



# Illinois State Board of Education

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www.isbe.net

**Darren Reisberg**  
*Chair of the Board*

**Dr. Carmen I. Ayala**  
*State Superintendent of Education*

March 24, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

I do have some good news for you today, but before we get to that, I need to remind you to complete the [Remote Learning Survey](#). This is only requested of public school districts, for ongoing monitoring purposes. More than 450 districts have already completed this one-question survey – thank you! For the 400 districts that have not, please do so by the end of the day tomorrow, if at all possible.

Here's the good news: the U.S. Department of Education (ED) let us know that our request to waive assessments, summative designations, and reporting on accountability metrics for the 2019-20 school year appears to meet all statutory requirements. ED directed Illinois to go ahead and begin implementing the waivers while it processes the formal approval, which we should receive in the coming weeks.

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.

We are very encouraged by the work of our advisory group on developing recommendations for remote learning after March 30. We look forward to sharing those with you in the coming days. In the meantime, please take note of the following important updates:

- We understand that you may be receiving notifications from ISBE's Web Application Security (IWAS). We are combing through these notifications to ensure that you receive only the most critical requests and communications during this time. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work on this.
- During remote learning, we still have to keep in mind students' safety, as well as their health. Please be sure to refer to your district's policies on cybersecurity and background checks. ISBE has [resources on our website](#) to support you in promoting internet safety.
- To follow up on yesterday's communication about schools serving as emergency child care centers, the intention is for early childhood educators who do not currently have teaching obligations during this crisis to be able to provide emergency child care for low-income essential workers. All persons providing care for children in an emergency setting are required to have a current background check. For more information, visit [www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/For-Communities.aspx](http://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/For-Communities.aspx).
- We are updating the [www.isbe.net/KeepLearning](http://www.isbe.net/KeepLearning) webpage on a daily basis. Today, we added the news that Plasma Education is donating its National Science Foundation

award-winning resource, Sci-Ops: Global Defense, in its effort to help schools nationwide maintain continuity of education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Help share additional resources with other districts by tweeting at @ISBENews with the hashtag #KeepLearning.

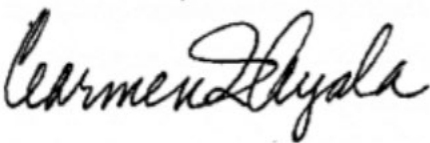
In the spirit of #KeepLearning, schools in the Belleville area received a shout out yesterday from a national coalition of special education advocates. In a mailing promoting “promising practices gathered from around the country,” a parent from Signal Hill School District 181 and Belleville West High School praised the way educators were continuing services to their child.

The parent wrote, “Related services are being provided through Google classroom and Hangout. Paper documents that my daughter needs (because computer would not be accessible) are being mailed to our home. Her teachers are assigning homework, but only after they have briefly taught and using the actual worksheet as guidance to teach then assigning as homework. Teachers are encouraging Universal Design for Learning (UDL), so not one student is required to submit their assignments a certain way.”

This kind of effort is going on statewide, as are many other smaller gestures that nonetheless preserve the vital connections between our schools and our families. For instance, the staff of Elk Grove High School [created a musical message](#) for students. The staff of George Washington High School in Chicago created a [TikTok dance](#). I cannot wait to see what you all come up with tomorrow! In the midst of this crisis, I know you will give me and each other a reason to smile.

Now, because good teachers give multiple reminders, here’s another nudge: Please fill out our [Remote Learning Survey](#) as soon as you can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmen I. Ayala". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala  
State Superintendent of Education  
Illinois State Board of Education