

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](#). Additionally, we've published several new COVID-19 pandemic related blog posts on [Ed Note](#).

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Federal Guidance

Information on the federal government's response to and resources regarding the coronavirus pandemic can be accessed at [coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- On July 23, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released new guidance for resources and tools for [school administrators](#), [parents, guardians and caregivers](#) as more states and school districts consider reopening schools.
 - The CDC also provided considerations for [higher education institutions](#) and [K-12 schools](#) to protect students and staff by diagnostic testing.
- On May 20, the CDC released [detailed reopening guidelines](#) for schools and child care centers. The guidelines primarily focus on the following: scaling up operations to promote safety actions and social distancing; intensifying cleaning, disinfection and ventilation; training staff and creating plans to deal with child or staff sickness.
- On May 14, the CDC released decision tools on how [schools](#) and [child care centers](#) could begin the process of reopening. These decision tools are recommendations to state and local officials as they begin to prepare for all possibilities this upcoming fall.

CARES Act Information

- On March 27, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law and had many provisions relevant to education and education policy. This is the [full text of the act](#) and [New America](#) published a [summary of its education provisions](#).
 - 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. This is the [list of allocation amounts to each state](#), the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico and [a FAQ document from the U.S. Department of Education](#). The Hunt Institute is tracking [state GEER fund utilization](#).
 - 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 pandemic relief through the Emergency and Secondary School Education Relief Fund. State education agencies must allocate 90% of the funds to local education agencies. This is the [list of allocation amounts for each state](#), the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.
 - 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.

- On June 5, the U.S. Department of Education released a [FAQ document](#) on the maintenance-of-effort requirements applicable to the CARES Act programs. On June 8, the department [announced](#) that, as authorized in the CARES Act, states may submit [waiver applications](#) for an extension of the period of availability of certain IDEA grant award funds.
- On June 19, DeVos [announced](#) \$127.5 million for the Reimagine Workforce Preparation Grant. The funds for this grant are part of the discretionary grant program section of the CARES Act. Applications are due August 24th.

U.S. Department of Education

- On May 18, the U.S. Department of Education released a [fact sheet](#) outlining states’ responsibilities to English learners and their parents during extended school closures.
- On May 15 (updated June 16), The Office of Postsecondary Education released [guidance](#) for managing interruptions of study related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The office expands regulatory flexibilities and provides information related to the CARES Act. See [here](#) for an FAQ regarding the temporary suspension of federal student loan interest and payments.
- The U.S. Department of Education has a [landing page](#) with coronavirus pandemic-related information. They provided [guidance](#) on providing services to children with disabilities during the outbreak and a [supplemental fact sheet](#).
- On April 6, the U.S. Department of Education published a [press release](#) that provides an overview of “new funding flexibilities to support continued learning,” as authorized by U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

Other U.S. Departments

- 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.” The USDA [announced](#) extended flexibilities to ensure kids [have access to food over the summer](#). On April 3, the USDA [announced](#) it was opening an application window for a Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program.

Governors’ Executive Actions and State Guidance

The National Governors Association provides a [resource page](#) covering governors’ actions across the states in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This page includes a section on schools/childcare and universities. Additionally, 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:** The department of education’s office of communications 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. **On June 29, Gov. Doug**

Ducey signed [Executive Order 44](#), which delays the start of in-person classes and addresses distance learning plans, benchmark testing, instruction time requirements and childcare providers.

- **Delaware:** On May 18, Gov. John Carney and Secretary of Education Susan Bunting announced the formation of three [COVID-19 School Reopening Working Groups](#), on Health and Wellness; Academics and Equity; and Operations and Services. These groups are tasked with developing recommendations for Bunting, superintendents and charter leaders to consider as they create a reopening plan which is expected by July 15. All meetings of the working groups are livestreamed and archived on the [department of education's YouTube page](#).
- **Kansas:** The 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. This is the [Continuous Learning Task Force Guidance](#) and the [implementation guidance](#).
- **Michigan:** The department of education released a [series of memos](#) addressing potential concerns about school closures. The memos offer guidance on a variety of education issues including [summer programming](#). May 15, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer issued [Executive Order No. 2020-88](#) to convene a COVID-19 Return to School Advisory Council.
- **Mississippi:** The state board of education made [policy changes](#) to manage the impact of extended school closures and also hosted [webinars](#). Policy areas modified include graduation for the class of 2020, high school end-of-course assessments, educator preparation programs and [more](#).
- **North Dakota:** The 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:** The state compiled [online resources for continuous learning](#) that align with state learning standards and published a [Continuous Learning 2020 resource](#). The state also published updated [Guidance for Long Term School Closures](#) on April 15. Guidance for supporting [English learners](#) and [migrant students](#) were released on April 27, and guidance for [student learning and grading](#) was released on April 21. See [additional information and resources](#).

Education Topic Areas

Assessments and Accountability

On March 20, the U.S. Department of Education and President Donald Trump [announced](#) that schools can apply to [waive assessments](#) for the rest of the 2020 school year. Waivers have been [approved for all 50 states](#), Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. As the new school year approaches, some states have asked for [continued assessment waivers](#) in order to prioritize instruction for the 2020-21 school year. However, some organizations — like [Bellwether Education Partners](#) and [the NWEA](#), which both offer alternatives for states to conduct meaningful assessments — argue that waiving requirements for the 2020-21 school year will lead to unintended consequences, particularly among low-income students, English learners, students with disabilities and homeless students. The Center on Reinventing Public Education released a [report](#) that summarizes how districts can approach assessments during the pandemic. Below are examples of state action relevant to assessments and accountability:

- **Georgia:** On June 18, Gov. Brian Kemp and State School Superintendent Richard Woods [announced](#) that the state will seek a standardized testing waiver for the 2020-21 school year. Both emphasized the need to focus on [“...remediation, growth and safety for students”](#) instead of standardized tests to meet the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

- **Louisiana:** On June 1, Louisiana enacted [SCR 72](#) to request the state board of elementary and secondary education “review the necessity to suspend all statewide assessments for the 2020-2021 school year, due to the impact of the school closures caused by COVID-19.”
- **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:** On March 26, the [state board of education](#) ruled 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:** On April 3, the department of elementary and secondary education released an [administrative memo](#) that shows 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 U.S. and state constitutions required for graduation ([Mo. Ann. Stat. § 170.011](#)).
- **New York:** On April 7, the 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.”
- **Wisconsin:** [A.B. 1038](#) (enacted) prohibits the department of public instruction from publishing a school and school district accountability report in the 2020-21 school year.

Broadband and Technology Access

Switching to virtual education may be one method to reduce the spread of coronavirus, but this move can also 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) led schools to [truncate their school year](#). 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; however, some programs for discounted hotspots are [set to expire](#) over the next few months. For additional information on virtual or remote instruction, consult the Remote/Virtual/E-learning section of this resource.

The Federal Communications Commission extended the [Keep Americans Connected Initiative](#) through June 30. The FCC asked broadband and telephone service providers, and trade associations, to take the Keep Americans Connected Pledge. So far, more than 750 companies and associations have signed the pledge. The pledge includes a commitment to not terminate service of any individual or small business unable to pay their bills, to waive late fees and to open Wi-Fi hotspots for individuals in need of internet access. [The initiative has ended and the Council of State Governments has outlined policy options](#) to maintain affordable broadband accessibility. Please consult [additional FCC efforts](#) for more information.

[As a result of surveying district leaders, Education Week released recommendations for addressing the digital divide that address access to wifi and accelerated instruction.](#)

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance [maintains 50-state information](#) on state guidance and policies addressing internet and technological device access. The following examples were captured in their tracking:

- **Nebraska:** The state’s public service commission issued an [order](#) allocating \$1 million via the Nebraska Universal Service Fund to reimburse internet service providers for providing service to low-income families.

- **Wyoming:** The state’s public service commission [prohibited](#) the suspension of services or issuance of late fees by internet providers statewide.

Many schools, local education agencies, states and others have sought out 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 34 states.
- This is a [compilation of wireless networking options](#) that may be available to students through telecommunications companies in various states.
- **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 department of education, and rural communities will be prioritized in their distribution.
- **Georgia:** The department of education is [partnering](#) with Verizon Wireless to provide school systems in ten states with discounted service plans for unlimited 4G LTE internet access, mobile device management (MDM) and Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA)-compliant security applications to [support distance learning](#). Previously, through the Georgia Broadband Development Initiative, the department of community affairs [mapped](#) broadband availability throughout the state and developed a [speed test](#) for residents.
- **New Mexico:** In order to support summer learning, [Albuquerque Public Schools](#) announced that students will continue to have access to Chromebooks and the internet throughout the summer. [July 15 was the final day of Chromebook distribution until the beginning of the fall semester.](#)
- **New York City:** The department of education is [lending 300,000 internet-enabled iPads to students](#). The iPads are being distributed to students gradually with priority for students participating in summer school. Previously, priority was given to students living in shelters, temporary housing and foster care, and to students who are multilingual learners and/or students with disabilities.
- **South Carolina:** The 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](#) showing where Wi-Fi hot spots can be found throughout the state.
- **Texas:** The [Austin Independent School District](#) 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. Updates to the AISD webpage indicate that students may continue to use their Chromebooks over the summer and into fall.

Continued and Future Learning

Many schools, states, local education agencies and others have turned their attention toward what schools will look like for students beyond the spring 2020 semester. A [blog post](#) on Ed Note offers details on the continuation of educational services at state-run schools, such as schools for students with vision and hearing loss and juvenile justice facilities. [ExcelinEd surveyed](#) state education chiefs and governors’ offices and found that the majority of education leaders plan to allow local districts to determine their reopening schedules. According to [data collected by Education Week](#), the majority of state’s education reopening decisions are currently being made at the district level.

The National Governors Association compiled and summarized [information](#) on summer camp and summer school reopening policies. Below are links to resources that review a range of reopening options states may consider when crafting their reopening plans:

- In an article from NPR, public health experts, education officials and educators discussed [nine key ideas](#) for what reopening schools might look like.
- The National Institute for Early Education Research compiled [Initial Ideas and Resources on Planning for Reopening Following COVID-19 School Closures](#) (the resources broadly cover school reopening plans and are not limited to early education policies).
- The American Enterprise Institute wrote [A Blueprint for Back to School](#).
- ExcelinEd shared [Reopening Schools After COVID-19 Closures: Considerations for States](#).

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

EducationNext compiled [state-by-state information](#), on when schools may reopen. In a similar vein, Education Week gathered all available [50-state information](#) regarding state orders, recommendations and reopening guidance documents. John Hopkins University has a [state reopening tracker](#) that examines education recovery plans related to how they are designed to support students and teachers. The Southern Regional Education Board compiled [state plans](#) for its member states. From a postsecondary education perspective, the Chronicle of Higher Education maintains a [database](#) of reopening plans for colleges across the country. Below are some examples of education leaders who are considering what education will look like in the summer, fall and future semesters for K-12 schools and higher education institutions:

- **Alaska:** The department of education and early development published [Alaska Smart Start 2020: Restart & Reentry Framework Guidance for K-12 Schools](#). The department is also holding a [Smart Start 2020 Webinar Series](#) with 7 weeks of webinars that took place between May 19 and July 2. This [document](#) has meeting materials from past webinars, including slides, links and further details.
- **Arizona:** After [convening a task force](#) to discuss reopening school for the 2020-21 school year, the superintendent of public instruction released a [Roadmap for Reopening Schools](#).
- **Arkansas:** The state division of elementary and secondary education has updated [guidance](#) noting that local districts considering summer school options should plan for digital delivery only until at least July 1.
- **California:** On July 17, the department of public health updated its [COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools and School-Based Programs](#) document. The department of education also released "[Stronger Together: A Guidebook for the Safe Reopening of California's Public Schools](#)," which is described as a "guide for local discussion on reopening schools" rather than a "one-size-fits-all document".
- **Colorado:** The department of education is regularly updating [A Framework and Toolkit for School and District Leaders for Feedback](#). The toolkit aims to "provide K-12 districts and schools with considerations and guidance for the 2020-21 school year that are based on health and safety protocols and advance quality education, equity, and opportunity." [On July 20, the department of education and department of public](#)

health & environment jointly released [reopening guidelines for schools](#). This guidance depends on and accounts for the level of COVID-19 incidence in the community.

- **Connecticut:** The Office of Gov. Ned Lamont issued [this report](#) on reopening higher education institutions. The report contains guidance recommended to the governor from the higher education subcommittee. On July 28, the state department of education released [updated guidance](#) for reopening schools in the fall.
- **Florida:** On June 11, Gov. Ron DeSantis [announced](#) “recommendations for local communities to consider as they finalize plans to re-open safe and healthy schools that are set up for success.” The [complete guidance](#) is divided into four sections on the Impacts on Achievement Gaps, Guidance for Reopening Healthy Learning Environments, the CARES Act and CARES — Safety Net Funds in Reserve. On July 6, Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran issued an [emergency order](#) that requires districts to submit plans to reopen brick and mortar schools in August by July 31 to remain eligible for state education funding.
- **Hawaii:** The Legislature adopted [S.R. 144](#), requesting the department of education to develop a reopening plan for the 2020-21 school year based on CDC guidelines. HDE is currently developing the guidance, the page can be accessed [here](#).
- **Idaho:** The state board of education released ([p. 18](#)) school re-entry criteria for in-person instruction in line with Gov. Brad Little’s [Idaho Rebounds plan](#). All re-entry plans must be approved by local health districts and contain an immediate closure plan should a student or faculty member be diagnosed with the virus. On July 10, the state board of education [announced](#) it will [allow local school boards](#) to make their own plans for reopening schools in the fall.
- **Indiana:** On June 5, the department of education released “[Indiana’s Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools \(IN-CLASS\): COVID-19 Health and Safety Re-entry Guidance](#),” which is described as a “guide of considerations to inform schools and districts as they approach planning and preparing school operations surrounding COVID-19.”
- **Illinois:** On June 23, the state board of education [released guidance](#) related to reopening schools in the fall. On July 24, Gov. J.B. Pritzker issued an [executive order](#) to allow in-person instruction at schools within the following parameters: 50 or fewer people in one space at a time, social distancing compliance, requiring symptom screenings and temperature checks, ensure appropriate hygienic practices and requiring use of personal protective equipment by students, staff and visitors.
- **Kansas:** On July 22, the state board of education [voted to reject](#) Gov. Laura Kelly’s [executive order](#) to delay in-person instruction until after Labor Day. The board’s vote means local school districts will now determine when they begin instruction. On July 15, the state department of [education released reopening guidance](#) that is grade-level specific.
- **Kentucky:** On May 15, the department of education released the [Considerations for Reopening Schools — Initial Guidance for Schools and Districts](#). The department highlights recommended reopening steps and guiding questions directed at school administrators and staff. Updated intermediate school closure [guidance](#) was released June 15.
- **Louisiana:** The department of education launched [Strong Start 2020](#) to help schools address unfinished learning, set a strong foundation for learning in the upcoming academic year and prepare for modified operation eventualities. On May 31, the Louisiana Legislature enrolled [SCR63](#), which requests that the state board of elementary and secondary education to create a task force to “assist the state Department of Education in developing guidance for Louisiana educators to meet the immediate need of supporting learning outside of normal practices”.

- **Maine:** The department of education released a [Return to Classroom Instruction Framework](#). This framework is divided into five parts: physical health and safety considerations; social, emotional, behavioral and mental health considerations; academic programs and student learning considerations; common foundations for remote learning; and additional considerations.
- **Maryland:** The state superintendent of schools released [Maryland’s Recovery Plan for Education: COVID-19 Response and the Path Forward](#), which provides tools and resources for districts and schools to use when considering reopening schools.
- **Massachusetts:** The Massachusetts Higher Education Working group released [this framework](#) for reopening colleges and universities. The reopening framework includes four phases. **On June 25, the department of elementary and secondary education released school reopening guidance for school districts.**
- **Minnesota:** On May 20, the department of education published [Summer Programming Guidance for Schools](#). The department determined that a school district or charter school may open school buildings for a hybrid model of in-school learning and distance learning for summer school.
- **Mississippi:** On June 8, the department of education [released Considerations for Reopening Mississippi Schools](#) between June-August 2020. This document provides information on three types of school opening schedules: traditional, virtual and hybrid.
- **Montana:** The state rescinded the 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. **Montana Learn 2020 and Montana Flex 2020** are task forces currently working on K-12 re-opening guidance. **In June, Gov. Steve Bullock released the Governor’s Plan for Reopening Safe and Healthy Schools for Montana.** The plan outlines the state’s health and safety plan for schools and a three-phase reopening plan for school districts.
- **Nebraska:** On April 23, the education commissioner released a [message](#) advising that all summer learning be provided in a remote environment. Remote instruction will qualify as the same as in-person instruction for summer school allowance.
- **North Carolina:** Part of the state’s COVID-19 Relief package ([S.B. 704](#)) requires schools to open on August 17 — a week earlier than usual — for the next academic year. On June 11, the [state board of education](#) approved the department of public instruction’s Lighting Our Way Forward: [North Carolina’s Guidebook for Reopening Public Schools resource](#) and this [summary](#) of the guidebook.
- **Oklahoma:** At its [May 28 meeting](#), the [board of education voted](#) to allow schools to hold classes on Saturdays. Saturday classes would not be mandatory, but if districts opt to hold Saturday classes, those days would count toward the minimum number of instructional days.
- **Oregon:** The department of education released [guidance](#) to assist in the planning between May and the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. Effective June 1, the state is allowing limited in-person summer school, small group instruction and/or summer programming. On July 22, the department updated [guidance](#) for the 2020-21 school year.
- **Pennsylvania:** On June 3, the department of education released [Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools](#). This document includes plan requirements and recommendations for schools considering a return to in-person instruction and this [website](#) includes more information.
- **Tennessee:** On June 8, the department of education released [Reopening Schools: Overview and Guide for LEAs](#).

- **Texas:** On May 18, as part of phase two of the state’s reopening plan, Gov. Greg Abbott [announced](#) that schools may begin offering in-person summer school beginning June 1. Teachers and staff are encouraged to continue working from home but may return to campus for in-person activities, such as summer school. The Texas Education Agency released more detailed [guidance for summer school](#). According to the governor’s announcement, higher education institutions may reopen campuses and are encouraged to establish standards that would allow for similar in-person summer learning activities. [On July 28, the Texas Education Agency announced that schools will no longer receive full state funding if they choose to use remote-only instruction.](#)
- **Virginia:** On June 9, Gov. Ralph Northam [announced](#) a phased approach to reopening preK-12 schools in Virginia. Opportunities for in-person instruction are rolled out in phases in this [guidance](#): first for special education programs and with child care for working families; then expansion to include preschool through third grade students, English learners, and summer camps in school buildings; followed by an expansion to all students if strict social distancing measures can be maintained, which may require alternative schedules blending in-person and remote learning for students. [In July, the state released the Recover, Restart, Redesign re-opening guidance for K-12 school districts.](#)
- **Washington:** On June 11, the office of superintendent of public instruction released [Reopening Washington Schools 2020: District Planning Guide](#).
- **West Virginia:** The department of education has released [guidance](#) on summer learning opportunities. Free books will be available for early elementary students, free credit recovery will be available for students who were failing courses as of March 13, all fees for the West Virginia Virtual School will be waived for middle and high school students, and teachers will have free access to professional learning opportunities.
- **Wisconsin:** On June 29, the department of public instruction [released reopening guidance](#) for local schools related to health and safety, school operations and instructional programming.

Early Learning

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

- [Remote Learning in Early Childhood](#), National Association of State Boards of Education
- [Young Children’s Home Learning and Preschool Participation Experiences During the Pandemic](#), National Institute for Early Education Research
- [How Will The COVID-19 Pandemic Impact Pre-K?](#), National Institute for Early Education Research
- [Supporting Smooth Transitions into Kindergarten During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), New America
- [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
- [Child Care’s Struggle to Survive COVID-19: State Impacts and Responses](#), National Women’s Law Center
- [Pre-K Budget Decisions in the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), Education Commission of the States
- [Early Childhood Data Systems: Responding to COVID-19 and Building for the Future](#), Data Quality Campaign

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

Education Commission of the States strives to respond to information requests within 48 hours. This document reflects our best efforts but it may not reflect exhaustive research. Please let us know if you would like a more comprehensive response. Our staff is also available to provide unbiased advice on policy plans, consult on proposed legislation and testify at legislative hearings as third-party experts.

- **Georgia:** On March 15, the commissioner of the 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 June 15, updated guidance** for child care programs provided a checklist to ensure compliance with health and safety protocols. The state also released a [FAQ document](#) related specifically to early learning.
- **Illinois:** On March 30, Gov. J.B. Pritzker established a [COVID-19: Illinois’ Early Childhood Care and Education Response](#) guidance document. This document established that early education programs funded through the state board’s Preschool for All and Prevention Initiative programs would not have their funding affected by a decision to close. 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. On April 20, the state released [updated guidance](#) to complement the previous releases. On May 22, the state released [reopening guidance](#) for child care programs. **The FAQ document was recently updated.**
- **New Mexico:** On May 1, the early childhood education and care department [announced](#) that it will use a portion of its federal CARES Act stimulus funding to offer incentive pay to early childhood professionals who are working in centers that remain open during the public health emergency. In partnership with the economic development department, the early childhood education and care department made \$12 million in grant funding available to childcare providers through the Childcare Stabilization and Recovery Grant Program. This funding is to be administered in conjunction with the administration of small business funding provided through the CARES Act.
- **Vermont:** On April 13, the agency of education released [Prekindergarten Education and Continuity of Learning](#) guidance. The guidance covers social and emotional support, pre-K learning resources and tuition payments. On April 28, the agency released [this document](#) on pre-K learning at home.

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:

- The National Conference of State Legislatures released a [blog](#) examining the expenditure of CARES Act funds in the states.
- The Data Quality Campaign released a [brief](#) describing how states can utilize CARES Act funds to increase the capacity of their data infrastructure to support academic recovery.
- In this [blog post](#), the Learning Policy Institute identifies inequities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic and potential policy solutions.
- FutureEd updated “[What Congressional Covid Funding Means for K-12 Schools](#)” that 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, information on the Rethink K-12 School Models grant, and includes state-by-state education stabilization fund amounts as reported by [the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#).
- This [Education Week article](#) features analysis 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.

- Bellwether Education Partners released 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:

- This NCSL school finance [resource](#) provides data visualizations depicting state and local revenue performance during the Great Recession and elementary and secondary education revenue during the Great Recession, in addition to other school finance resources to assist state policymakers.
- This [brief](#) from the Annenberg Institute provides key considerations operating with reduced budgets.
- An [article](#) from Education Dive explores equity concerns that budget cuts could widen racial funding gaps.
- [More Clues From the Great Recession: How Will COVID-19 Affect Community College Funding](#): Using lessons learned from the Great Recession and IPEDS data on trends in college revenue, the Community College Research Center discusses what community colleges may expect in terms of changing state and local support.
- [How Much Will COVID-19 Cost Schools](#): Using data provided by the Learning Policy Institute, EdWeek has built an interactive calculator to project increased education costs for states.
- Brookings released a blog post on [“How the Coronavirus Shutdown Will Affect School District Revenues,”](#) which includes information on how each state relies on state funds for education, projects how 2020-21 budgets may be more directly impacted by coronavirus cuts than 2019-20 and warns about the potentially inequitable impacts of a recession. Brookings also has a [running blog post series](#) exploring Congressional decisions to provide federal aid for schools during COVID-19.
- 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.
- On May 22, Education Commission of the States published [COVID-19 and School Funding: What to Expect and What Can States Do](#). The post provides an analysis on determining state budget cuts and links to an interactive tool for budgeting scenarios and suggestions for education leaders around this issue. A [blog post](#) from the Learning Policy Institute examines the amount of funding necessary to stabilize falling state and local revenues.
- 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.
- An [Education Dive article](#) on K-12 budget cuts highlights additional research from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities that suggests that less than half of states have warned their districts of revenue cuts for the upcoming school year.
- Education Dive also released an [article](#) on postsecondary budget cuts highlighting how state policymakers are approaching higher education spending. The report highlights actions taken in **California, Georgia, Nevada, Oklahoma** and **Wyoming**.
- [The Pew Charitable Trusts](#) looked at state funding trends during past recessions to examine how state support for postsecondary institutions could change during the pandemic and economic crisis.
- [WestEd](#) published a report providing considerations for state education leaders and policymakers to ensure that reductions to state education budgets are implemented in a fair and equitable manner.

State Responses:

According to a June 15 [article](#) from Education Dive, most states plan to use GEER funds to expand or continue meeting students' needs for access to reliable, high speed internet and devices. In some states, funds will also be used to create grant programs for districts and provide professional development for teachers.

- **Arizona:** Gov. Doug Ducey unveiled the [AZ Cares](#) plan that provides \$270 million in one-time new funding to give schools the tools needed to reopen safely at the start of the school year. Funding will be directed towards reducing achievement gaps, bridging the digital divide, providing budget certainty to schools, enabling distance learning, hiring more teachers and supporting innovation.
- **Colorado:** Gov. Jared Polis [announced](#) several budget cuts for the current fiscal year because of insufficient revenues. Some of the programs that funding was cut from include the Educator Loan Forgiveness Fund, the Colorado Second Chance Scholarship, teaching fellowship stipends and the teacher mentor grant program. On May 18, Polis issued an [executive order](#) directing CARES Act funds: \$510,000,000 to K-12 school districts and \$450,000,000 to higher education institutions. The school finance unit maintains a [COVID-19 FAQ webpage](#). On May 18, the joint budget committee released a [memorandum](#) on revised long bill recommendations for school finance.
- **Florida:** The department of education released "[Reopening Florida's Schools and the CARES Act](#)," which outlines how CARES Act funds will be used in alignment with the governor's education priorities. [On July 6, Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran issued an emergency order](#) that requires districts to submit plans to reopen brick and mortar schools in August by July 31 to remain eligible for state education funding.
- **Illinois:** A [Chalkbeat article](#) details how the state board of education plans to allocate its \$569 million in CARES Act funding, including \$512 million to school districts based on how many low-income students each district serves, \$32.9 million to additional technology and device purchases, \$7.1 million to internet connectivity and \$12 million to coaching educators on remote learning.
- The **Indiana** department of education released [guidance on reporting virtual students for the 2020-21 school year](#), which addresses differences in funding for students participating in virtual learning because of COVID-19 school closures and students participating in virtual learning prior to the pandemic.
- **Minnesota:** Recently enacted [H.F. 4415](#) adjusts school aid formulas in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with adjustments for specific expenditures and forms of aid.
- **Montana:** The state expects to receive \$41.3 million of CARES Act funds. The office of public instruction 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 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. Recently enacted [S.B. 704](#) also provides additional state funds for education and [H.B. 1043](#) appropriates CARES Act funding.
- **South Dakota:** On May 26, Gov. Kristi Noem [announced](#) that \$68 million in federal CARES Act funding has been allocated to education efforts in the state for three policy buckets: \$41 million to elementary and secondary schools for technology and internet access, cleaning expenses and other health measures; \$19 million to higher education emergency relief funding; and roughly \$7.9 million to the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Funds.
- **Tennessee:** A May 29 [presentation](#) by the department of education details SEA allocation of CARES Act funding. Gov. Bill Lee [announced](#) an additional \$81 million in funding for higher education and K-12 schools.

K-12 grants will be utilized to support safe reopening and technological investments. Higher education grants will support the implementation of social distancing and technological improvements for distance learning.

- **Texas:** On July 28, the Texas Education Agency [announced](#) that schools [will no longer receive full state funding](#) if they choose to use remote-only instruction.
- **Virginia:** On April 7, the superintendent of public instruction announced that the U.S. Department of Education approved the state’s application for additional flexibility in using federal education funds, which is 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. The National Association of State Boards of Education published an [overview of state board adjustments to graduation policies](#). Education Week is tracking [changes to state graduation criteria for the class of 2020](#), as well as other graduation requirement flexibilities.

Below, we review recent policy changes in several states:

Graduation Requirements

- **Colorado:** Graduation requirements are currently determined by the district, which offers flexibility in the ability to adjust graduation requirements. The state department of education [published guidance](#) for districts
- **Mississippi:** The [state board](#) waived certain end-of-course assessments that could not be administered.
- **North Carolina:** The state board of education [announced](#) that seniors will receive a pass/fail designation, that [failing students](#) should receive remote learning opportunities, and [districts cannot require](#) more than 22 credit hours (the state minimum) to graduate.
- **Tennessee:** The state board of education released [guidance](#) for what components must be included in a LEA’s continuous learning plan for the 2020-21 school year, including how the LEA will meet instructional time requirements.
- **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.
- **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.”

Grade Promotion

- **Arizona:** [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 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 department of education published [Guidance on Graduation Requirements, Awarding of Credits and Continuity of Learning](#). 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 include:

- [A State Policymaker’s Guide to Equitable Transitions in the COVID-19 Era](#), Education Commission of the States.
- [College in the time of coronavirus: Challenges facing American higher education](#), American Enterprise Institute.
- [Guidance and Support for Students Moving into Postsecondary](#), Annenberg Institute.
- [Legal Risk During COVID-19](#), Southern Regional Education Board.
- [Recognizing Prior Learning in the COVID-19 Era: Helping Displaced Workers and Students One Credit at a Time](#), WICHE.
- [12 States Accelerate Developmental Education Reforms During the Pandemic](#), Education Commission of the States.
- [Memorandum on Reopening Institutions of Higher Education](#), National Governors Association.
- [Data You Can Use: Will COVID-19 Affect High School Seniors’ Access to Financial Aid?](#), Education Commission of the States
- [Higher Education Responses to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#), National Conference of State Legislatures.
- Immediate Next Steps for Helping High School Seniors Transition to a 2-/4-Year College or Certificate Program, [National College Attainment Network](#)
- [Planning for Fall 2020 and Beyond](#), Inside Higher Ed.
- [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](#)
- A Stateline article discusses [difficulties regional colleges are facing](#) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and explores state and system responses.
- [Public Research Universities' OK Year on Admissions](#), Inside Higher Ed

Below are some institutional policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **California State University** [issued](#) 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.
- On June 4, the **Iowa Board of Regents** [approved a tuition freeze](#) for the fall 2020 semester.
- The [University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill](#), among [other institutions](#), have adjusted their fall 2020 schedule to end the semester before the Thanksgiving holiday. Institutions are looking to stave off a second wave of COVID-19 in the late fall or early winter with these decisions.
- On April 29, **Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education Board of Governors** [approved a tuition freeze](#) for the 2020-21 academic year.
- 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. The university is also keeping the campus [food pantry](#) open by taking orders online.

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

- **California:** The [University of California](#) and the **California State University** systems provide examples of higher education institutions relaxing [admissions](#) procedures. This is a [joint statement](#) from the board of education, the 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."
- **Colorado:** The department of education published guidance FAQs on both [concurrent enrollment](#) and [higher education admissions](#).
- **Georgia:** [Guidance](#) from the department of education 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 suspended](#) placement exam requirements, as well as requirements to submit official high school transcripts or equivalency transcripts for admission in summer and fall 2020 classes.
- **Maryland:** [S.B. 329](#) and [H.B. 187](#) (enacted) require a public institution of higher education to submit an outbreak response plan to the department of health on or before August 1 each year beginning in 2021. Additionally, the bills outline certain conditions under which a public institution of higher education is required to implement the outbreak response plan and certain processes that must be included in the plan.
- **New Jersey:** [S.B. 2356](#) (enacted) exempts the spring 2020 semester from counting towards the number of semesters a student is eligible for a scholarship award. Additionally, the bill waives any costs a student would have to pay back when moving from full- to part-time enrollment status if the status change was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Pennsylvania:** The department of education [released preliminary guidance](#) for resuming in-person instruction at postsecondary institutions and adult education programs.
- **South Dakota:** The board of regents provided [temporary policy exemptions](#) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. 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.
- **Virginia:** Gov. Ralph Northam released [guidance for reopening higher education institutions](#). The guidance includes public health conditions and considerations, developing campus reopening plans, and licensing and regulatory flexibilities.
- **West Virginia:** The higher education policy commission and council for community and technical college education [voted to improve flexibilities for students](#). 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

States, districts and schools have developed and implemented remote learning plans to accommodate school campus and building closures because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The American Enterprise Institute has been tracking the implementation of remote learning plans. In an [ongoing analysis of school district responses to the COVID-19 pandemic](#), AEI found that over half of schools rely mostly or completely on online platforms to provide remote instruction. For information on how states and districts are addressing internet and technological device access, consult the Broadband and Technology Access section of this resource. For information on how states and districts are working to support student learning for the remainder of the 2020 calendar year see the Continued and Future Learning section of this resource.

The Center for Reinventing Public Education [conducted an analysis](#) of remote learning plans for 477 school districts. Among other key findings, the analysis discovered that just a third of school districts have provided clear expectations that teachers provide remote instruction, track student engagement or monitor academic progress. The analysis also found gaps between affluent and low-income districts, and between urban/suburban and rural districts, in expectations for instruction.

An Education Commission of the States [blog post](#) also summarized data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Surveys to visualize time spent on learning activities, student access to technology, school support and instructional delivery mediums. This blog post also offers key lessons for states in the implementation of virtual or distance learning.

The American Institutes for Research released the [findings](#) of a survey studying school and district remote learning delivery and student access disaggregated by urban and rural, as well as low- and high-poverty districts.

Resources to Support Remote Learning:

- The Aurora Institute published a [blog post](#) detailing new flexibilities in using federal funds to support technology infrastructure and teacher professional development for remote learning.

- The Digital Learning Collaborative has a resource from December 2019 called “[eLearning Days: A Scan of Policy and Guidance](#).”
- A [survey of state guidance](#) from MIT Teaching Systems Lab 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.
- On May 14, Education Week released their [review of state remote learning directives and guidance](#). They found that states largely focused on providing recommendations rather than guidance, loosened seat time requirements, shifted from enrichment to new material, and adopted hold-harmless grading provisions.
- On June 1, the State Educational Technology Directors Association released a report providing [considerations for state education agencies around CARES Act funding in relation to digital learning](#). The report makes recommendations on state digital learning plans, district digital learning plans, equitable access to technology and internet, and implementing digital content. The report also examined how CARES Act funding may be useful in pursuing these recommendations.
- The National Center on Education and the Economy provided an [analysis](#) of distance learning approaches in countries considered top-performers in education. The report highlighted high quality curriculum and digital resources, in addition to quality monitoring, professional development and student access to technology as keys to successful implementation of distance learning. It also identified the identification of learning gaps, assessment innovations and hands-on learning as key strategies.
- Education Week surveyed district technology leaders and student and teacher tech use and [provided recommendations](#) on effective virtual instruction.

State Responses:

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](#).

Florida provides an example of [virtual education](#) used in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. 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.

The **Alabama** Department of Education [released an RFP](#) to “provide and manage a comprehensive statewide K-12 virtual school.” The RFP closed on June 5. A [statewide virtual school](#) would provide education options for families hesitant to send their children into schools in the fall as well as help the state prepare for future, unanticipated closures because of continued spread of COVID-19. [The state department of education selected a provider](#) in early July.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz [announced](#) a public-private partnership that aims to meet the technology and connectivity needs of families with school-aged children. Partnership for a ConnectedMN is led by Best Buy, Comcast, Blandin Foundation, Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation and the Minnesota Business Partnership, in collaboration with the State of Minnesota.

The **New Jersey** Department of Education recently [clarified](#) that all students may opt for full-time remote learning in the fall, in addition to district plans to provide hybrid and in-person instruction.

While Education Commission of the States has not completed a 50-State Comparison 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 Comparison on charter school policies](#) provides information on virtual charter schools.

Special Education

As noted in the federal guidance section, the U.S. Department of Education produced a [fact sheet](#) for students with disabilities. The Center on Reinventing Public Education released a [50-state database](#) on how states are providing local districts with resources, learning plans and help with compliance issues. In June, the [EdResearch for Recovery Project released a brief](#) outlining key insights and ways to best serve students with disabilities during and following the pandemic. Below are examples of state-level guidance for special education:

- **California:** On March 20, the department of education published [special education guidance](#), which includes a FAQ section for schools and local education agencies. The Marin County Office of Education is running a [Spring Pilot Program](#) with [protocols](#) in place to reopen alternative and special education classrooms. Phase one of the pilot program was scheduled to run May 18-June 11, phase two is from June 12-July 31 and phase three is from August 6-August 20.
- **Illinois:** The state board of education put forward [a series of guidance pieces](#) addressing how to serve students with special needs during remote learning in April and May. There is also a [FAQ](#) page on this topic.
- **Massachusetts:** The department of elementary and secondary education released a [FAQ](#) for schools and districts regarding special education. 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:** Legislation enacted in April ([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.
- **New York:** On June 5, Gov. Andrew Cuomo issued an [executive order](#) to allow special education services and instruction to be provided in person for the summer term, effective through July 5.
- **Virginia:** The [department of education](#) has compiled a [FAQ page](#) on special education student services that provides information about equitable access and support for a variety of student learning needs in preschool, elementary and secondary schools. On June 9, [guidance](#) was released by the state that allows school divisions to elect to provide in-person instruction for students with disabilities in both school year services and school year special education services, with strict social distancing rules.
- **Washington:** The office of superintendent of public instruction has several resources available on a special education guidance [landing page](#), including a [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](#) resources.

In compliance with a provision of the CARES Act, the U.S. Department of Education [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.” In addition, this [whitepaper](#) from n2y details how ESSER funds can be used for special education instruction under the CARES Act — particularly related to technology access.

Student Health and Wellness

Although many states have closed school campuses and buildings 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 or by 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](#). The USDA provided [additional flexibilities](#) to ensure students have access to free- and reduced-price meals in the fall.
- [SchoolHouse Connection](#) provided a [resource](#) with strategies for schools, early learning programs and higher education institutions that addresses COVID-19 and homelessness concerns. They also have a [FAQ page on COVID-19 and homelessness](#).
- The Urban Institute published [Strategies and Challenges in Feeding Out-of-School Students](#) in April. The report provides a landscape of state and federal policy changes around this issue.
- 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.
 - 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.
- The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning ([CASEL](#)) maintains social and emotional learning (SEL) [resources](#) to support school communities during closures. CASEL also released [guidance](#) for reopening schools in a way that supports positive social and emotional development.

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

- **California:** The department of education updated guidance on [School and Child and Adult Day Care Meals](#). The department 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.
- **Hawaii:** The state department of education provides a [health hotline and telehealth services](#) to students and their families. Services are provided at no cost to students.
- **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 posed by the COVID-19 pandemic” for elementary and secondary schools.
- **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.

- **Ohio:** The department of education’s telehealth [guidelines](#) include a 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. The department has also released [guidance](#) for supporting students in foster care to ensure educational stability during a school closure.

Physical Health and Safety

While many schools, districts and states have not yet finalized where learning will take place in the fall, they are beginning to issue physical health and safety guidance for returning to in-person learning. The [School Superintendents Association](#) estimates that an average school district can anticipate [\\$1,778,139 in additional expenses](#) incurred by 1) adhering to health monitoring and cleaning protocols, 2) hiring additional cleaning, nursing and transportation staff in order to implement protocols (the biggest cost driver in this estimate), 3) providing PPE for staff and 4) transportation and childcare. Education Week [released a guide](#) to help schools reimagine and repurpose large common areas and calculate social distance spaces in classrooms. [Additionally, the Harvard School of Public Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics have weighed in with guidance to reduce risk and support safe school reopening.](#)

Below, we outline policies and guidance to ensure physical health and safety in schools, [including examples of mask requirements](#). For general information about school reopening guidance, see the Continued and Future Learning section of this resource.

- **California:** The department of education’s [reopening guidelines](#) address [health and safety plans](#) for illness prevention, passive and active monitoring for symptoms related to COVID-19, hygiene, protective equipment, and cleaning and disinfecting.
- **Indiana:** Gov. Eric Holcomb issued a statewide [mandatory mask order](#) that requires face coverings in schools for students in the third grade and above, faculty, staff, volunteers and anyone else in schools. Mask are also required for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities with exceptions for strenuous physical activity.
- **Kansas:** Gov. Laura Kelly issued an [executive order](#) aimed at the mitigation of the spread of COVID-19 in schools that includes a mask order, social distancing requirements, access to hand sanitizer and temperature checks.
- **Kentucky:** The department of education released [safety expectations](#) for school reopening that includes guidance on social distancing, face coverings and other protective equipment, sanitation, screening and contact tracing.
- **Maine:** The department of education includes a [physical health and safety section](#) in the [Return to Classroom Instruction Framework](#). Suggestions include removing furniture that cannot be easily cleaned, installing plexiglass shields for high traffic staff, marking traffic flow lines and/or 6-foot distance indicators, and being prepared to isolate, care for and transport anyone who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms.
- **Massachusetts:** In a [June 5 letter to superintendents and other school leaders](#), the commissioner of education outlined health guidelines and supply requirements. Masks must be worn by students and staff, and schools must supply disposable masks for students who need them. Temperature checks will not be required as part of entry screening protocols. The letter also clarifies that it is the responsibility of the district to secure disposable masks, hand sanitizer and safety materials like gloves, gowns, eye protection and N-95 masks for certain staff under certain conditions.

- **Pennsylvania:** The department of education released [Preliminary School Sports Guidance](#) to address sports organizations and team needs.
- **Tennessee:** On June 6, the department of education [announced](#) that the emergency management agency agreed to purchase thermometers for all schools. Schools are allocated one thermometer per 40 students.
- **Wisconsin:** Gov. Tony Evers recently [distributed](#) two million face masks and 4,000 thermometers to schools for fall re-openings.

Teachers

As state and local policymakers prepare school reopening plans for the fall, assuring the safety of teachers and faculty at higher risk of serious illness from coronavirus remains an important factor. On July 10, the Kaiser Family Foundation released an analysis indicating that [24% of all teachers](#) —or roughly 1.5 million— are at greater risk of serious illness. This analysis used data from the 2018 National Health Interview Survey and identified the following risk factors: those with diabetes, asthma, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, a body mass index above 40 and cancer patients. On July 28, the leadership of the [American Federation of Teachers](#) told its members that it would [support “safety strikes”](#) if health precautions are not adequately addressed in the wake of decisions to reopen schools.

Given abrupt switches to online instruction and the cancellation of state assessments, some states have waived teacher evaluation requirements, provided guidance, or allowed 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 on this [FAQ page](#), last updated June 3.
- **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. [Deans for Impact](#) released a [COVID-19 Teacher Preparation Policy Database](#) detailing the guidance every state has issued. The [American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education](#) built an [interactive map](#) showing changes and guidance provided in four areas: initial licensure and certification, clinical experiences, hiring and induction, state standards and other program requirements. [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.” NCTQ collected several state examples of [changes to student teaching and initial licensure requirements](#) in a blog post. Below are some examples of state responses related to teacher preparation and licensure:

- **California:** Gov. Gavin Newsom’s [executive order](#) suspended requirements for credential candidates to take the Teaching Performance Assessment, California Administrator Performance Assessment and complete

other requirements if the candidate was unable to complete an assessment or requirement because of COVID-19 related closures.

- **Kansas:** The 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.
- **Mississippi:** [Guidance](#) from the department of education states that 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, and has provided a document with [related frequently asked questions](#).
- 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 pandemic's 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. NCTQ updated this data in a May 28 [article](#). 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 Education Commission of the States’ 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 pandemic 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
- [Youth Apprenticeship: A Strategy for Recovery and Resilience](#), New America

Below are some examples of responses to workforce education policy:

- U.S. Department of Education: On April 27, Secretary Betsy DeVos [announced](#) the allocation of \$127.5 million for Reimagining Workforce Participation Grants. The Reimagining Workforce Preparation Grants are designed to expand short-term postsecondary programs and work-based learning programs.
- [Education Dive](#) highlighted how some institutions and states have altered career and technical education models in response to the pandemic.
- **Mississippi:** The state legislature enacted [H.B. 1795](#) which requires the department of employment security to appropriate funding to workforce investment areas throughout the state to ensure workers displaced by the COVID-19 pandemic have access to job training that prepares them for future employment.
- **North Carolina:** The general assembly enacted [S.B. 704](#), granting students in community college apprenticeship programs a tuition waiver if they were unable to complete coursework or field experience related to their program because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Ohio:** The department of education issued [guidance](#) on 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.
- **Utah:** The state legislature enacted [H.B. 5010](#) which directs financial grants to institutions of higher education to offer short-term programs to: provide training to furloughed, laid off, dislocated, underserved or other populations affected by COVID-19 to fill employment gaps in the state; provide training and education related to industry needs; and provide students with certificates or other recognition after completion of training.

Additional Resources

- [Center on Reinventing Public Education](#)
- [Chiefs for Change](#)
- [Child Trends](#)
- [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#)
- [¡Colorín Colorado!](#)
- [Council of Chief State School Officers](#)
- [Council of State Governments](#)
- [EAB](#)
- [EDUCAUSE](#)
- [Education Week](#)
- [Ednomics Lab \(Georgetown University\)](#)
- [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](#)