150.220 & WAC 392-129-140 mandates this course of action.

11. BOARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

This motion was discussed at the Curriculum & Instruction Committee meeting on February 11, 2020. The Committee reviewed the motion and moved the item forward for approval by the full Board.

12. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Upon approval of this motion, the District will submit the waiver request to OSPI for review. If approved by OSPI, Leschi Elementary School will follow the school calendar utilized by all District schools.

13. ATTACHMENTS

- Waiver Application Letter from Superintendent Juneau: *Leschi Norovirus Epidemic Emergency School Closure Waiver (for approval)*

January 31, 2020

Chief Financial Officer
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Old Capital Building
P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200

Re: LESCHI NOROVIRUS EPIDEMIC EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURE WAIVER

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter and enclosed School Board Action Report as the application by the Seattle School District (“District”) under WAC 392-129-140 and 392-129-150 to waive one (1) day from the 180-day calendar without the loss of state funding for Leschi Elementary School (“Leschi”). This request is made pursuant to a school emergency closure caused by a norovirus epidemic that rendered the school unhealthy to remain in operation. As a result, Leschi was closed Friday, December 13, 2019.

To support the District’s request for a waiver, the following information is being provided:

1. Name of the school district: Seattle School District No. 1.
2. Name of the superintendent of the school district: Denise Juneau
3. A statement signed by the superintendent that the school district board of directors has reviewed the application and supports its submittal: The Board of Directors for the District reviewed the waiver request at open public meetings on February 26, 2020 and March 11, 2020. The Board of Directors, through the enclosed School Board Action Report, has reviewed and approved of the waiver application to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (“OSPI”). Please consider this letter and its attachments to be my signed statement.
4. The name of the individual school that did not operate: Leschi Elementary School.
5. The unforeseen natural events, mechanical failures, and/or actions or inactions by one or more persons, which caused the school emergency closure: Leschi Elementary School, a school of 370 students, began to see signs of the norovirus illness on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 when 52 students were absent and 21 more students came to the nurse during the school day complaining of stomachaches and nausea. Normal absence rates for this school are about 30 students per day.

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6. The specific dates of the school emergency closure: ~~Monday~~Friday, December 13, 2019.
7. The specific dates that the school district has scheduled to make up the lost days: The District does not propose to make up this one day at Leschi. This waiver request is made pursuant to WAC 392-129-140 and 392-129-150. The closure was isolated (one school in our system was closed). It would be an expense to deliver central services (transportation) and pay school staff to at one school when other schools are not in session. The District can utilize the waiver and still comply with the district-wide annual average total instruction requirements contained in RCW 28A.150.220.

Thank you for your attention to the District's waiver application.

Very truly yours,

Denise Juneau
Superintendent

Enclosure: School Board Action Report

cc: Diane DeBacker, Chief Academic Officer
Fred Podesta, Chief Operations Officer

JoLynn Berge, Chief Financial Officer
Sara Mirabueno, Director of School Operations
Anthony Ruby, Director of Schools
Lisa Moland, Principal, Leschi Elementary School
Ronald Boy, Senior Assistant General Counsel