



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

Darren Reisberg
Chair of the Board

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education

April 6, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

This week is National Assistant Principals Week, so it's a great time to reach out and express your gratitude to the administrators who do so much to take care of teachers and students. To all the assistant principals in Illinois – thank you!

I sincerely hope everyone had an opportunity to sleep, relax, and breathe this weekend as we enter week four of this crisis truly hitting home in Illinois. I also hope you may have had a chance to hear Rolling Meadows High School featured on National Public Radio yesterday. If you missed it, take a minute (actually three minutes) to enjoy the [creative ways](#) school choirs across the nation are bringing us their spring concerts.

I am proud and excited to announce that ISBE has translated our remote learning recommendations into two more languages. In addition to [Spanish](#), the guidance is now available in [Polish](#) and [Arabic](#). We are also working on additional guidance regarding special education and on emergency actions regarding educator licensure, and graduation requirements, and we hope to have updates for you soon.

If you're doing Remote Learning perfectly, I tip my hat to you. But if you're struggling to figure out how to reach each student and meet their needs -- plus, perhaps the needs of your own children at home -- please know that you have many colleagues struggling right along with you. We are all in this together.

Many organizations are stepping up to help teachers and families make their way through this novel terrain. Action For Healthy Kids has joined with Kaiser Permanente to offer a live, interactive 30-minute webinar Wednesday, April 8, at 1 p.m. for families and caregivers involved in remote learning. The webinar will feature experts in the field from REL Midwest and AIR who will cover topics related to transitioning to remote learning, including evidence-based resources, social and emotional learning, adult learning, and online learning platforms. Action and Kaiser will present another webinar at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, April 15, to focus on educators. You can [register for the webinars here](#).

Another company wants to make it easier for you to communicate with families without having to reveal your personal phone number. Rival5 Caller-ID has a masking function that hides your

cell or home phone number and instead broadcasts your district or school's number to the destination number. It's a standard feature of Rival5 Mobile, Mobile Plus, Classroom, and Full Feature extensions. The company is making this service free to use for Illinois and Indiana school districts until June 1, 2020. You can see a [YouTube video about the service](#), or go to rival5.com/k12masking to sign up.

Finally, I want to share some advice from a psychology professor. [Eva Pomerantz](#), a professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, has long focused on how to facilitate children's motivation and achievement in school. This week, in a brief [web post](#) from the U of I, she was asked how families can achieve those same goals at home. Here is some of what she had to say:

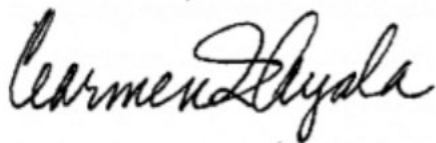
First, I remind myself the goal is simply for my children to do something constructive. I try to be flexible in my idea of "constructive" and in terms of how much can get done each day.

Second, I try to put my children's perspective at the forefront. I ask myself: Can we accomplish the goal of being constructive while doing it my children's way? And if not, how we can do it in a way that would sit well with them?

Third, I'm also forgiving of my children and myself as we navigate this unusual and challenging situation. When things do not work, I try to find a way to do it better next time, and then I move on.

We've all had students in our classrooms who weren't making top grades, despite the fact that they were trying their hardest, and doing the very best they could. What do we do in such circumstances? We encourage students by focusing on their strengths, giving second chances, and altering our approach. If you're struggling to make remote learning work in the way you personally envision, I'm asking you to treat yourself with the same kindness you would show those students. Give yourself some praise for all the things that work, and give yourself extra chances to come up with a new approach for things that need adjustment. Be kind to one another and to yourselves.

Sincerely,



Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education
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