

Why NJ schools should remain open during their annual Spring Break.

Every year districts throughout NJ schedule annual spring breaks that best meet the individual needs of school districts. Many districts have shortened to a four day weekend while others continue with a week long break.

Today, we are in a serious crisis, nationally, statewide and locally. We asked our educators to completely redesign their approach to learning overnight. Our educators have been phenomenal in learning a whole new paradigm and delivering instruction to our students. We have also asked our parents to be educators too. This has been challenging and stressful. Not only are our families struggling, but many are also feeling a tremendous financial impact that elevates the stress level at home.

For those reasons, we need to rethink closing our schools over the spring break for the 2020 school year. During this time, it is important to keep the continuity of learning as we enter into week three and four of the mandatory shut down. Having multiple days without instruction, connection and interaction could be detrimental to our children during this stressful time. Our students rely on us for educational and moral support and for those reasons, spring break should be shortened. By seeing our students everyday, individually and as a class, we can continue instructional and moral support services.

I have been online with my students and their classes and they really enjoy the engagement with teachers and their fellow classmates. A discontinuation of that engagement for several days would not be very productive and may have a negative impact on our students.

Traditionally, spring break has been a time for families to go on vacations. That is not going to happen this April. Children will be at home with their parents and siblings with little to nothing to do. Knowing that their teachers will be there daily is important for them.

Finally, if and when we do go back to school, the calendar will be adjusted moving the last day of school earlier giving our seasonal employees an opportunity to begin their work earlier.