

Over the last few weeks, Boards in our area have been grappling with the decision to soft close until the end of the school year or to make the decision later. Below are some of the thoughts that emerged. (04-20-2020)

Candid Conversation with other Region Leaders	
Closure allows consistency of instruction	Opening for even a few weeks would be better than what we are currently doing. It would be better for kids who are struggling.
Less anxiety of what is coming next for students and teachers. More focus on what is best for the current circumstances.	What if this goes until the fall?
Under guidelines, vulnerable teachers may not be able to return leaving us short handed	Substitute teachers may be willing to return.
With the choice for students to return still being up to the parent, districts could be in flux of still offering distant learning and in-school learning for students.	Making the decision after the 30 th gives us a chance to comeback even if it is for two weeks. Though instruction may not be where we want it, and all students wouldn't be back, it would offer closure to students and ready them for the fall. Books and equipment could be checked in.
Criteria for reentry has a "14 day after the peak" stipulation and "no stay at home orders." The stay at home order is until April 30 th , if at that time we are at the peak, then we only have 2-3 weeks left of school. If we are at peak now, we would be looking at May 1 before considering reopening.	I'd very much like to re-open and so would my Board. We only have 3 confirmed cases in the county. I think the kids need even a few days or weeks in school to close out the year.
Some districts have no or few cases. Local health personnel want them to reopen, but the decision has to involve the public health authorities. Currently, those authorities are not leaning toward reopening in southeast Idaho saying we are not there yet.	The large districts are closing around us. Sometimes we are like lemmings as we follow each other into closure.
The plan to reopen is extensive. Cleaning and sanitizing would be possible but creating plans for vulnerable students and staff could pose challenges, as will absentee plans for staff and students who chose not to return.	We have too many factors and entities to answer to as well as contacts to consult i.e. Public Health, the Governor's Office, The SBOE and the SDE.
Pros for returning to school when cleared to do so: Students will be able to return for their things and finish off the year.	Pros for closing for the year: Limit spread in our community if it is here. The liability for coming back will not be placed on the district.

<p>Coming back to school will bring normalcy to a difficult time. It will provide the support that students may not have in other parts of their lives. This will allow graduation to seniors.</p>	<p>I will not have a mix of at home and at school learning for my teachers. There will not be a need to find subs for teachers and staff that are at risk and do not feel safe coming back to school. We already have a system that seems to be functioning.</p>
<p>We are having some mental health issues with students. In some ways they need to get back together if just for a short time for their mental sake.</p>	
<p>Pocatello, Fort Hall, Sugar, Rigby, Shelly, Boise, Middleton, Blaine, Mackey, West J: soft closure until end of the school year. Some closing but leaving graduation on the table.</p>	<p>Snake River, Preston, American Falls, Aberdeen, Malad, waiting until 30th to decide. Freemont: Until Gov reopens. Many boards will meet this week to make the decision.</p>
<p>States with mandatory closures until end of calendared school year. 4/18/2020</p> <p>Alabama Alaska Arkansas Arizona District of Columbia Florida Georgia Illinois Indiana Iowa Kansas Louisiana</p>	<p>Michigan Mississippi Missouri Nebraska New Hampshire New Mexico Oklahoma Oregon Pennsylvania Texas Utah Vermont Virginia Washington Wisconsin</p>