

Introduction

Below, we include information pertaining to the coronavirus pandemic and its effects on education. Because the situation is changing daily, this information should not be considered all-inclusive; rather, it is a snapshot of what we know at the time of this posting. As more information becomes available, Education Commission of the States will add to this page with relevant education policy information. If you are a state policymaker wanting to be connected to another state, please reach out to your [State Relations liaison](#).

Education Commission of the States tracks education legislation across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Because of the influx of legislation addressing the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on education, Education Commission of the States now tracks the topic in both its [2020 State Education Policy Watch List](#) and [State Education Policy Tracking tool](#).

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Federal Guidance

- Information on the federal government’s response to and resources regarding the coronavirus can be accessed at [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov), and a special landing page for schools and child care centers can be found [here](#).
- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was signed into law March 27, had many provisions relevant to education and education policy. The full text of the act can be found [here](#) and [New America](#) has published a summary of its education provisions [here](#).
 - On April 9, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos published a [letter](#) to college and university presidents describing CARES Act funding for higher education; on that same day the department of education published [this list](#) of allocation amounts for each higher education institution.
 - On April 14, DeVos [announced](#) that the nearly \$3 billion [Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund](#), which was authorized by the CARES Act, would be quickly made available to governors. The list of allocation amounts to each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico can be found [here](#).
 - On April 21, DeVos [announced](#) an additional \$6.2 billion available to higher education institutions through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund authorized by the CARES Act.
 - On April 23, DeVos [announced](#) \$13.2 billion in coronavirus relief through the Emergency and Secondary School Education Relief Fund. State education agencies must allocate 90% of the funds to local education agencies. The list of allocation amounts for each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico can be found [here](#).
 - On April 30, DeVos [announced](#) that nearly \$1.4 billion in additional funding, as part of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, will be directed to minority-serving institutions — including historically black colleges and universities and tribally controlled colleges and universities — and institutions serving low-income students.
- The U.S. Department of Education has a landing page with coronavirus-related information at ed.gov/coronavirus. To highlight a few resources, see [here](#) and [here](#) for guidance on providing services to children with disabilities during the outbreak; and see [here](#) for an FAQ regarding the temporary suspension of federal student loan interest and payments.
- A [press release](#) from April 6 provides an overview of “new funding flexibilities to support continued learning,” as authorized by U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture released a statement addressing “flexibilities to make it easier for children [and others] to get food during the COVID-19 national emergency and remove administrative roadblocks for the dedicated local staff who serve them,” available [here](#).
 - On April 3, the USDA announced it was opening an application window for a Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant program; that press release is available [here](#).

Governors’ Executive Actions and State Guidance

- The National Governors Association provides a [resource page](#) covering governors’ actions across the states in response to COVID-19. This page includes a section on schools/childcare and universities.
- The National Association of State Boards of Education provides a policy update on [Continued Learning during COVID-19](#) that reviews state guidance for addressing a variety of issues.
- Below are examples of guidance from states on matters related to education:

- **Arizona:** All Arizona schools are closed through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. The Arizona Department of Education’s Office of Communications has posted [Guidance to Schools on COVID-19](#). Resources on that page include an [interactive map](#) showing where students can receive free meals and a [Virtual Resource Hub](#) for teachers and families “to assist them as they plan for non-traditional instruction.” The state also provided a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document that addresses which schools are impacted by the closure, online learning, graduation, statewide assessments and student meals.
- **Colorado:** On April 27, Gov. Polis issued guidance for [P-12](#) and [postsecondary](#) education under the state’s new Safer at Home plan. The guidance for P-12 education requires remote instruction for the remainder of the year, with very limited exceptions. The [guidance](#) for postsecondary education requires institutions to maximize remote learning with limited exceptions for specific learning opportunities that are not conducive to remote learning, such as clinical, occupational, and career and technical education programs.
- **Illinois:** All Illinois K-12 in-person instruction has been suspended through the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. The Illinois State Board of Education released [Mandatory School Closure Guidance](#) for Illinois schools and school districts, last updated on April 24 . The document includes answers to questions regarding assessments and accountability; calendar and instruction/continuity of education; educator preparation and licensure; nutrition, meals, and food service; the scope of school closures; special education; and staffing. See [here](#) for extensive ISBE updates and guidance.
- **Kansas:** All Kansas schools are closed through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. The Kansas commissioner of education convened a [Continuous Learning Task Force](#) to develop plans for moving education online, assisting students who do not have access to online tools and providing for students with Individual Education Plans. The Continuous Learning Task Force Guidance can be found [here](#).
- **Michigan:** With the state’s in-person K-12 instruction suspended for the [remainder of the school year](#), the Michigan Department of Education released a [series of memos](#) addressing potential concerns. The memos include information about [feeding children during school closures](#), [an update on student assessments](#) and [compliance requirements](#) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act during a public health emergency. The department of education also issued [Learning at a Distance Guidance](#) to “help address the immediate needs of staff who must address the immediate needs of children – at a distance – during a pandemic.”
- **Mississippi:** Mississippi Public Schools are closed for in-person instruction for the [remainder of the school year](#). The Mississippi State Board of Education made policy changes that are described succinctly [here](#), and also hosted webinars on the changes which are available [here](#). Policy areas modified include graduation for the class of 2020, high school end-of-course assessments and educator preparation programs. Additional guidance and information are available [here](#).
- **North Dakota:** All public and private schools in the state are closed indefinitely. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction has posted [School Guidance](#) that contains expectations and general guidance for schools, including, among other things, information on student well-being, how the closures impact special education, online learning, state aid to schools, teacher evaluations and professional development requirements, makeup days for school closures, student attendance, assessment and accountability, and school meals.
- **Washington:** All public and private schools are closed [for the remainder](#) of the school year. Washington compiled online resources for continuous learning that align with state learning standards [here](#), and published a Continuous Learning 2020 resource [here](#). The state also published updated [Guidance for Long Term School Closures](#) on April 15. Guidance for supporting [English learners](#) and [migrant students](#) and was released on April 27, and guidance for [student learning and grading](#) was released on April 21. Additional information can be found [here](#).

Education Topic Areas

Assessments and Accountability

The U.S. Department of Education and President Donald Trump [announced](#) March 20 that schools can apply to [waive assessments](#) for the rest of the 2020 school year. Waivers have been approved for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The approval letters can be found [here](#). Below are examples of state action relevant to assessments and accountability:

- **Massachusetts:** On April 10, Gov. Charlie Baker signed [H. 4616](#) which, among other things, charges the commissioner of elementary and secondary education to modify or waive “the requirement for a comprehensive diagnostic assessment of individual students ... in order to address disruptions caused by the [COVID-19] outbreak.”
- **Mississippi:** The [Mississippi State Board of Education](#) ruled on March 26 that students in grades 7-12 who are currently enrolled in Algebra I, Biology, English II, and/or U.S. History are not required to “take and/or pass the corresponding end-of-course subject area test(s) or meet one of the options in lieu of passing the test(s) to meet graduation requirements.”
- **Missouri:** An [administrative memo](#) from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, released April 3, communicates that the state has waived requirements for the third grade reading test ([Mo. Ann. Stat. § 167.645](#)); the civics test required for high school graduation ([Mo. Ann. Stat. § 170.345](#)); and the examination on the provisions and principles of American history and civics, including the US and state constitutions, required for graduation ([Mo. Ann. Stat. § 170.011](#)).
- **New York:** On April 7, the New York State Education Department [announced](#) the cancellation of the June 2020 administration of the New York State Regents Examinations. The memorandum also included information on the adjustments that would be made “to the examination requirements that students must ordinarily meet in order to earn diplomas, credentials, and endorsements so that the cancellation of these exams will not adversely impact students.”

Continued and Future Learning

Many schools, states, local education agencies and others are beginning to turn their attention toward what school will look like for students beyond the spring 2020 semester. In an article from NPR, public health experts, education officials and educators discussed [nine key ideas](#) for what reopening schools might look like. Additionally, the National Institute for Early Education Research pulled together initial ideas and resources [on planning](#) for reopening schools from various states. (The resources broadly cover school reopening plans and are not limited to early education policies.) The American Enterprise Institute released “[A Blueprint for Back to School](#)” that provides an initial framework for policymakers and education leaders to use when planning for future learning environments.

At least one [study](#) has projected that school closures will have a negative impact on student academic achievement. In a guest blog [post for ECS](#), the authors of that study discuss what states can and are doing to mitigate the projected negative impacts on academic achievement. FutureEd has an [article](#) questioning how and if summer schools could be used to keep students learning in light of spring school closures. A recent [article](#) in Chalkbeat highlights the issues many districts are grappling with when considering summer school offerings.

Education Next compiled [state-by-state information, last updated April 27](#), on when schools may reopen. In a similar vein, Education Week frequently updates a [list](#) of each state’s current learning environment and provides additional context. Below are some examples of education leaders who are considering what education will look like in the summer, fall and future semesters.

- **California:** In a [news conference](#) on April 14, Gov. Gavin Newsom outlined a [roadmap](#) to eventually move the state away from stay-at-home orders and less restrictive prevention measures. Newsom announced that he was beginning to have conversations with the state superintendent and others about what socially distanced schools could look like in the fall, including considerations of staggered school times for students to reduce physical contact. As of April 28, Newsom [suggested](#) that the state is considering the prospect of starting the next academic year earlier than usual on the precondition that schools can ensure safety measures are taken to safeguard the health of their staff and students.
- **Los Angeles Unified School District** has [announced](#) it is ending in-person classes for the rest of the school year, and “to help students make up for lost learning, the district plans to offer virtual summer school in ‘four-week blocks of study for students at all levels’ that will focus on literacy, math and critical thinking.”
- On April 15, the Southern Regional Education Board [announced](#) an Education Recovery Task Force with leaders from 16 states, with a stated mission of helping states to “determine the best strategies for re-opening K-12 public schools, providing each student with the support they need, and planning for a possible COVID-19 resurgence and future emergencies.” More information on the task force can be found [here](#).
- **Wisconsin’s** [schools will remain closed](#) for the remainder of the school year, but the [plan for a phased reopening](#) of the state includes resuming in-school operations for K-12 schools in Phase One.
- On April 28, the **Colorado** Department of Higher Education [released guidance](#) suggesting that “institutions may, but are not required to, provide in-person classroom or laboratory instruction in programs and courses that cannot be taught remotely.” As conditions of this course of action, an institution must attest to meeting appropriate COVID-19 mitigation strategies and students must be allowed to opt-out of in-person instruction. The guidance is reportedly [designed](#) for career and technical programs but could also apply to school programs and courses like welding or automotive technology that may be more difficult to adapt to remote learning.
- **Montana** recently rescinded the state’s directive for school closures, allowing schools to reopen as early as May 7. According to the office of public instruction, [schools may continue to provide distance learning](#), a mixed-delivery model or declare local emergency school closures. The office also released a working document with [guidance on school re-entry](#) and recovery after a pandemic event. For now, information collected by the state education agency indicates that [most school districts will continue with remote learning](#) for the remainder of the school year, while a few may pursue partial reopening for students without access to devices or internet or for students with special education needs.
- Several states — including [South Carolina](#), [North Carolina](#) and [Nevada](#) — launched task forces related to reopening schools.

Early Learning

Resources and state guidance relevant to early learning responses to COVID-19:

- [Resources for Early Childhood Policymakers on Preventing and Preparing for Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), National Institute for Early Education Research
- [Latest COVID-19 Resources by State](#), Alliance for Early Success
- [Policies, Practices, and Resources for Child Care and Early Education Providers Amid the Coronavirus Crisis](#), Urban Institute
- [Coping with COVID-19](#), National Association for the Education of Young Children

Below we list some examples of relevant policy changes and guidance:

- **Georgia:** On March 15, the commissioner of the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning published [this guidance](#) to child care and Georgia pre-K providers, detailing, among other things, that “Georgia Pre-K payments will not be impacted, and Pre-K lead and assistant teachers will still be paid” and that child care and parent services scholarship payments would be continued regardless of program attendance. On March 25, [updated guidance](#) from the commissioner stated that all scheduled scholarships would be converted to “full-time” to allow providers to receive the highest rate possible. The state also released an [FAQ document](#) related specifically to early learning, last updated May 4.
- **Illinois:** Gov. J.B. Pritzker established a [COVID-19: Illinois’ Early Childhood Care and Education Response](#) guidance document on March 30. This document established that early education programs funded through the state board’s Preschool for All and Prevention Initiative programs will not have their funding affected by a decision to close. Additionally, Pritzker established, through an executive order, that Preschool for All and Prevention Initiative funding was to be used to meet child care and related needs of the children of essential workers who were not already enrolled. On April 7, the state issued updated [COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care and Early Learning Programs](#), following the extension of the governor’s stay-at-home order.
- **Vermont:** The Vermont Agency of Education released [Prekindergarten Education and Continuity of Learning](#) guidance on April 13. The guidance covers social and emotional support, pre-K learning resources and tuition payments.

Finance

The federal government, states, state education agencies, local education agencies, schools, postsecondary institutions and others are grappling with how the coronavirus pandemic is affecting finances and education funds. Below we list resources and examples of responses to these financial questions.

Resources related to CARES Act funding:

- FutureEd published a resource on April 6 titled “[What Congressional Covid Funding Means for K-12 Schools](#),” which lists 12 allowable uses of the \$13.2 billion dedicated to K-12 relief in the CARES Act. The resource also covers funding implications for students with disabilities, child nutrition and student-based health care, and includes state-by-state education stabilization fund amounts as reported by [the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#). The resource was updated April 28 to include recently released information on the Rethink K-12 School Models grant program and updated information regarding students with disabilities.
- This [Education Week article](#) features analysis from Michael Griffith on the economic impact that CARES Act funds will have on states’ school funding.
- The American Council on Education created a searchable database simulating and forecasting the distribution of CARES Act funds to higher education institutions, available [here](#).
- Bellwether Education Partners is releasing a [series of briefs](#) on CARES Act funding to help state and local policymakers make informed decisions about how to use the funds.
- The Student Success Through Applied Research Lab provides an [interactive tool](#) for CARES Act funding allocations, specifically at the postsecondary level. The tool provides a map of CARES Act allocations and college score card characteristics, total CARES Act allocation by state and institution type, funding per student and total allocation.

Resources related to state and local funding:

- Brookings has an article from April 9 titled [“How the coronavirus shutdown will affect school district revenues,”](#) which includes information on how each state relies on state funds for education, projects how 2020-2021 budgets may be more directly impacted by coronavirus cuts than 2019-2020 and warns about the potentially inequitable impacts of a recession.
- This [interactive funding tool](#) provides a range of information on additional sources of funding during COVID, including an overview of the CARES Act, information on LEA stimulus funding, IHE stimulus funding and governor’s funding broken down by state.
- This Learning Policy Institute [blog](#) from Michael Griffith features some analysis on determining state budget cuts, an interactive tool for budgeting scenarios and suggestions for education leaders around this issue.
- This Center on Budget and Policy Priorities [fact sheet](#) shows the preliminary estimates of declines in general fund revenue for several states, providing an initial glimpse at potential state budget conditions.

State Responses:

- **Colorado:** Gov. Polis [announced](#) several budget cuts for the current fiscal year because of insufficient revenues. Some of the programs for which funding was cut include the Educator Loan Forgiveness Fund, the Colorado Second Chance Scholarship, teaching fellowship stipends and the teacher mentor grant program.
- **Montana:** Montana is expecting to receive \$41.3 million of CARES Act funds. The Montana Office of Public Instruction has published [guidance](#) for the allocation of these funds, including preliminary estimations of how these funds will be allocated to individual schools throughout the state.
- **North Carolina:** On March 24, the North Carolina superintendent of public instruction released [this memorandum](#), announcing a new \$50 million “flexible allotment for all public school units to address COVID-19 related expenses” and newly granted flexibilities for districts to use existing allocations to meet student needs.
- **Virginia:** On April 7, the Virginia superintendent of public instruction announced that the U.S. Department of Education had approved the state’s application for additional flexibility in using federal education funds, as detailed in [this press release](#).

Instructional Time and Grade Promotion

This [50-state resource on instructional time](#) offers information that includes minimum day, hour or minute requirements. Although it does not specifically capture information regarding exceptions or waivers to these requirements because of emergencies (such as for an epidemic), many states make mention of such emergency provisions in similar or adjacent sections of code to those cited on [this page](#).

Several states have introduced legislation, published guidance or enacted new policies regarding graduation requirements for high school students in light of coronavirus disruptions. ExcelinEd provides a [database](#) that includes, among other things, information on graduation requirements across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The database is no longer being updated but provides historical information on state action. The National Association of State Boards of Education published an overview of state board adjustments to graduation policies, available [here](#). Education Week is tracking changes to state graduation criteria for the class of 2020, as well as other graduation requirement flexibilities, in its weekly updated resource [here](#). Below, we detail recent policy changes in several states:

- Graduation Requirements

- In **Colorado**, graduation requirements are currently determined by the district, which offers flexibility in the ability to adjust graduation requirements. The state department of education has [published guidance](#) to districts that suggests:
 - Giving credit for internships, work, and other extra-curricular responsibilities.
 - Waiving work-based hour requirements.
 - Alternative learning experiences, such as capstone projects.
 - Using [2021 graduation requirements menu of options](#).
 - **Mississippi**: The state board has implemented the following changes:
 - Current seniors who meet all district and state requirements may graduate this school year.
 - The requirement that students take end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, English II, Biology and U.S. History has been suspended for seniors, as these cannot be administered in spring 2020.
 - The **North Carolina** State Board of Education [announced](#) that seniors will receive a pass/fail designation (rather than a letter grade) for their spring courses based on their course performance as of March 13, the last day students were in school. [This update](#) from the state board of education also states that seniors who had a failing grade should be provided remote learning opportunities to help them pass.
 - Board guidance also adjusts graduation requirements that currently state that no district can require students to earn more than 22 credit hours, the state’s designated minimum. According to the press release, many school and district requirements exceed the state minimum. Details of the guidance plan can be [found here](#).
 - **Ohio**: [H.B. 197](#) (enacted) permits public and nonpublic schools to grant a diploma to any student on track to graduate and for whom the principal, in consultation with teachers and counselors, determines has successfully completed the high school curriculum or individualized education program at the time of the order to close schools.
 - Section 10 of **Washington** [H.B. 2965](#) (enacted) authorizes the state board of education to administer an emergency waiver program to ensure that students on track to graduate before February 20, 2020 are not negatively affected. On April 8, the state board approved emergency rules “that allow school districts to apply for greater flexibility in awarding a diploma to high school seniors impacted by closures”. More information on the board rulings can be found [here](#).
- Grade Promotion
 - **Arizona**: A [H.B. 2910](#) (enacted) waived third graders from requirements to “[demonstrate sufficient reading skills as established by the state board](#)” in order to be promoted from the third grade for the 2019-20 school year.
 - **Mississippi**: The Mississippi State Board of Education made [policy changes](#) so that “current 3rd graders will be promoted to 4th grade for the 2020-21 school year if the student meets all other district requirements for promotion.”
 - **Ohio**: [H.B. 197](#) (enacted) exempts schools from retaining a student under the third-grade reading guarantee based solely on the student’s academic performance in reading in the 2019-20 school year, unless the student’s principal and reading teacher determine the student is not reading at grade level and is not prepared for fourth grade.

- **Virginia:** The Virginia Department of Education published [Guidance on Graduation Requirements, Awarding of Credits, and Continuity of Learning](#), updated April 16. Among other guidance, this includes the following provision for students in pre-K through 8th grade: “The school division’s plan to address missing content should not prevent student promotion to the next grade level or next sequential course.” The guidance suggests that schools provide flexibility for missing content and for students who were not passing classes at the time of closure. Guidance also suggests that school divisions review the board of education’s [Emergency Guidelines for Local Alternatives to Awarding Standard Units of Credit](#).

Postsecondary

Postsecondary institutions — and the students who are both currently enrolled or who soon hope to be enrolled in their programs — are facing much disruption related to the coronavirus. Resources relevant to postsecondary education responses to COVID-19:

- [Higher Education Responses to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), National Conference of State Legislatures. Last updated May 4.
- Immediate Next Steps for Helping High School Seniors Transition to A 2-/4-Year College or Certificate Program, [National College Attainment Network](#)
- [Survey results: How enrollment leaders are responding to COVID-19](#), EAB
- [The Coronavirus and Test-Optional Admissions](#), Inside Higher Ed
- [Tracking How the Coronavirus is Impacting Colleges](#) (continually updated), Education Dive
- [When the Crisis is Over](#), Student Ready Strategies
- Each of the four regional education compacts have websites dedicated to COVID-19 resources:
 - [Midwestern Higher Education Compact](#)
 - [New England Board of Higher Education](#)
 - [Southern Regional Education Board](#)
 - [Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education](#)

Below are some institutional policy examples that aim to address the financial needs of postsecondary students:

- **California State University** will [issue](#) a one-time \$500 payment to full-time, low income students, who have attended the university for at least one year. Undocumented immigrants are eligible to receive these grants.
- The **University of California system** will allow its 10 universities to decide how to allocate CARES funding but [stated](#) that they will leverage other available funds to assist students in need who do not qualify for CARES funding support through the university.
- The **University of Washington** [announced](#) that it will use funds from the CARES Act to provide \$1,200 per student who qualifies for financial need. Students who meet financial need and have dependents will receive \$1,700. Funds are not available to international students, undocumented students, non-matriculated students or students enrolled in distance-only degree programs.

Below are examples of postsecondary education policy responses to COVID-19:

- **California:** The [University of California](#) and the [California State University](#) systems provide examples of higher education institutions relaxing [admissions](#) procedures (suspending or considering changes to standardized test requirements, accepting pass/fail grades rather than A-F for spring 2020). A joint statement from the California State Board of Education, the California Department of Education, California State

University, the University of California, California Community Colleges and the Association of Independent California College and Universities addressing “university admissions and placement challenges presented by the suspension of in-person instruction” can be found [here](#).

- **Colorado:** The Colorado Department of Education has published guidance FAQs on both [concurrent enrollment](#) and [higher education admissions](#).
- **Georgia:** This Georgia Department of Education guidance from March 31, titled “[State Board of Education Waivers for Local Education Agencies](#),” includes information on college admissions and scholarship eligibility. The [University System of Georgia](#) will not require students applying for admission in fall 2020 to submit an ACT or SAT score, though students who have scores are still free to submit them for consideration. The [Technical College System of Georgia](#) is suspending placement exam requirements, as well as high school transcript or equivalency transcripts for admission in summer and fall 2020 classes.
- **South Dakota:** The South Dakota Board of Regents provided [temporary policy exemptions](#) in response to COVID-19. Policies listed under the exemptions include academic probation and academic suspension, acceptance of AP credits, alternative grading options for spring 2020, alternative math placement, maximum number of course withdrawals, registration and course attempts, tenure review extension and transfer of credit.
- **West Virginia:** The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and Council for Community and Technical College Education voted to improve flexibilities for students, as summarized [here](#). Among other things, the commission approved suspending GPA requirements to renew certain scholarships and grants. Similarly, the council suspended the community service and GPA requirements to maintain the West Virginia Invests Grant.

Remote/Virtual/E-Learning

Switching to virtual education may be one method to reduce the spread of coronavirus, but this move also can cause challenges for students who are [not able to access internet-based education](#). Indeed, some of the challenges around remote-based learning (including internet and device access) have led schools to [truncate their school year](#). The Center on Reinventing Public Education collected some publicly available district plans for supporting students and noted that after approximately six weeks of school closures, [more of these districts are offering more robust remote learning plans](#). In recognition of increased reliance on internet access for many students participating in online learning, [some internet service providers](#) have altered their policies, raised internet connection speeds and eliminated data caps.

State education agencies continue to release and update guidance and resources for remote and online learning. A couple of examples include **Ohio’s** [remote learning resource guide](#) and **Massachusetts’s** [remote learning guidance](#). Digital Learning has a resource from December 2019 called “eLearning Days: A Scan of Policy and Guidance,” available [here](#).

Florida provides an example of virtual education used in response to COVID-19; the Florida Virtual School also [formed a partnership](#) with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to offer the [Alaska Statewide Virtual School](#), which is intended for students in Alaska to [supplement](#) remote learning opportunities provided by their local schools.

A survey of state guidance from MIT Teaching Systems Lab, last updated on April 1 and available [here](#), found that “the most substantial point of divergence in remote learning policy guidance” was whether local education agencies

were advised to focus on “enrichment,” emphasizing the review of previously taught skills, or to focus on “new material,” seeking to advance standards-based learning. The question of whether to emphasize enrichment or new material will be an important question for education leaders when considering future semesters.

Below, we include some relevant Education Commission of the States resources regarding remote, virtual and/or distance learning.

- While Education Commission of the States has not completed a 50-state scan on this issue, this [Virtual School Policy Snapshot](#) provides an overview of state legislative activity from 2017 to 2019 and may be useful. The snapshot provides information in three primary areas: attendance and engagement, authorizing and governance, and funding.
- This [50-state scan on charter school policies](#) provides information on virtual charter schools.

Many schools, local education agencies, states and others are seeking solutions to access issues for students who do not have internet access or devices capable of internet access. Below are some examples:

- According to America’s Public Television Stations, public media education partnerships have been made with school districts, governments and education agencies in at least 21 states. More information on those partnerships can be found [here](#).
- A compilation of wireless networking options that may be available to students through telecommunications companies in various states can be found [here](#).
- **California:** On April 1, Gov. Gavin Newsom [announced](#) a partnership with Google to [provide Chromebooks and mobile hotspots](#) to students in rural areas to facilitate distance learning. Google pledged to donate Chromebooks and “will fund the use of 100,000 donated mobile hotspots to provide free and unlimited high-speed Internet connectivity for the remainder of the school year.” These will be distributed by the California Department of Education, and rural communities will be prioritized in their distribution.
- **The New York City Department of Education** is [lending 300,000 internet-enabled iPads to students](#). The iPads are being distributed to students gradually with priority for students living in shelters, temporary housing and foster care, and to students who are multilingual learners and/or students with disabilities. However, the process of distributing these devices at this scale [encountered various obstacles](#), such as data entry issues, accurately assessing which students need devices, ensuring families know how to use the devices and more.
- **South Carolina:** The South Carolina Department of Education maintains a [website](#) that provides information and links to internet service providers offering free or discounted internet services for students impacted by school closures. The department also houses a [map](#) that shows where Wi-Fi hot spots can be found throughout the state, including those offered by phone companies, around school buildings and on school [buses that are equipped with Wi-Fi hotspots](#) and that have been distributed in low-income neighborhoods across the state.
- **Texas:** The [Austin Independent School District](#) has developed a program to “get computers and internet access to as many students, homes, and neighborhoods as possible while campuses are closed.” This program has involved the delivery of Chromebooks and Wi-Fi hotspots to students in grades 3-7 who need these devices, as well as the [retrofitting of 110 school buses](#) with Wi-Fi capabilities in order to broadcast hot spots up to 200 feet to increase internet access for students. A map of these mobile Wi-Fi bus locations can be found [here](#).

Special Education

As noted in the federal guidance section, the U.S. Department of Education produced a [fact sheet](#) for students with disabilities. Below are examples of state-level guidance for special education.

- **California:** The California Department of Education published [special education guidance](#) on March 20, which includes a FAQ section for schools and local education agencies. This guidance was updated on April 9.
- **Illinois:** The state board of education put forward special education guidance for Illinois schools and local education agencies, last updated March 18. An [FAQ](#) on this topic was last updated on April 20.
- **Massachusetts:** The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released an [FAQ](#) for schools and districts regarding special education, which was most recently updated on March 26 in light of the March 21 federal guidance update. This document provides guidance on such topics as district obligations to provide education to students with disabilities, state and federal timelines, and recommended educational resources for students with disabilities. The department also has a COVID-19 Information and Resources for Special Educators [landing page](#), which includes slides from recent special education directors' meetings.
- **New Jersey:** Recently enacted legislation ([A 3904](#)) allows for special education and related services to be delivered to students with disabilities through the use of electronic communication or a virtual or online platform and as required by the student's Individualized Education Program to the greatest extent possible.
- **Virginia:** The department of education released a [memorandum](#), most recently updated on April 17, on providing equitable access and support for a variety of student learning needs in preschool, elementary and secondary schools.
- **Washington:** The Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has several resources available on a special education guidance [landing page](#), including an [FAQ](#), a [Supporting Inclusionary Practices during School Facility Closure](#) guidance document, an [Online \(and Offline\) Resources to Support Continuous Learning for Students with Disabilities](#) resource list and a list of [Professional Development Opportunities for Supporting Students with Disabilities resource list](#).

In compliance with a provision of the CARES Act, the U.S. Department of Education [recently reviewed](#) the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to recommend if certain waiver authorities are necessary to provide flexibility to state and local education agencies to comply with the provisions of IDEA. The U.S. Department of Education "[is not requesting waiver authority](#) for any of the core tenets of the IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973."

Student Health and Wellness

Although many states have are shutting down schools as a method to prevent spread of the coronavirus, school closures can also bring about unintended consequences for students who rely on other services provided in schools to maintain and promote student health and wellness, such as free or reduced-price lunches, physical and mental health care, and services for students who are homeless.

- On March 20, the [Food and Nutrition Service](#), within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, issued national waivers to the [meal time requirements](#), [non-congregate meal requirements](#) and the [activity requirement in after-school programs](#) (updated April 4).
- [SchoolHouse Connection](#) provided on March 13 a [resource](#) with strategies for schools, early learning programs and higher education institutions that addresses COVID-19, homelessness and health. An FAQ on COVID-19 and homelessness, last updated May 5, is available [here](#).

- Many postsecondary institutions are providing [telehealth options](#) for students and staff to receive remote consultations and counseling for mental and emotional health.
 - In 2019, the [Higher Education Mental Health Alliance](#) published [“College Counseling from a Distance: Deciding Whether and Where to Engage in Telemental Health Services,”](#) which discusses at length the potential benefits, risks and limitations of such services.
 - The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [announced](#) that its Office for Civil Rights will “not impose penalties” for certain types of regulatory noncompliance “in connection with the good faith provision of telehealth during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency.”
 - An Education Commission of the States Ed Note blog post from December 2019 titled [“Connecting Students to Mental Health Care Through Telehealth Technology”](#) provides some examples of telehealth service implementation in rural communities.

Below are some examples of education policy responses to COVID-19 related to student health and wellness:

- **California:** The California Department of Education has published guidance on [School and Child and Adult Day Care Meals](#), last updated May 1. The department has also created an interactive [CA Meals for Kids mobile app](#), which offers maps, directions, service times and more information to help students and families find meals during COVID-19 related emergency school closures.
- The **Hawaii** State Department of Education provides a [health hotline and telehealth services](#) to students and their families. Services are provided at no cost to students. Families with medical insurance will be asked to provide their insurance information but will not be billed for services or co-pays.
- **Maine:** Maine [S.P. 789](#) (enacted) authorizes the governor, in consultation with the commissioner of education, to implement a plan to “continue to provide nutrition services to students when schools are closed in response to the threat posted by COVID-19,” for elementary and secondary schools.
- **Massachusetts:** Massachusetts [H. 4626](#) (pending) would appropriate an additional \$10 million for the state emergency management agency to fund services for people in homeless shelters, including telehealth behavioral health services and the provision of necessary technology and materials to ensure students “may continue their studies in the event of school closures.”
- **New Jersey:** New Jersey [A. 3840](#) (enacted) directs school districts to “implement a program during the period of the school closure to provide school meals to all students enrolled in the district who are eligible for the free and reduced-price school lunch and school breakfast programs.” The bill also specifies the identification of delivery sites and the use of school buses to deliver up to three school days of food per delivery to students who are not within walking distance of those delivery sites.
- The **Ohio** Department of Education released guidance around student health and wellness. Their telehealth [guidelines](#), including an FAQ for service providers of mental and behavioral health services to students. Additionally, they offer [guidance](#) around preventing abuse and neglect, including suggesting a reporting procedure if there is a case of suspected abuse.

Teachers

As the situation evolves, questions continue to emerge around issues impacting teachers, including certification, teacher pay and teacher evaluations.

Given abrupt switches to online instruction and the cancellation of state assessments, some states are waiving teacher evaluation requirements, providing guidance, or allowing local flexibility around evaluations. Examples of

adjustments are below. Additional examples of state action around teacher evaluations can be found in this recent Education Commission of the States [information request](#).

- **Colorado:** In an [executive order](#), Gov. Jared Polis suspended the requirements “regarding the frequency and duration of employment performance evaluations” with the goal that this would “enable schools and districts to focus on providing alternative learning opportunities for students.”
- **Louisiana:** Gov. John Bel Edwards issued an [executive proclamation](#) that, among other things, suspends provisions that make teacher evaluations a necessity in order to advance or renew teaching credentials. The department of education offers additional guidance on evaluation questions in this [FAQ, last updated May 5](#).
- **New Jersey:** Gov. Phil Murphy issued an [executive order](#) that, among other things, waives the use of student growth data and requirements for observations in educator evaluations.
- **Ohio, Texas** and **Virginia** issued some guidance to localities on teacher evaluations to provide flexibility at the district level, especially for districts unable to complete educator evaluations.

This public health crisis not only impacts current teachers but also those who are preparing to become teachers. The [American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education](#) released [Educator Preparation Community Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Response](#), which includes information from the national office, member voices and AACTE advocacy. Its [Coronavirus, States and Educator Preparation Programs](#) resource from March 20 offers examples from four states addressing education preparation program concerns. [The Southern Regional Education Board](#) also identified policy areas in which states may act to “ensure that current policies do not prevent student-teachers from graduating and becoming licensed to teach in the upcoming school year.” Below are some examples of state responses related to teacher preparation and licensure:

- **Kansas:** The Kansas State Department of Education has issued guidance on [Licensure Policies during COVID-19 Pandemic](#) that includes information on emergency substitute licenses, one-year nonrenewable licenses, testing and renewal processes.
- **Kentucky:** The Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board’s Division of Educator Preparation, Assessment, and Internship published a [Student Teaching and Clinical Experience FAQ](#).
- **Mississippi:** Candidates seeking admission to state board-approved educator preparation programs through the end of 2021 are exempt from the program entry testing criterion. Spring 2020 educator licensure candidates are exempt from the 12-week full-day student teaching requirement to become licensed.
- **Washington:** On March 19, the Legislature passed [legislation](#) pertaining to emergency teacher certificates, as well as provided a document with [related frequently asked questions](#).
- Guidance for teacher preparation programs has also been published in [California](#), [Iowa](#), [Kentucky](#), and [South Carolina](#).
- This Education Commission of the States [resource](#) discusses how some states have turned to alternative teacher certification to mitigate teacher shortages. Although this report is from 2016, some states may consider alternative teacher certifications in light of the coronavirus’ impact on educator preparation programs. Similarly, [this Education Commission of the States information request response](#) from 2019 provides examples of state legislation that allows greater flexibility in teacher licensing.

As the public health crisis continues and economic conditions create uncertainty around education funding, other teacher workforce issues are emerging. Below are resources that touch on teacher workforce related policies such as pay, working conditions, and the teacher labor market.

- On March 11, Brookings provided [information](#) on using federal stimulus to help during the pandemic, including teacher pay.
- Education Week has an [article](#) that discusses “this year’s statewide initiatives to increase salaries,” with an interactive map showing the status of some statewide teacher pay proposals.
- The National Council on Teacher Quality published an [article](#) assessing how district policies on emergency school closures in 41 large districts across the country address and adapt teacher policies during emergency closures. In a similar vein, the New York Times published an [article](#) about how unions, teachers and districts are navigating teacher work policies during this public health crisis.
- An [article featured on The 74](#) discusses how the new economic conditions that states face may affect teacher pensions and how states handled changes to public pensions in the previous recession.
- On ECS’s blog, Ed Note, a [recent post](#) looks at data that can provide insights about potential changes in the educator workforce.
- A recent [blog post](#) from the Learning Policy Institute discusses the impact of the COVID-19 recession on teaching positions.

Workforce

Responses to the coronavirus pandemic are also impacting workforce development, particularly those efforts related to education. Below we have compiled some resources regarding these impacts:

- [Perkins V State Plans and COVID-19 – Frequently Asked Questions](#), U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education
- [Handling clinicals, apprenticeships and more](#), American Association of Community Colleges
- [We Must Sustain Apprenticeship in a Post-Pandemic Downturn](#), Jobs For the Future

Below are some examples of state responses to workforce education policy:

- **Ohio:** The Ohio Department of Education issued [this guidance](#) around career and technical education during the COVID-19 health crisis. This guidance addresses testing requirements that are normally required for postsecondary credit and high school equivalency degrees.

Additional Resources

- [Center on Reinventing Public Education](#)
- [Chiefs for Change](#)
- [Child Trends](#)
- [¡Colorín Colorado!](#)
- [Council of Chief State School Officers](#)
- [Council of State Governments](#)
- [EAB](#)
- [EDUCAUSE](#)
- [Education Week](#)
- [Hunt Institute](#)
- [Institute for Public Policy and Social Research \(Michigan State University\)](#)
- [NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education](#)
- [National Association of State Boards of Education](#)
- [National Association of State Budget Officers](#)
- [National Conference of State Legislatures](#)
- [National Governors Association](#)

- [National Institute for Early Education Research](#)
- [The Journal](#)