



# Illinois State Board of Education

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## Mandatory Suspension of In-Person Instruction Guidance for Illinois Schools and School Districts

**Last updated: April 1, 2020**

### Executive Orders/Proclamations:

- [Executive Order 2020-15](#) (March 27, 2020) suspends all state assessments, creates Remote Learning Days and Remote Learning Planning Days, addresses Early Childhood Block Grant funds, and permits virtual submission of school construction bids.
- [Executive Order 2020-10](#) (March 20, 2020) with exceptions, requires all individuals currently living within the State of Illinois to stay at home or at their place of residence. Among other changes, extends mandated statewide suspension of in-person instruction through April 7, 2020.
- [Executive Order 2020-07](#) (March 16, 2020) includes Open Meetings Act flexibility.
- [Executive Order 2020-06](#) (March 15, 2020) exempts schools operated by the Department of Juvenile Justice, State Board of Education or Department of Human Services from EO 2020-05.
- [Executive Order 2020-05](#) (March 13, 2020) requires all public and non-public schools to close beginning on Tuesday, March 17 through Monday, March 30. EO 2020-05 also provides flexibility in e-learning plans.

### Emergency Rules:

- [Part 226](#) (March 25, 2020) allows all approved special education private facilities to continue to invoice school districts and requires school districts to continue to pay the per diem approved by the Illinois Purchased Care Review Board under Section 14-7.02 of the School Code.
- [Part 5](#) (March 27, 2020) allows the State Superintendent to declare a requirement to use Remote Learning Days for a district, multiple districts, a region, or the entire State. During the Remote Learning Days, schools must conduct instruction remotely.
- [Part 235](#) (March 27, 2020) allows currently funded early childhood block grant programs that voluntarily choose to provide care for children of essential workers to use funds in excess of what is necessary for the program to provide at-home materials for children in the program and to purchase supplies and equipment while caring for children of essential workers.
- [Part 120](#) (March 30, 2020) requires all transportation costs incurred between March 17, 2020, and through the end of the 2019-2020, that are beyond transporting students to be allowable and reimbursed by the formula under Section 29-5 of the School Code.

## ASSESSMENTS/ACCOUNTABILITY

### 1. How will the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction impact administration of Spring 2020 State-mandated assessments and accountability?

ISBE submitted a statewide waiver application to U.S. Department of Education (ED) to waive all federally required assessments, summative designations, and reporting on accountability metrics on the Illinois Report Card for the 2019-20 school year. ED has communicated that based on its review of the ISBE request, it appears to meet all statutory requirements and, accordingly, ED intends to issue a formal approval of the ISBE waiver request in the coming weeks. Illinois may begin to implement the waiver while ED processes the formal approval.

The waiver application:

- Waives all federally required assessments in the 2019-20 school year;
- Waives the requirement to provide summative designations and identify schools for targeted and comprehensive support in the 2019-20 school year; and
- Waives the requirement to report on accountability indicators on the 2019-20 school year Report Card.

View the waiver application online at [www.isbe.net/Documents/Assessment-Accountability-Waiver-Illinois.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/Documents/Assessment-Accountability-Waiver-Illinois.pdf).

Executive Order 2020-15 suspends state assessments for the duration of the Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation. **With this order, state assessments, including the Illinois Assessment of Readiness, PSAT 8/9 and PSAT 10, SAT, DLM-AA, the Illinois Science Assessment, and Constitution exam are all suspended for Spring 2020.**

We know that the free SAT provided by the state is the only opportunity many students get to take a college entrance exam. ISBE is working with the College Board on developing options to allow current 11th grade students to take the SAT in the fall. We hope to have more information on these options by the end of April.

### 2. Will Invest in Kids scholarship recipients be required to take state assessments this Spring?

State law requires Invest in Kids scholarship recipients to be assessed “in the same manner” as public-school students. As State assessments have been suspended, Invest in Kids scholarship recipients will not need to complete State assessments during the Spring 2020 testing window. ISBE is seeking relief from the evaluative study mandated by the Invest in Kids Act that is based on these assessments.

### 3. Will the College Board still administer Advanced Placement (AP) Exams?

For the 2019-20 exam administration only, students can take a 45-minute online exam at home. Educator-led development committees are currently selecting the exam

questions that will be administered. Students will be able to take these streamlined exams on any device they have access to— computer, tablet, or smartphone.

College Board will conduct standard-setting processes to set appropriately rigorous cut scores for AP scores of 3, 4, and 5.

AP curricula are locally developed, and College Board defers to local decisions on how best to help students complete coursework. To be fair to all students, some of whom have lost more instructional time than others, the exam will only include topics and skills most AP teachers and students have already covered in class by early March.

College Board recognizes that the digital divide could prevent some low-income and rural students from participating. Working with partners, College Board will invest so that these students have the tools and connectivity they need to review AP content online and take the exam.

The exam questions are designed in ways that prevent cheating; College Board is using a range of digital security tools and techniques, including plagiarism detection software, to protect the integrity of the exams.

#### **4. Are there resources available for virtual learning for Advanced Placement courses?**

All AP students and teachers will be able to draw on the free online resources that were provided to every AP classroom this fall. Additional resources will be made easily accessible to AP students and teachers through mobile phones and other devices.

Beginning on March 25, students and teachers could begin attending free, optional live AP review courses, delivered by AP teachers from across the country. Courses will be recorded and available on-demand. These mobile-friendly classes are designed to be used alongside work schools may continue to assign.

### **BOARD MEETINGS/OPEN MEETINGS ACT**

#### **5. Have any Open Meetings Act (OMA) requirements been relaxed?**

Based upon Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-07 issued on March 16, during the duration of the Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation, the provisions of the Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120, requiring or relating to in-person attendance by members of a public body are suspended. Specifically, the requirement in 5 ILCS 120/2.01 that "members of a public body must be physically present" is suspended; and (2) the conditions in 5 ILCS 120/7 limiting when remote participation is permitted are suspended. Public bodies are encouraged to postpone consideration of public business where possible. When a meeting is necessary, public bodies are encouraged to provide video, audio, and/or telephonic access to meetings to ensure members of the public may monitor the meeting, and to update their websites and social media feeds to keep the public fully apprised of any modifications to

their meeting schedules or the format of their meetings due to COVID-19, as well their activities relating to COVID-19.

**6. Should districts consider canceling meetings?**

If a board does not have any pressing matters that require immediate vote, ISBE recommends that schools consider canceling or rescheduling meetings. This will likely not be a realistic option for many school boards, however, who will need to convene to ensure that both fiscal needs and teacher evaluation/retention requirements are met.

**CALCULATION OF ACT OF GOD DAYS AND EXECUTIVE ORDER 2020-15**

**7. How are the Act of God days utilized for the time period of March 17 through March 30 calculated towards the minimum term of at least 176 pupil attendance days? (Updated 4/1/20)**

ISBE continues to count the days that schools utilized during the period of March 17 through March 30th as Act of God days. These days do not need to be made up at the end of the school year.

**CALENDAR AND STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

**8. How will days count on and after March 31? (Updated 4/1/20)**

ISBE filed emergency rules to create Remote Learning Days and Remote Learning Planning Days, which began March 31 and are considered pupil attendance days for calculation of the length of the school term under Section 10-19 of the School Code.

**9. What are the timelines for return to school?**

Future decisions regarding statewide mandatory suspension of in-person instruction will be made in consultation with public health officials.

**10. Do districts need to submit changes to school calendars at this time?**

Calendar revisions do not need to be made at this time. Districts should be keeping accurate records, but do not need to enter calendar coding at this time. ROEs/ISCs and school districts will address calendars collaboratively in June. View ISBE and IARSS's guidance on school calendars [here](#).

## **EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND LICENSURE**

### **11. What is being done for educator licensure candidates who might not be able to complete required program components (e.g., student teaching, internship hours, the EdTPA, content tests) due to school and test center closures?**

Due to recent school and test center closures that limit or prohibit candidates from completing their preparation program requirements, ISBE is pursuing emergency action that will enable candidates to still receive licensure this spring and summer and gain employment this fall. ISBE will provide official guidance regarding the edTPA, student teaching/internships, clinical hours required for endorsements, and testing timelines as soon as we have secured this emergency action. ISBE is committed to resolving these licensure issues so that no candidate in the final stages of their preparation is adversely affected by the closures.

### **12. Can classes leading to educator licensure be grades as pass/fail?**

Illinois Administrative Rule 25.100 requires coursework used for licensure to be passed with a grade of “C-” or higher. If your institution defines “pass” as a “C-” or higher, licensure will not be impacted. If an institution’s “passing” grade is equivalent to lower than a C-, the institution should inform ISBE on the determination made by institution administration. ISBE will work with institutions to support those candidates who may be impacted.

### **13. Will ISBE amend renewal dates for educator licensure?**

Illinois is investigating opportunities to provide temporary extensions of renewal dates of licenses and will provide more information about this issue as it becomes available.

### **14. How does the statewide mandated suspension of in-person instruction impact educator professional development?**

In light of recent mandated suspension of in-person instruction to prevent exposure to the COVID-19 virus and guidelines set forth by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) regarding group gatherings, the Illinois State Board of Education encourages all providers delivering professional development and/or administrator academies to consider alternative delivery formats while Illinois is under the governor-issued state of emergency. This guidance applies to all professional development and administrator academies, including those typically only offered in-person (e.g., AA #1801, AA #1865, AA #2001, and AA #3000/01/02).

## GRANTS & FUNDING

### **15. Will the application deadline for FY 2021 Early Childhood Block Grant applications be extended?**

ISBE is extending the FY 2021 RFP submission deadline until 4 p.m. on April 15, 2020. We understand that potential applicants are currently handling other issues in relation the COVID-19 pandemic and may not be able to meet the previous due date of March 23. As a result, all applications are now due via electronic or U.S. mail on April 15, 2020 at 4 p.m. Due to the closing of State buildings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, ISBE is not able to offer the option of hand delivered applications.

### **16. Will the deadline for Title III Intent to Apply forms be extended?**

We are extending the deadline to submit Title III Intent to Apply forms to April 27, 2020. This extension will not affect when districts receive their funding in September if they have submitted their Intent to Apply and then subsequently submit their full application by the respective deadlines.

### **17. There are upcoming deadlines requiring meaningful consultation between public and nonpublic schools (e.g. Title III Intent to Apply). We are unable to make contact due to school closures mandatory suspension of in-person instruction. How should we proceed?**

ISBE strongly recommends nonpublic school administrators provide their administrator contact information to public schools. This will facilitate coordination with regards to grants and services. Meaningful consultation may be completed via phone or webinar. Forms may be printed and signed by the nonpublic school and then returned via email to the public school for submission in applications.

### **18. Will there be flexibility regarding the use of grant funds?**

Some flexibilities will be granted, and they are described in subsequent responses. In all cases grant funds are required to support the specific student groups for which they are intended, and grantees must ensure that those funds are used to support those students in alignment with the intent of the grant program. Grantees must also maintain appropriate records and cost documentation for all costs charged to grants.

### **19. Can I utilize grant funds for unplanned purposes to support the specific needs of our students and school community?**

Yes, grantees can utilize grant funds for unplanned purposes to support the specific needs of the students and school community. All activities must serve the population for which the grant is intended, meet all applicable allowability requirements, and be appropriately documented. Documentation must be maintained to support the decision to deviate from the original plan, how the alternative actions were determined, and costs relate to the alternative

actions. ISBE will provide further information on how to report and claim these deviations in the expenditure report in the near future.

**20. Should school districts continue to pay individuals using grant funds?**

Yes, if a district employee is funded in whole or in part with grant funds during the school year, the employee should be paid during this period of school interruption. ISBE will allow grantees to continue to charge salaries and benefits to currently active awards consistent with the recipient's policy of paying salaries from all funding sources Federal.

These employees should, to the extent practicable, work on project activities during the time the school is closed. Employees supported with grant funds who are intended to provide direct services to students may continue to work during the period of a COVID19 outbreak using alternative methods. Examples of appropriate alternative methods may include telephone, videophone, and e-mail.

Grantees must maintain appropriate records and cost documentation for all costs charged to grants.

**21. Will ISBE extend application deadlines?**

ISBE will consider flexibility in regard to the submission of completing applications in response to specific announcements, as well as unsolicited applications. ISBE will continue to monitor submission deadlines for specific grants and extend deadlines as needed.

**22. Will no-cost extensions on expiring awards be granted to school districts?**

ISBE encourages grant supported salaries and position to continue throughout the closure of schools. While we do not expect expenditures to freeze completely, grantees may find it difficult to spend funds as budgeted and on the same timeline. ISBE will monitor each award and grant no-cost program specific grant extensions as needed.

**23. Will school districts be granted and extension of financial, performance, and other reports?**

ISBE will allow grantees to delay submission of performance reports (GPRS) for up to three months beyond their normal due date. However, there can be no extensions granted for expenditure and Annual Financial Reports.

**24. Will grantees be provided an extension of Single-Audit requirements?**

ISBE will extend due dates up to six months to recipients and sub-recipients that have not yet filed their single audits for FY 2019.

**25. Will ISBE grant an extension to the currently approved indirect cost rates?**

ISBE will allow grantees to continue to use the currently approved indirect cost rates (i.e., predetermined, fixed, or provisional rates) to recover their indirect costs on all awards. ISBE will approve grantee requests for an extension on the use of the current rates for one additional year without submission of an indirect cost proposal. Agencies may also approve grantee requests for an extension of the indirect cost rate proposal submission to finalize the current rates and establish future rates.

**26. If a school district incurs fees for canceling events and travel, can the district use grant funds to pay these incurred costs?**

Grantees that incur costs related to the cancelation of events, travel, or other activities necessary and reasonable for the performance of the award may charge these costs to their award.

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

**27. How can homeless students be supported during the mandated suspension of in-person instruction?**

The Lead Area Homeless liaisons and School District liaisons are required to work directly with families during this trying time to make sure that homeless children and youth have all of the materials needed to complete assignments, to provide access to meals, and to ensure the safety and stability of this vulnerable population. School District Liaisons work with Lead Area Liaisons to identify and locate specific services or connections with other agencies. The ISBE State Homeless Coordinator will continue to work closely with the liaisons to ensure that homeless children and youth, including unaccompanied youth, receive the same services as all other children. [View Lead Area Homeless Liaison contact information.](#)

## **NUTRITION/MEALS/FOOD SERVICE**

**28. Given the stay at home order included in Executive Order 2020-10, can school personnel still distribute meals to students?**

Yes. School districts should continue to distribute meals to students.

**29. Are districts required to provide meals to students during the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction?**

Districts must provide a free lunch to students eligible for free meals during the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction. While districts are not required to provide meals to all students during the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction, it is strongly encouraged.



Please make every effort to provide meals for all children who need them, in the way that works best for your community, such as grab-and-go or delivery. For schools participating in National School Lunch or Summer Food Service Programs, meals offered to all children age 18 and below, or enrolled in school, are reimbursable.

As all students are eligible for meals, district meal service numbers may increase from what the district usually orders. Therefore, please adjust food orders to make sure there is ample food to meet the increased need. If faced with scenarios where there are fewer meals than the number of students requesting meal service, we ask that you please prioritize those students who are eligible for free/reduced lunch programs when distributing meals. In the event of localized shortages, schools should contact local food banks or neighboring districts for additional resources or the purchase of meals.

### *Districts that Are Currently Participating in the National School Lunch or Summer Food Service Programs*

Please note the following with respect to district participants in the National School Lunch or Summer Food Service Programs:

#### **Participation Requirements**

- Meals must meet the meal pattern requirements.
- Meals offered to all children age 18 and below, or enrolled in school, are reimbursable.
- There is no reimbursement for meals offered to adults, although school may offer such meals for purchase.
- Daily counts are required by meal service type. Please make sure that you are collecting this data on a daily basis.
- Schools should consult local Department of Public Health for questions related to food safety requirements.

#### **Implementation Guidance**

- Ensure all the students' nutritional needs are addressed. This includes students with allergies and other food restrictions. Make sure to mark the food appropriately.
- Create multiple geographically located food distribution centers where necessary. Students are not allowed to eat inside the school.
- Ensure that all necessary personnel are stationed to maximize student and staff safety and that all distribution sites are supervised.
- Explore distribution strategies that will avoid large gatherings of people and make social distancing possible.
- Students can receive two meals a day (one breakfast, one lunch, or one snack in any combination). Both meals can be distributed at once either via pick-up, drive-up or delivery.
- Allow ample and reasonable amount of time for meal pick-up for each meal service, recognizing that families may be experiencing challenges during this time.

- Use multiple modes of communication to inform students and families of available food service, including time, location, and method of distribution.
- Consider multiple methods of distribution, such as: drive up; walk up; satellite locations, such as libraries, churches, park districts, and youth centers; home delivery via bus routes; and other options.

**30. Are districts required to complete a form to provide non-congregate feeding for students?**

ISBE has already obtained the USDA waiver to provide meals during school closures, including to children under 5. Districts will need to complete a one-page waiver that takes less than 10 minutes: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/ISBE-66-98.pdf>. Please send to ISBE at [CNP@isbe.net](mailto:CNP@isbe.net) as soon as possible.

**31. Can schools and districts provide meals to students between the ages of 18 and 21 receiving special education services?**

Yes, provided the student receiving special education services is enrolled in the school district.

**32. What if a district is not able to procure products to meet the federally required meal pattern requirements?**

Schools and community organizations operating USDA-funded Child Nutrition Programs at this time (Non-Congregate COVID-19 closure waiver) are required to follow the meal pattern of the program in which they are operating. If, however, there are extenuating circumstances that do not allow a specific requirement of the meal pattern to be met, the USDA has allowed state agencies an option to offer a waiver on a case-by-case basis. ISBE will offer this waiver option on a case-by-case basis via a simple [online form](#).

**33. Must children be present to pick up meals? May a parent/guardian pick up meals for their children to maintain social distancing?**

Schools and community organizations operating USDA-funded Child Nutrition Programs at this time (Non-Congregate COVID-19 closure waiver) may, under current USDA flexibilities, distribute meals to a parent or guardian to take home to their children. Districts need to develop and maintain a plan which enforces the message that meals distributed to parents or guardians of eligible children are for the children. In addition, the plan should provide information on how the school district is making an attempt to not distribute duplicate meals to any child.

Districts that Are Currently NOT Participating in the National School Lunch or Summer Food Service Programs

**34. Must districts that do not participate in the federally funded School Lunch or Breakfast Programs provide meals to students?**

Districts that do not participate in the federally funded National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs must still provide a free lunch to children who qualify for free meals during the mandated suspension of in-person instruction. However, a waiver is not required to provide such meals in a non-congregate setting. ISBE is working with community organizations such as the major food banks who are working with their networks to assist in areas where potential meals may be needed. Please see the section on Implementation Guidance above which also applies to districts that do not participate in the federally funded School Lunch or Breakfast Programs.

**35. Can a district that does not participate in the federally funded National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs be reimbursed for free meals served?**

Provided the free meals meet the National School Lunch meal pattern requirements, a reimbursement of \$.04 per meal is available. Please contact the ISBE Nutrition Department at [cnp@isbe.net](mailto:cnp@isbe.net) in order to access this reimbursement.

**SCOPE OF MANDATORY SUSPENSION OF IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION**

**36. Are school buildings closed? (Updated 4/1/20)**

No. Personnel who are preparing learning materials and meals are performing essential functions and may go to schools to complete this work. Additionally, parents may come to schools to pick up learning materials and/or meals. Schools may also serve as emergency child care sites. Social distancing should be practiced to ensure the safety of individuals in the school building.

**37. Are personnel who are preparing and distributing learning materials and providing janitorial services considered “essential workers” and thus exempt from the stay at home mandate?**

Yes. Personnel who are preparing and distributing learning materials to students and personnel who are providing janitorial services are performing essential functions and are exempt from the stay at home mandate.

**38. What is the responsibility of school officials with regard to reporting illness? (Updated 4/1/20)**

Districts should notify their local health department. Districts do not need to notify ISBE.

**39. Are districts required to enroll new students during Remote Learning Days? (Updated 4/1/20)**

Yes, districts are required to enroll new students during Remote Learning Days. Districts should create procedures to ensure new student enrollments can be completed remotely as much as possible. Original documents should be sent in via US Mail or collected following the emergency declaration. In-person registration should only occur on an as-needed basis. Social distancing should be used to protect district staff and parents.

**40. Will deadline extensions be granted for immunization, physical, dental, and vision exams and records? (Updated 4/1/20)**

ISBE will provide official guidance regarding student and staff health requirements soon.

***COURSEWORK & ACTIVITIES***

**41. Can instruction for driver's education continue during Remote Learning Days? (Updated 4/1/20)**

The classroom portion of a driver education program may be completed through remote/distance learning, but the 6-hour behind the wheel portion of driver education programs must be suspended for the duration of the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction. At this time, the permit test is not able to be taken online. ISBE is not planning to make additional changes that might compromise health or safety.

**42. Does the statewide mandatory suspension of in-person instruction apply to private driver's education schools?**

ISBE does not interpret the Executive Order 2020-05 as applying to private driver's education schools.

**43. Can students continue internships or other experiential learning opportunities during the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction?**

Internships and experiential learning may be completed in line with public health recommendations, such as virtual participation.

**44. Should extracurricular activities still be taking place?**

Extracurricular activities must not take place in person during the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction. Further, Executive Order 2020-07 bans gatherings that consist of 50 people or more.

**45. Can students utilize school grounds (i.e. playgrounds, basketball courts) during the statewide mandated suspension of in-person instruction?**

School grounds may only be used for essential functions. In addition, some local health departments have closed all parks and playgrounds.

**46. Will coursework and graduation requirements be amended or waived?**

ISBE highly recommends that districts strategize and prepare for how it can meet the needs of graduating seniors, including ensuring transcripts are accessible and students have the continued ability to request recommendations from teachers and the district. ISBE is also investigating opportunities to provide flexibility for graduation requirements for seniors, such as coursework requirements.

***EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & CHILD CARE***

**47. How does the statewide mandatory suspension of in-person instruction impact prekindergarten programs?**

The mandatory suspension of in-person instruction extends to any early childhood program for children ages birth through five located in public schools or in private schools.

Please see the [joint guidance](#) issued by the Department of Human Services, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Education, and the State Board of Education regarding child care centers, child care homes, and early education programs.

**48. Will ISBE penalize any community-based PFA/PI program financially for closing or having under-enrollment?**

Early education programs funded through ISBE are advised that their funding will not be affected by a decision to close their program in response to the public health emergency. Similarly, the Office of Head Start has issued guidance that Head Start and Early Head Start programs will not be penalized for closing during the public health emergency. The Chicago Department of Child and Family Services will also not reduce funding due to closures or low attendance during this period. And IDHS is developing a simplified waiver process for the 80% attendance requirement in the Child Care Assistance Program for being paid for all eligible days for all enrolled children (look for further guidance on this process in the coming days). For programs funded by any or all of these funding streams, programs are expected to continue to pay all staff per their regular work schedule during any closures due to the public health emergency.

**49. How does the mandated suspension of in-person instruction impact Early Childhood Block Grant Prevention Initiative programs?**

Currently, the Illinois State Board of Education Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) Prevention Initiative programs in collaboration with MIECHV and DHS Healthy Families Programs are suspending in-person visits until further notice. However, it is also important to ensure the continuity of education and services to children and families. Thus, to the extent possible, staff should offer visits over the phone or FaceTime/Skype if the family has that capability and follow their model's recommendations related to conducting and documenting visits that take place virtually or on the phone.

Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-15, all public school districts and eligible entities that receive funding from ISBE to implement and administer a grant program for preschool education or an ECBG may provide child care services to the children of employees exempted from Executive Order 2020-10 who are aged 0 to 12 years old. The use of grant funds does not affect the ability of public school districts or eligible entities from continuing to serve students already identified and enrolled in a preschool education program or an ECBG program.

***NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS***

**50. Are non-public schools mandated to suspend in-person instruction? (Updated 4/1/20)**

Yes, both non-public and public prekindergarten through grade 12 schools must suspend in-person instruction from Tuesday, March 17 through Thursday, April 30. This mandate applies to all Illinois public and nonpublic schools, including parochial and charter schools.

**51. How will missed days impact nonpublic school recognition and registration for number of days requirement?**

Registration and recognition status for nonpublic schools will not be impacted by the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction.

**52. How does the other guidance in this document apply to nonpublic schools? (Updated 4/1/20)**

Nonpublic schools must suspend in-person instruction through at least Thursday, April 30. ISBE has drafted this guidance document primarily to address issues pertaining to public schools during the suspension of in-person instruction; however, nonpublic schools are encouraged to use this guidance as a model.

## ***RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES***

### **53. Does the mandated suspension of in-person instruction impact residential settings?**

Executive Order 2020-05 requires prekindergarten through grade 12 schools suspend in-person instruction for educational purposes. Schools that include residential settings must halt education-related activities; however, the residential components of such facilities are not impacted at this time.

### **54. Does the mandated suspension of in-person instruction apply to state operated schools?**

No. Executive Order 2020-06 exempts schools operated by the Department of Juvenile Justice, State Board of Education or Department of Human Services from EO 2020-05. This includes:

- School District #428 (Department of Juvenile Justice)
- Philip Rock Center and School
- Illinois School for the Deaf
- Illinois School for the Visually Impaired
- Illinois Center for Rehabilitation & Education – Roosevelt

## ***SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION***

### **55. Can Districts begin construction activities during the suspension of in-person instruction? (Updated 4/1/20)**

Yes. School districts may begin construction activities on any school building for the period of time that the building is closed for educational purposes as long as (a) students are not present in the building, and (b) any construction activity does not impede the availability of the building for other purposes, including food preparation and meal delivery and any child care services provided to the children of employees considered essential workers. Schools must understand that construction must be interrupted and discontinued in the event in-person instruction can begin again.

### **56. How can schools fund construction projects that were not scheduled to begin until later in the year? (Updated 4/1/20)**

School districts should work with their boards, insurers, the Capital Development Board or any other relevant entity to make funds available for projects that can begin earlier than originally scheduled.

## REMOTE LEARNING

### 57. How can schools plan for remote learning?

Each school or district may utilize five Remote Learning Planning Days, consecutively or in separate increments, to develop, review, or amend its Remote Learning Day Plan. Remote Learning Planning Days shall be deemed pupil attendance days for calculation of the length of a school term under Section 10-19 of the Code.

Generally speaking, school districts have full autonomy to provide continuous learning opportunities during the Remote Learning Days through whatever means possible, including through technology and free online resources. We encourage every school and district to explore and implement what works best for the school community. Please see the [Remote Learning Recommendations](#). These recommendations were developed by an advisory group, composed of teachers, administrators, students, and stakeholders.

Importantly, schools and districts should plan for Remote Learning Days in mutual agreement with any applicable collective bargaining entity and in consultation with local counsel.

The following Remote Learning Plans have been provided as examples with district approval. Please note Remote Learning Plans will look very different from district to district. We encourage maximum flexibility to be utilized when creating these plans.

- [Chicago Public Schools District 299 Remote Learning Plan](#)
- [Bloomington School District 87 Remote Learning Plan](#)
- [Butler School District 53 Remote Learning Plan](#)
- [Le Roy CUSD 2 Remote Learning Plan](#)

### 58. Can Remote Learning Planning Days be used in half day increments? (Updated 4/1/20)

Yes, we encourage maximum flexibility to be utilized.

### 59. Do Remote Learning Plans need to be submitted for approval by ROEs/ISCs or ISBE? (Updated 4/1/20)

No, plans **do not** need to be submitted for approval.

Remote Learning Plans must:

- Provide instruction to all students that, when applicable, reflects state standards
- Allow students to confer with educators
- Address needs of students with disabilities, English Learners, students experiencing homelessness, and other vulnerable students
- Include plans on how to transition back to on-site learning
- Include mutual agreement on work with collective bargaining units



- Be posted on website.

**60. How do Remote Learning Plans and E-Learning Plans differ? (Updated 4/1/20)**

If a district already has an E-Learning Plan in place, they may adapt the plan to become a Remote Learning Plan by ensuring the above requirements are met.

Remote learning is learning that happens outside of the traditional classroom because the student and teacher are separated by distance and/or time. Remote learning can be real-time or flexibility-timed, and it may or may not involve technology.

**61. Can Remote Learning Plans be revised periodically to align with changing circumstances? (Updated 4/1/20)**

Yes. Plans should be updated to ensure the needs of all students continue to be met throughout the suspension of in-person learning. If a plan is revised, post the revised plan to the district website.

**62. How should districts provide continuous learning opportunities during Remote Learning Days?**

School districts have full autonomy to provide continuous learning opportunities during the Remote Learning Days through whatever means possible, including through technology and free online resources. We encourage every school and district to explore and implement what works best for the school community. Please see the [Remote Learning Recommendations](#). These recommendations were developed by an advisory group, composed of teachers, administrators, students, and stakeholders.

School districts that had e-learning plans in place can utilize those plans during Remote Learning Days.

**63. Should schools be taking student attendance on Remote Learning Days? (Updated 4/1/20)**

We recognize the importance of student attendance to ensure students are engaged in learning. During these unprecedented times, we prioritize the connectedness and care for our students and one another as we maintain a continuity of learning.

Districts are able to create individual attendance policies. Please include a check-in or some method of tracking “attendance.” This information will help teachers gauge which students are not engaged and/or may need additional outreach or support to engage in learning. Staff should reach out to the family of any child that was in attendance prior to the suspension of in-person instruction who has not been reachable during this time. The State Board urges your districts to account for every student who is enrolled.

Additional information on reporting this information to ISBE will be forthcoming.

**64. How should student work be graded during Remote Learning Days?**

Student work completed during the suspension of in-person instruction must not negatively impact a student's grades or otherwise impact a student's academic standing. As we do not yet know the full extent of the closure and want to minimize any negative effects on students, schools may allow student work to count during the closure only to increase a student's academic standing.

Our students may be experiencing varying mental and physical health challenges at this time and may have very different access to supports and technology at home. Our goal is that no student is negatively impacted by the closure and that no school district's policies or procedures should widen the equity gap.

For additional information, please see the Remote Learning Recommendations regarding grading overall, as well as recommendations for grade bands and student groups.

**65. How do schools handle students who were failing before Remote Learning Days and do not complete additional work? Should they be held back or prevented from graduating until they make sufficient progress? (Updated 4/1/20)**

When possible, allow students who were failing the opportunity to make up content (e.g., when on-site learning resumes, during summer, or the start of the 2020-21 school year).

**66. May students' dual credit programs continue during Remote Learning Days?**

Please reference the [joint guidance](#) on dual credit released on March 27 by ISBE, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

**67. What is being done with the results of the E-Learning Technology Needs Survey? (Updated 4/1/20)**

The President signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act into law on March 27, 2020. The purpose of the CARES Act is to provide states with funding to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Local Education Agencies (LEAs), including charter schools that are LEAs, that received an allocation under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 in fiscal year 2020 are eligible for CARES Act funds. The amount of funds Illinois LEAs will be eligible for is based on the percentage of Title I, Part A allocated to the LEA in FY 2020.

ISBE has developed estimates for LEAs to help you begin to plan at [www.isbe.net/layouts/Download.aspx?SourceUrl=https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Est-Prelim-CARES-Act-Emergency-Relief-LEA-Allocations-3-31-20.xlsx](http://www.isbe.net/layouts/Download.aspx?SourceUrl=https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Est-Prelim-CARES-Act-Emergency-Relief-LEA-Allocations-3-31-20.xlsx). We strongly encourage LEAs to explore using the additional funding to strengthen your infrastructure for

remote learning. ISBE also will receive a funding amount as the State Education Agency, which we intend to make available to the LEAs in the greatest need to support students' access to technology and the internet.

The start date of the program has not yet been determined. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) must release an application within 30 days of the enactment of the Act that will allow ISBE to have access to the funds. ISBE will complete the application as soon as it is made available and then submit it for approval by ED. Please find more information about the CARES Act at [www.isbe.net/Documents/CARES-Act-District-Info-3-31-20.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/Documents/CARES-Act-District-Info-3-31-20.pdf). Please submit any questions about the CARES Act to [IllinoisCARES@isbe.net](mailto:IllinoisCARES@isbe.net).

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **68. What if a district has a question regarding special education?**

ISBE released [Statewide School Closure Special Education Guidance](#) on March 18.

## **STAFFING**

### **69. What if a district has questions regarding teacher staffing during the mandated statewide suspension of in-person instruction?**

Please reference the [joint guidance](#) on staffing released on March 27 by ISBE, IEA, IFT, IPA, and IASA.

### **70. What guidance does ISBE have for how schools should be treating all employees and third-party contractors during the mandated school closure? (Updated 4/1/20)**

At this time, there are no anticipated changes to the expectation that districts continue to pay everyone on the payroll and that employees continue to work – remotely, unless physical presence is absolutely necessary to support remote learning or ensure students have meals. Please see the revised [joint statement](#) from ISBE and the IEA, IFT, IASA, IPA regarding expectations of employees during Remote Learning Days.

ISBE and the Governor's Office also urge all employers to continue paying third-party contract employees. State funding is continuing to flow uninterrupted, so paying all employees, including third-party contract employees, is possible.

### **71. Does the recommendation that school districts keep at least one administrator on site mean school districts are available to provide childcare?**

No. The purpose of ISBE's recommendation that an administrator remain in the building is to ensure the safety of any students who happen to come to school and to ensure that an individual with executive decision-making capacity is available on site.

## TRANSPORTATION

### **72. Can school districts utilize transportation funding for delivering meals and instructional materials, and providing WiFi? (Updated 4/1/20)**

ISBE filed emergency rules to allow for increased transportation expenditure allowances. All transportation expenditures that support the health and well-being of Illinois prek-12 students – such as costs related to the distribution of food and instructional materials and the use of buses to provide WiFi – will be reimbursed by ISBE’s regular transportation reimbursement formula. These new rules, effective immediately, cover expenses incurred from March 17, 2020, through the end of the 2019-20 school year. Read the full text of the rules at [www.isbe.net/Documents/23-120RGE.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/Documents/23-120RGE.pdf).

### **73. If districts use buses to deliver meals, is that mileage reimbursable? What is a reimbursable transportation expenditure?**

The per-meal federal reimbursement rate for schools participating in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs includes transportation as an allowable expenditure. ISBE is also seeking flexibility to allow for transportation costs related to food delivery (or other services and materials for students’ health and wellbeing) during the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction to be claimable for reimbursement from the State through ISBE’s regular Transportation Reimbursement.

### **74. Is ISBE reimbursing expenditures for school bus transportation during the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction if school buses are not running regular routes? (Updated 4/1/20)**

Contractual Payments for Transportation are eligible for State Transportation Reimbursement in accordance with the Part 120 Administrative Code Rules provided that the costs paid by a school district are within an executed contractual agreement. The amount of payments made by a school district during the mandatory closure dates of March 17-30 as well as the Remote Learning Days that begin March 31 are subject to negotiation by the school district and transportation contractor. If negotiated and within the written agreement, all the paid expenditures will be allowable for State Transportation Reimbursement in accordance with the formula prescribed in Section 29-5 of the School Code.

### **75. Is the Illinois Secretary of State offering an extension period for obtaining school bus permits?**

The Secretary of State released the following information on March 17: Due to the COVID-19 virus and based on recommendations by health and safety experts, all Secretary of State Driver Services Facilities are closed to the public. Essential Secretary of State staff are working. All driver’s licenses, instruction permits, permits and identification cards that were set to expire on or after March 17, 2020 are being extended for a period of 30 days.

This includes School Bus Permits. We recognize that it may be difficult to complete the annual refresher training during this period, so a grace period of 30 days will be allowed for completion of this training.