



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

March 22, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

As a reminder, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency is seeking to identify what resources you may have available to assist others in times of need, such as food, shelter, storage space, generators, and personnel. With your consent, the information from this survey will be shared with the State Emergency Operations Center and will be utilized to mobilize resources as need arises. Please complete this survey at your earliest convenience: tinyurl.com/utgo6e7.

On March 20, I sent a [message](#) notifying you of Governor JB Pritzker's mandatory stay at home procedures, a necessary measure to slow the spread of a deadly and highly contagious pandemic. [Executive Order 2020-10](#) means in-person instruction will continue to be suspended through **at least April 7**, in order to help keep our communities safe.

Personnel who are preparing and distributing meals and learning materials to students are performing essential functions and are exempt from the stay at home mandate. View [Executive Order 2020-10's definition of essential workers](#).

As previously announced, every day through March 30 will count as an Act of God Day. Later this week, ISBE will issue guidance regarding March 31, and beyond. ISBE contemplates that districts will eventually transition to Remote Instructional Days. We have assembled an advisory group composed of teachers, administrators, and stakeholders to make recommendations about what Remote Instructional Days would look like. This advisory group will explore what is possible and what is reasonable under these unprecedented circumstances, keeping always in mind the incredible diversity and varying capacity of our 852 school districts.

As I said before, we are in uncharted territory. But ISBE is committed to making sure you have everything you need to achieve two singular priorities for as long as it is necessary to suspend in-person instruction:

1. Ensure all students' nutritional needs are met.
2. Ensure all students have access to remote instruction through whatever means possible.

Additionally, the Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, Department of Human Services, Department of Children and Family Services, and ISBE released [Guidance for Child Care Centers, Child Care Homes, and Early Education Programs](#), as well as an accompanying [FAQ document](#).

The joint guidance document outlines childcare center closures during the COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as information regarding Emergency Child Care Centers. Effective March 21, schools, community-based organizations such as churches and social services organizations, or health care facilities or other workplaces for essential workers may apply to serve as Emergency Child Care Sites for the children of critical emergency workers. We encourage schools to participate if possible -- view the [application](#).

The guidance also addresses early education programs funded through ISBE. Funding for early education programs will not be affected by program closure in response to the public health emergency.

Lastly, ISBE and the Illinois Association of Regional School Superintendents issued an [update regarding school calendars](#). We know that each district has responded to the COVID-19 crisis in a different way responsive to its community's needs. Therefore, we understand that each district will have unique occurrences that will require special attention. No calendar revisions need to be made at this time. We ask that you please keep accurate records, but do not worry about calendar coding. ROEs/ISCs and school districts will address calendars collaboratively in June.

Thank you for your continued leadership and support during this unparalleled situation. We will get through this together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "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