



**August 27, 2020**  
**FURLOUGH FAQ**

### **Facts**

- School is starting remotely on September 9, 2020, which impacts the necessity of some positions throughout the district.
- Roughly 200 employees will have all or part of their hours furloughed starting September 8, 2020, based on budget and the availability of work in a remote setting.
- The district intends to get students back to the classrooms as soon as it is safe for students and staff to do so. At that time the intention is to bring furloughed staff back to their original positions.
- Furloughing certain positions allows the district to still support the staff whose jobs are not needed in remote learning by paying for the employer-paid portion of their health insurance. Employees will need to pay the employee-paid contribution of their health insurance.

### **FAQ**

**Q: What is a furlough?**

**A:** A furlough is an alternative to a layoff, which allows effected staff to remain employed in an unpaid status. It is essentially a mandatory unpaid leave of absence.

**Q: Why can't you continue to keep and pay all staff like you did in the spring with remote learning?**

**A:** In the spring, due to the Governor's declaration and OSPI's commitment, we had secure funding to keep our staff engaged in various types of work and professional development. This fall our funding is based on enrollment, which we won't know for certain until after school has started. It is likely we will have reduced funding and can therefore only support positions that are necessary in a remote learning model.

**Q: How will I know if I am being furloughed?**

**A:** If you are being furloughed you will be contacted personally and then will receive a letter from the district to the mailing address you have on file.

**Q: How is the district supporting the staff it is furloughing?**

**A:** While there is no work to perform and therefore no wages are provided during the furlough period, the district will continue to pay the employer-paid portion of health benefits for furloughed staff who were eligible for benefits as of 2/29/2020 as long as they remain

furloughed. Furloughed staff will still be required to pay for the employee-paid responsibility of their benefits. Staff who are furloughed may be eligible for both state and available federal unemployment benefits.

**Q: How long will the furlough last?**

**A:** We don't know how long our distance learning model will be in place, so we can't say how long the furlough will last. However, we are committed to maintaining staff in furlough status through at least December 31, 2020, if we have not returned them to work by then. Please note that this commitment could change if the district is faced with a significant reduction in enrollment that impacts its ability to continue the arrangement.

Also, it is likely that some work will become available prior to the return to full face-to-face instruction, and staff will be recalled to work based on the furlough procedures that are developed.

**Q: Will any other employees be furloughed or face a reduction in hours?**

**A:** It is possible. We are continuing to evaluate our operations and additional staff could be impacted at a later date. Also, if the district faces a reduction in enrollment or otherwise experiences a cut in funding, we will have to reassess our staffing needs.

**Q: What are unemployment benefits and how do I apply?**

**A:** Unemployment benefits provide you with temporary income when you lose your job or are furloughed through no fault of your own. The money partly replaces your lost earnings and helps you pay expenses. The benefits, from taxes your employer paid, are not based on financial need.

You can apply online or by phone. However, call volumes are high right now and applying online will be faster. At this time, you cannot apply in person.

Setting up an account to apply online works best on a laptop or desktop computer. You can use a phone or tablet, but this service is not optimized for mobile and may be difficult to navigate. Like most Washington state agencies, Employment Security Department uses SecureAccess Washington (SAW) to manage access to customer accounts. If you do not already have a SAW account; you'll need to create one. If you do, you can use that same username and password to access eServices.

Start by going to <https://secure.esd.wa.gov/home/>

Before applying, [download the unemployment application checklist to prepare](#) or see attached.

Unemployment benefits are determined by the Employment Security Department, not the school district. District staff do not have access to your unemployment account and will be unable to provide assistance once your claim has been filed.

**Q: Does the district offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?**

Yes. [Magellan Health Services](#) provides EAP services for all employees and their families. Enrollment in a medical plan is not required for this service.

Everyone needs a little help now and then. Change can create stress. Routine can create stress. Life is full of challenges and surprises, ups and downs, highs and lows. It's natural to feel sometimes like there's just too much to handle. You're not alone.

This program is available to Everett Public Schools employees and their families. Easy to find, confidential assistance is available every hour of every day. If after speaking with one of the Magellan clinicians an employee decides that they would benefit from seeing a counselor face-to-face, they will receive a referral to a provider in their area for up to five face-to-face appointments. Employees will be encouraged to make an appointment right away to get the needed support.

Employees can call the toll-free number listed below to speak confidentially with a trained, compassionate professional. Employees are also encouraged to visit [Magellan Health Members](#) (instructions for registering) for information on hundreds of health and wellness topics, including:

- Employment changes
- Adjusting to change
- Alcohol or drug dependencies
- Child or elder care
- Family or parenting issues
- Grief
- Marital or relationship issues
- Pre- and post-natal concerns
- Self-improvement
- Stress
- Work/life balance

**Magellan**  
HEALTHCARE<sup>SM</sup>

**Call 1-800-523-5668**