

**SPECIAL REPORT**



**A-Z Power Words**  
**transition** verb: to change  
**unparalleled** adjective: never seen or experienced before

**SAFETY FIRST** In Washington State, public schools in the Northshore district closed on March 5.

# SCHOOLS RESPOND

**COVID-19 has caused many schools to close. What does this mean for students?**

As of March 12, almost 377 million students around the world were out of school because of COVID-19. That's according to the United Nations (U.N.). Schools have closed because of health emergencies before, the U.N. points out. But it says the "global scale and speed of the current educational disruption [are] unparalleled."

So far, 46 countries on four continents have closed schools or announced plans to. Twenty-six countries, including China, Iran, and Italy, have closed all schools. They are experiencing severe COVID-19 outbreaks. China has been hit hardest. There, more than 233 million students are out of school.

In the United States, individual

schools and districts are deciding what actions to take. At press time, only a few had closed. Others are likely to follow. Many districts see closures as a last resort. That's because schools provide much more than education. Often, students depend on them for meals and after-school programs.

"We would only consider closing any particular school for very specific reasons and for as brief a period of time as possible," Bill de Blasio told the *New York Times* on March 9. He's the mayor of New York City. The school district is the country's largest, with more than a million students.

On March 11, the Seattle public school district, in Washington State, said it would close for two weeks. "Closing schools is the last thing we ever want to do," wrote superintendent Denise Juneau in a statement. "But . . . this is an unprecedented situation."

## LEARNING ONLINE

Schools are turning to online lessons to make sure learning can continue during closures. The Northshore School District, also in Washington State, closed its schools on March 5, for up to 14 days. "We are simply trying to do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19," Michelle Reid wrote in a letter to families. She's the district superintendent. Learning will "transition from the classroom to the cloud," she added. Reid says the district will loan computers to students who need them. She says the district also plans to provide meals for students and childcare assistance for parents and guardians.

In Chester County, Pennsylvania, Malvern Preparatory School is open. But it's training its staff to teach virtually, just in case. "We hope not to close school for any length of time," wrote Donald Reilly, the head of the school, in a letter to students and staff. "However, we feel it is best to be prepared." —By Allison Singer

**YOUR \$ SPECIAL REPORT**

# A LOOK AT THE ECONOMY

**TFK's Rebecca Katzman spoke with money expert Jean Chatzky, editor of *Your \$* magazine, about the impact of COVID-19 on the economy.**

## STOCK MARKET TROUBLE

Concern about COVID-19 and its impact on the economy is also affecting the stock market. The stock market is where people can buy parts of public companies called stocks or shares. When a company does well, its stocks tend to go up and **shareholders** make money. When a company does poorly, the opposite happens. Because the COVID-19 outbreaks are hurting many businesses, stock prices are falling.

On March 9, the stock market lost more money than it had in one day since 2008. Its sudden drop in value caused the buying and selling of stocks to be halted for 15 minutes. "Markets hate uncertainty—they like to know what's coming," Chatzky says. And unfortunately, no one knows how long the COVID-19 outbreaks will last or how widely the disease will spread. In a televised speech on March 11, President Donald Trump announced a number of actions the federal government would take to try to help the economy recover.

Chatzky says it's important for children to know about COVID-19 and to understand how it's affecting local businesses and the global economy. "The more you know," she says, "the less likely you are to be afraid."

Because of the COVID-19 health emergency, people are being more cautious. "They don't want to gather in groups where they may be in contact with somebody who has the virus" that causes it, financial expert Jean Chatzky told *TIME for Kids*. Many are staying home and limiting travel in order to avoid exposure. Large public events have been canceled. And when people aren't out in the community and spending money, businesses, employees, and the overall **economy** suffer.

Businesses are also having trouble keeping certain items in stock. Products used in the United States are often made in China. But China has been hit hard by COVID-19. As a result, many things—from basic food staples to toys to tech gadgets—are in limited supply.

There are also shortages of health and cleaning products. As people stock up, some stores are running out of items such as hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes. "These things are flying off the shelves," Chatzky says. "People are doing whatever they can to feel protected."



**SOLD OUT** Some store shelves are nearly empty as people stock up on supplies.

**A-Z Power Words**  
**economy** noun: the system by which goods and services are provided, sold, and bought  
**shareholder** noun: someone who owns a part of a company or business

