Speeding Ahead: COVID-19 School Closures and Distance Learning

UPDATED: March 31, 2020

In the wake of school closures across the country, state officials are scrambling to help districts to stem the dramatic loss of learning time for students by providing guidance and support as they embark on an effort to deliver long-term remote instruction. When states are able to conduct needs assessments and present districts with guidelines on how to develop distance learning plans and deploy necessary resources, they can help level the playing field between and within districts and narrow the digital divide.

As advocates interested in preventing the exacerbation of achievement gaps in this time of crisis, we believe it is important to evaluate what states are doing and how quickly they have been able to mobilize in the face of unprecedented interruptions in classroom learning. Below are some examples of how states across the nation are addressing distance learning, and where each state falls in terms of the "speed" of their adoption of distance learning strategies.

There's been a wide range of responses in the 30 states we've examined thus far, though states have collectively stepped on the gas pedal since our initial post—11 states, plus New York City, clocked in at 65 mph, while only five states are currently progressing at 25 mph or less. At one end, North Carolina has a consistently updated website devoted to distance learning, with guidelines for districts developing comprehensive plans, strategies for schools deploying technology, a series of trainings for teachers, and instructional resources for building remote lesson plans. By contrast, Maryland has not published any guidance to districts on its Department of Education website, apparently leaving districts largely to their own devices.

In light of state guidance, or in some cases in spite of the lack thereof, districts are also forging ahead with a range of remote learning efforts, which are constantly evolving. A Brooklyn parent told us that after the first week in which parents took the lead on instruction and few Black and Latinx students participated, in week two "with teachers leading the video meetings, with free Internet having been offered by Spectrum, and with the delivery of several hundred thousand laptops/tablets across the city to kids who needed them, both my kids' classes are at 99% participation."

For a more comprehensive look at district responses, check out the Center on Reinventing Public Education, which has an ever-growing database of individual district approaches to distance learning. *The 74* has also profiled efforts in districts around the country including NYC, Los Angeles, and Guilford County, NC.

Though not a comprehensive list, these states represent the range of efforts taking place at the state level. We're not saying here that fast is necessarily good or that slow is inherently bad. Each state faces different challenges and in many instances states and districts may be proceeding more slowly because either they or the families they serve lack the capacity necessary to fully carry out homeschooling. We are presenting this update in the hope that states, districts, policymakers, educators, and parents can learn from each other about how best to serve as many students as possible as effectively as is practicable.

We will continue to provide updates in the coming days and weeks to include more states and the most up-to-date information on state initiatives.

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65 MPH
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Florida
Georgia
Nevada
New Hampshire
New York City
North Carolina
Rhode Island
Texas
Wyoming

50 MPH
Alabama
Illinois
Kansas
Louisiana
Missouri
New Mexico
South Carolina
Tennessee
Washington

35 MPH
Arizona
Kentucky
Ohio
Pennsylvania
Virginia

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25 MPH
Massachusetts
Michigan
New Jersey

5 MPH
Maryland
Oregon

Alabama (50 mph) *New 3/30*
- 3/27 Guidance
  - Provides a list of instructional and formative assessment resources, and links to a Google Drive folder with additional information on these resources.
  - Provides various options for ensuring seniors receive necessary credits for graduation
- 3/27 Academic Continuity Plan Template
  - District distance learning plans are due to ADE by 4/3.
  - Rather than open-ended questions, districts choose from a set of options in each section of the plan.
  - **"Make every effort to provide services for all students with disabilities**, including students with 504 plans, and maintain appropriate documentation to support all efforts"
  - "Provide effective two-way **communication with families in a language that they understand**. **Tailor instruction and assessments to students' English Language proficiency needs** in all four language domains (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing)."
- 3/27 Special Education Q&A
  - Clear, simple guidance document on how to address the needs of SWD through distance and online learning.
  - "Distance learning has the potential to look different for students with disabilities. **Individualized supports and services should be provided to those for whom an online model is appropriate, accessible, and reasonable.** All options must be considered in light of the current COVID-19 circumstances and the educational needs of the child. As a reminder, federal law requires distance instruction to be accessible but does not mandate specific methodologies. **If technology is a barrier, educators may use equally effective alternate access.**"
- 3/26 Executive Order
  - Governor Kay Ivey closed all schools for the duration of the school year and **required districts to implement distance learning plans, starting on Monday 4/6.**
- "Alabama Superintendent of Education Eric Mackey said Thursday that the **state is developing plans for how the distance learning would work**. The governor said schools will use alternate instruction such as online lessons or take-home packets." Alabama schools to finish year through distance learning
- 3/18 Press Release

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- ALSDE created a task force to look into distance learning options. "The task force will first **work to identify various research-based learning pathways and resources** that are available to meet the needs of all districts in Alabama, **evaluate the capacity of current statewide "non-traditional" instructional delivery methods**, and develop a statewide plan for short and long-term implementation.
- "As of today, Wednesday, March 18, all 142 of Alabama's public school districts will be closed and have provided students with short-term '**optional enrichment learning activities** through a variety of delivery methods, including hard copy, digital, and blended models.'"
  - 3/13 Guidance
    - **Most districts are not prepared to implement a distance learning model, such as online learning, on short notice.** Some districts and schools may be in a position to continue teaching using distance learning methods; however, **equity is a critical consideration**. It is important to note that if educational services are being delivered to students in any form, in order for the district to remain open, access to those services must be equally provided, including to students who don't have access to technology at home and students receiving special education services. **For most districts, it will make more sense to cancel school altogether than to organize a learning model that cannot be accessed equitably by all students.**

Arizona (35 mph)
- *New* 3/25 Webinar
  - Provides links to federal special education guidance, though doesn't present as state specific guidance or clarifications.
- *New* Title IV-A web page has links to a variety of training opportunities for teachers working on implementing distance learning.
- *New* The Virtual Resource Hub is a spreadsheet with a variety of online instructional resources for teachers and families.
- 3/17 Guidance
  - **"School closure is NOT a complete shutdown of school operations and instructional obligations to students.** During school closures, staff are still expected to engage in work-related activities, and students and families are expected to meet the instructional requirements of their teachers and schools."
  - **"School leaders, teachers, staff and parents must work together to plan for continuity in education and critical services during this time.** Specifically, during the closure, educators and community leaders are called on to: • **Continue to deliver educational opportunities to the extent possible** through remote learning and independent study, which may or may not include online learning or printed materials, among other options; • Provide school meals; and • Arrange for supervision of students during ordinary school hours."
- 3/17 Webinar
  - **"PEAs must ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability can be provided the special education and related services** identified in the student's IEP developed under IDEA, or a plan developed under Section 504. Schools should take into consideration **alternate methods for providing educational services** to children with disabilities, such as home visits, teleservices, homework packets, or Internet-based lessons."

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- "Through this entire process, it is **crucial that schools communicate frequently with families to think and plan about how best to meet the needs of their children** in what may be a chaotic and constantly-changing environment. These challenges can best be met together."
  - "Educator and Family Resources" tab has links to virtual learning options and options for low cost internet. Office of Communications

California (65 mph)
- 3/17 Guidance
  - 'School districts, county offices of education, and charter schools (local educational agencies/LEAs) **should immediately begin developing a plan for distance learning** for their students and providing training and professional development for their teachers to implement the adopted distance learning strategy as effectively as possible."
  - **Outlines key considerations for developing distance learning plans**, including examples from various districts.
  - Suggests using school busses to distribute meals, **WiFi hotspots,** and printed instructional materials, pulling from South Carolina's best practices.
  - "equitable access does not require that LEAs offer the exact same content through the same channel for all students. Instead of abandoning a promising e-learning approach because not all students will have equal access to it from home, **the plan should include an analysis of alternate deliveries of comparable educational content**."
  - Contains appendix on Resources that Support Distance Learning, which includes
    - **Instructional resources for teachers** and families, including those for supporting English Learners and in different languages
    - Training and advice for teachers implementing distance learning; Lessons from the Field: Remote Learning Guidance contains additional external resources and PD for teachers.
  - 3/20 Special Education Guidance
    - CA is encouraging districts to be flexible and creative when it comes to delivering instruction to SWD.
    - "If the LEA can continue providing special education and related services as outlined in the IEP, or an agreed upon amendment to the existing IEP, through a distance learning model, they should do so. **The LEA can also consider alternative service delivery options such as in-home service delivery, meeting with individual students at school sites, or other appropriate locations to deliver services.** Further, LEAs are **encouraged to work collaboratively with Nonpublic Schools and Agencies (NPS/As)** to ensure continuity of services, including moving to virtual platforms for service delivery to the extent feasible and appropriate."
  - CA is providing information on ways to access affordable internet Educators' Toolkit**,** as does Getting Internet Access

Colorado (65 mph) *New 3/30*
- CDE initiated a Community Needs Inventory on 3/27 to ensure all districts are getting the resources they need to implement distance learning. LEA's have until 4/2 to complete the survey.
- Instructional Guidance

- ■ "Educational services should strive to include equitable access to instruction for all students. **Equitable access does not require that all students receive instruction in the same format** (e.g., online instruction). Districts should consider the individual learning needs of students in determining how to best meet individual needs."
- ■ "In instances where technology is not accessible or where educational materials are not available in an accessible format, educators may still meet their legal obligations by providing equally effective alternate access to the curriculum or services provided to other students."
- ■ **"Schools must make every effort to provide support to English learners to allow them to access academic content.** English language development is a part of universal instruction. Grade level content needs to be provided with adequate scaffolds and supports that English learners need to access the grade level content being provided by online/virtual programming."
- ■ Provides a number of **strategies to engage students who have limited or no access to internet/devices**, as well as a few ideas of how to improve access.
  - ○ CDE's Learning from Home web page has **clear, simple guidance** for distance learning for teachers, parents, and students and provides a common set of language to avoid confusion. **It provides important links for internet connectivity**. There are also **links to numerous trainings** so teachers can quickly learn a variety of digital tools.
  - ○ 3/20 Letter from CDE Commissioner
    - ■ States CDE is taking their time and will be issuing guidance soon.
    - ■ **There will be a statewide instructional hour/day requirement waiver.** We are working on the specific guidance, expectations and minimal documentation we'd request. Many of you have given us feedback on what guidance, flexibility and framing would be important and thus we are taking a little more time to craft the guidance and provide useful resources. We want district input so we are working to get it through my Superintendents and Rural Councils. We are also trying to get clarity from the US DOE on support of students with disabilities and English learners during this challenging time. Many, many of you have questions on this. **Thus, we are taking the time we need to address it thoroughly.**
  - ○ 3/18 Executive Order
    - ■ Directs the CDE to develop guidance for districts around distance learning, and **requires districts and charters to make every effort to deliver instruction during school closures.**
  - ○ COVID-19 FAQs
    - ■ All districts may not be able to count distance learning efforts as part of required instructional hours, but CDE looks like they may be allowing flexibility around normal e-learning requirements:
    - ■ "Many districts are inquiring about the use of e-learning days in lieu of cancelled student contact days. **Districts and schools that have not yet implemented e-learning days may find it difficult to meet the requirements for e-learning days in the near future.** However, the use of **remote learning and student engagement will be considered part of a good faith effort to make up lost instructional time."**
    - ■ "Remote learning and student engagement may include posting or dissemination of pre-recording of lessons to students, live streaming class lectures and discussions, and distribution of assignments and homework. **Districts and schools should take into consideration the individual needs of their community, including access to**

electronic equipment and resources, when planning for remote learning and provide alternative approaches to facilitate learning and engagements for all students."

Connecticut (65 mph)

- ○ *New* 3/30 Professional Support Series
  - ■ Provides a list of **upcoming webinars to support teachers and district officials** as they implement distance learning.
- ○ *New* 3/24 Special Education Guidance
  - ■ "Given that Connecticut has mandated statewide school closures, it is **essential that school districts focus on providing continued educational opportunities for all students**. School districts must ensure that students receiving special education have access to these opportunities. For students with individualize education program (IEPs), **school districts must ensure that each student is provided the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP developed pursuant to the IDEA, to the greatest extent possible.**"
- ○ *New* RESC Alliance and CSDE Resources for Distance Learning
  - ■ Provides links to 11 different Google Drive folders that contain comprehensive resources including:
    - ● Districts' full distance learning plans
    - ● Special education guidance
    - ● Options for low/no cost internet
    - ● Teacher professional learning opportunities
    - ● Instructional resources
  - ■ This is really **the hub for all resources** provided by CT, though it's hidden in a large list of links on CSDE's main COVID webpage.
- ○ *New* Special Education Guidance and Resources for COVID-19 webpage provides a series of links to state and federal resources for addressing the needs of SWD in light of COVID-19
- ○ *New* Google spreadsheet as links to various **instructional resources for EL.**
- ○ *New* Resources to Support Student Learning During School Closures Due to COVID-19
  - ■ Provides a variety of **instructional resources for teachers and families, organized by both subject and grade level.**
- ○ 3/16 Guidance
  - ■ Wants districts thinking about longer term distance learning, rather than short-term supplemental resources.
  - ■ "Do not wait for a perfect plan to be developed to start your distance learning."
  - ■ Plans need to be approved by CSDE, but these can be done retroactively to allow districts to move forward with distance learning as soon as possible.
  - ■ **Districts are expected to administer distance learning, but are not required to submit plans to the CSDE.**
- ○ The Partnership for Connecticut donated over 60,000 laptops that will be provided to high school students in the lowest-performing districts in the state, which will help address the technology gap that exists in the state. Laptops headed to students in struggling school districts so learning can resume

Florida (65 mph)

- ○ *New* 3/27 Press Release
  - ■ Announces the new Online Learning Community created by Florida Virtual School

- "With content created for individual or school district needs, the FLVS Online Learning Community provides multiple educational tracks and subject areas, including:
  - Online Learning 101: videos and other resources designed to **help students, parents and teachers explore the world of online learning**
  - **Courses for educator**s with pre-recorded webinars and training courses, including technology and educational systems
  - Live workshops and webinars from FLVS trainers, learning specialist and school counselors to support online teachers and parents
  - **Emergency training for educators** moving to online learning due to unexpected circumstances such as COVID-19 or natural disasters"
- *New* 3/36 Superintendent Call
  - Provides guidance and instructional resources related to supporting EL during distance learning.
- *New* 3/24 Guidance
  - Shares best practices and guidelines for districts working on **distributing devices** for online instruction.
- 3/19 Q&A Guidance
  - "Yes, although campuses are closed, school is still in session and students are still earning grades."
  - "Each student with an IEP, or 504 plan, **should be included in the school district's instructional continuity plan to the same extent as all other students**. This plan may include virtual instruction, as well as virtual specialized instruction and related services t**o the extent practicable.** All areas of the student's IEP or 504 must be considered. Any and all required evaluations, IEP meetings etc. may also be held virtually to the extent practical."
- 3/17 Guidance
  - "To support students with identified IEP-related services who may have a disruption in services, school districts are given flexibility for the remainder of the school year to **provide alternative services or delay services until later in the summer months**, in coordination with a student's parents and IEP team."
- Schools have extended/early spring breaks to allow districts time to plan for distance learning. **All schools are expected to be implementing distance learning by 3/30.** Some districts started offering distance learning on 3/23. Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- All teachers were given the opportunity to participate in **Online Teacher Training**, given by the state's virtual school. 3/12 Press Release
- FDOE is not issuing guidance to districts/schools about how to provide internet or technology, but their site does have **options for free and low cost internet** posted on their COVID-19 "Family Resources" page.

Georgia (65 mph) *New 3/30*
- 3/16 Executive Order
  - Requires GaDOE to "implement measures providing for the health, nutrition, safety, educational needs, and well being" of students.
- GaDOE has an extensive Pandemic Planning Guide. While it is primarily focused on school safety it does include references to continuous education plans and special education guidance.

- Guidance related to continuing education plans includes examples of the types of activities that should be offered at various lengths of closures including supplemental, partial continuation, and full continuation of academic content.
      - "School districts have a **responsibility to ensure that students with disabilities have both equal access to the educational opportunities** provided to all students, as appropriate, and access to FAPE. In planning for continued educational activities in the event of school closures due to a severe pandemic, States, SEAs, and LEAs must consider ways of ensuring that the planned activities are accessible to students with disabilities."
      - "Where necessary to provide an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of the program, appropriate communications, educational materials, and instruction, **must be made available in accessible formats or through the use of auxiliary aids and services**. Planning for the use of captioning, narration, screen readers, magnifiers, high volume headsets, TTY, TDD, large print and Braille are some of the ways to ensure that educational materials are accessible to as wide a range of students with disabilities as possible. **Using multiple approaches or mediums for delivering continuing educational services**, such as paper, computer, and video, may be valuable for all students and may help ensure that students with disabilities receive the communications, materials and instruction they need to be successful."
   - GaDOE partnered with Georgia Public Broadcasting to create Georgia Home Classroom, which has an extensive library of video content categorized by grade and subject. GaDOE also provides additional educational resources through the Northwest Georgia RESA Digital Learning Community, which provides digital lessons for all subject and grade spans, as well as trainings for teachers about online classrooms.
   - GaDOE has free access to two courses for teachers, including one on supporting students with disabilities during distance learning.
   - 3/11 Digital Learning Planning
      - Document provides districts with early considerations regarding preparing for distance learning, as well as some digital learning resources.
   - "**GaDOE and GOSA's foundations are teaming up with other non-profits to provide devices/hotspots for schools in need.** We are working with providers to finalize details and will be sharing opportunities for districts shortly. To support this project, make a donation to the Georgia Foundation for Public Education or the Innovation Fund Foundation." GaDOE's Digital Learning landing page

Illinois (50 mph) *New 3/30*
   - 3/27 Letter from State Superintendent
      - **Remote Learning Days will begin for schools statewide on March 31** and continue until in-person instruction can resume.
      - "During Remote Learning Days, **schools may implement either an E-Learning Plan or a Remote Learning Day Plan that provides students with instruction and access to educators through whatever means possible."** Schools may use up to five Remote Learning Planning Days at any time after March 30 to work on Remote Learning Day Plans in partnership with their collective bargaining units.
      - ISBE reverses their previous decision on counting instructional days: "Remote Learning Days, Remote Learning Planning Days, and Act of God Days count as actual student

attendance days. All of these days count toward the minimum length of the school year and absolutely do not need to be made up."

- ○ 3/27 Guidance
  - ■ Provides extensive guidance for teachers and district officials developing distance learning plans, including special considerations for SWD, as well as differences in guidance for each grade span.
- ○ Continuing Education Resources webpage
  - ■ Contains links for free/no cost internet options
- ○ 3/23 Guidance (Outdated)
  - ■ **Any instruction that happens on "Act of God" days (3/17-30) will NOT count as an instructional day.**
  - ■ "All days that a school district is closed pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order 2020-05 will be counted as Act of God Days. Emergency Days will not be used. **These Act of God Days do not need to be made up at the end of the school year. School districts are strongly encouraged to provide continuity of education to students during these Act of God Days through whatever means possible."**
  - ■ Schools are not required to move spring breaks, but are strongly encouraged to.
  - ■ "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. "
- ○ 3/20 Guidance (Outdated)
  - ■ "ISBE contemplates that **districts eventually will transition to Remote Instructional Days**. ISBE has **assembled an advisory group composed of teachers, administrators, and stakeholders to make recommendations about what Remote Instructional Days could look like**. This advisory group will explore what is possible and what is reasonable under these unprecedented circumstances, always recognizing the incredible diversity and varying capacity of our 852 school districts. 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.**"
- ○ 3/18 Special Education Guidance
  - ■ "In summary, OCR stated that all Local Educational Agencies (LEA) must ensure that each special education student receives equal access to educational opportunities that are provided to general education students. Despite the guidance from the OCR, **there continues to be no flexibility from complying with federal and state laws; schools should continue to observe all relevant federal and state timelines during the statewide school closure."**
  - ■ "Because statewide school closure days are considered to be Act of God days, many **special education timelines are tolled (frozen)** during the pendency of Executive Order 2020-05."
  - ■ "LEAs providing **continuity of education must do so equitably, through whatever means possible.** Special education personnel are encouraged to provide opportunities for students, **including any necessary accommodations, whenever possible.** Educators should keep detailed documentation of all educational opportunities provided to students during the statewide school closure."

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- 3/13 Guidance
  - "You have full autonomy to provide continuous learning opportunities in the way that you are able, including through technology and free online resources. We encourage you to explore and implement what works best for your school community."

Kansas (50 mph)
- Kansas is leaving most decisions in the hands of district officials, but there is an expectation that districts will provide distance education.
- 3/19 Guidance
  - The state commissioned a Continuous Learning Task Force that released **extensive guidance** on ensuring student access to learning through the end of the year.
  - Guidance includes a **five-day plan** for schools and districts to develop an educational plan for students.
  - **Created a survey for schools to send to parents regarding technology access.**
  - Notes that internet connectivity WILL be an issue, provide potential resources for districts and families

Kentucky (35 mph)
- *New* The Education Continuation Task Force held their first meeting 3/23 with the goal of issuing distance learning guidance soon. Their next meeting is scheduled for 3/30.
- All school districts are utilizing the Kentucky Department of Education's Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) Program to ensure that educational services continue during the closure period. Gov. Beshear recommends school closure period be extended until April 20
  - Typically districts have to apply to use this system of instruction ahead of time, but this was waived due to COVID-19
- Superintendents have been advised to prepare at least 6 weeks of virtual content.
- About NTI
  - NTI is an existing structure in KY since 2014 due to extended weather-related closures across the state. (83 districts (48%) already were accessing this program in the current school year.)
  - **Instruction can done digitally or in printed format**
  - **NTI includes guidance for SWD and ensure students have access to technology/WiFi**
- New KDE task force will aid districts during COVID-19 closure period
  - Task force developed to help districts provide the best instruction for students and better utilize NTI

Louisiana (50 mph)
- *New* LDOE has created a 3-part Continuous Education Toolkit
  - Part 1 contains **instructional resources** for all grades and subjects, as well as **some guidance for SWD**.
  - Part 2 contains guidance for school and district leaders as they develop **distance learning plans**. This includes guidance on **improving access to the internet and device**s, as well as communication plans.
  - Part 3 gives schools and districts guidance on staffing.
- 3/17 Guidance

- ■ "**School systems are not required to offer distance learning.** Schools may offer complete distance learning, as capabilities exist. The required 63,720 instructional minute requirement per year shall also be suspended and minutes will not have to be made up."
  - ○ [3/13 Executive Order](#)
    - ■ Districts *may* provide distance education "as capabilities exist"
  - ○ Districts are currently not required to provide distance learning due concerns around equitable access to resources, services, and technology.
  - ○ LA is partnering with local PBS stations to provide educational programming and resources [At-Home Learning](#)
    - ■ But this seems more intended for families and students to access in the absence of district learning opportunities

Massachusetts (25 mph) *New 3/30*
- ○ DESE issued distance learning guidance on 3/26, however the link to this guidance is currently broken on their website. We've requested a copy of this guidance.
- ○ [3/23 Commissioner's Update](#)
  - ■ "Academics: **Students should be doing as much learning as possible while they are at home, and DESE is working to make this easier.** Staff in the Center for Instructional Support have assembled a list of resources that districts can add to their own, and DESE is working with public broadcaster WGBH and its partner station WGBY to provide other resources….**Additional guidance from DESE will be forthcoming.**"
- ○ While additional guidance is developed, the state has partnered with WGBH, the state's public television station to provide a [Distance Learning Center](#), which has an extensive collection of educational content indexed by subject and grade level. It also provides guides for teachers to integrate the content into Google Classroom.
- ○ Other [resources](#) are available for students and families, but currently there is a lack of guidance around comprehensive academic planning for schools and districts. The COVID-19 resource pages also don't have information about connecting schools and families with technology and/or internet access.

Maryland (5 mph)
- ○ *New* As of 3/30 the state has not issued any guidance related to distance learning, however State Superintendent Karen B. Salmon issued a statement related to distance learning.
  - ■ "I am w**orking in concert with all local school system superintendents**, including multiple calls per week, in order to provide the continuity of learning to all of our students in every jurisdiction across the State of Maryland during this time.

    We are already working very closely with every school system to address issues affecting their ability to provide educational services to all of their students. **It should also be noted that we will be diligent in providing educational services to our students with disabilities.**

Local superintendents have provided me with their plans for the continuity of learning during the additional closure period. My staff at the Maryland State Department of Education has been reviewing the plans and determining what supports and resources the State can provide where needed.

More information will be available in the coming days as we work collaboratively on a statewide plan that maintains equitable standards and expectations for students. Local school systems will be communicating with their individual school communities as they move forward with implementing their plans. We plan to resume the continuity of learning next week, and we will be working closely with local superintendents, school administrators, and our teachers to activate that plan."

- As of 3/24, the state has issued no guidance regarding distance learning since closing all schools on 3/16. There is no mention of continuing education during closures anywhere on the MSDE's website.
- [3/11 Guidance](#)
  - Only K12 guidance currently provided on the MSDE website. Only provides basic information about the disease itself. Nothing about continuing instruction.

Michigan (25 mph) *New 3/30*

- [3/27 Guidance](#)
  - Notes new flexibility allowed for using federal funds to pay for technology to facilitate distance learning, as well as educator training.
- [3/23 Guidance](#)
  - "If a district chooses to provide educational support (online learning, instructional packets, enrichment/enhancement activities, among other approaches) to all students, **districts must consider the additional needs of students with disabilities, including accessibility.** Educational supports provided through distance learning approaches are designed to assist students in maintaining skills, and in some cases, make progress in the general education curriculum. **Districts must address the unique and individual needs of students with disabilities when utilizing these approaches.** If technology is needed for a student with a disability to access an educational activity, the needed technology and support must be provided by the district at no charge to the student."
- [3/20 Guidance](#)
  - **Any distance learning will not count toward instructional time** that schools must complete by the end of the school year. This is a dramatic departure from other states and limits the effectiveness of other positive steps the state is making.
  - "There is no mechanism to earn instructional time during a period of mandated school closure. However, schools can and are encouraged to offer **supplemental learning opportunities** to students using distance learning methods as they see fit. **MDE will not be granting seat time waiver requests** during this time."
- [3/18 Guidance](#)
  - "Only those districts and schools that can ensure that all students have equitable access to quality learning opportunities should pursue a full transition to online learning.
- [3/18 Readiness Guidance](#)
  - MDE provides planning and logistical guidance to districts considering providing distance learning, including **links to order free devices and internet access.**

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Missouri (50 mph) **New 3/30**
- ○ DESE COVID-19 Homepage
  - ■ "The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has **heard from school leaders and families across the state about technology and internet access needs during COVID-19 school closures**. DESE has asked school leaders to provide specific details on this important topic and **will use this information to better inform decisions and guidance** at the state level."
  - ■ "As with any situation where a possible closure can be anticipated, **districts are encouraged to consider what alternative plans can be developed and implemented to support student learning in the absence of standard instructional practices**. While the Alternative Methods of Instruction (AMI) statute does not take effect until the 2020-21 school year, t**he guidance DESE issued with the AMI application can assist schools in planning for both general and special education.**"
  - ■ **"Computers, tablets, modems, hotspots, etc. are allowable expenses under Title IV. A. and Title V. Title IV.A. allows for the purchase of technology for either 'Access to a Well-Rounded Education' or 'Individual Learning using Technology.' Title V (Rural and Low-Income Schools) allow for technology purchases**. Budgets must be amended prior to obligation of funds. Purchasing equipment, such as connections in/to a child's home that would ultimately be owned by a private citizen, is not an allowable expense."
  - ■ "The Office of Special Education, with assistance from the Washington Department of Education, has **developed a model form to provide LEAs with one place to document information that impacts the provision of FAPE for students with disabilities."**
- ○ 3/27 Guidance
  - ■ Allows for school buses to be used to distribute food to students and act as WiFi hotspots.
- ○ 3/13 FAQs
  - ■ "DESE **strongly encourages supporting student learning during any extended closure.** Since hours can be forgiven and will not harm a school for accountability purposes, we encourage schools to focus on what will best benefit students rather than "attendance credit." **DESE will not require an approved plan for alternative instruction** during a period of closure related to COVID-19."
  - ■ "DESE encourages supporting student learning during any extended closure. Since attendance hours can be forgiven and will not count against a school for accountability purposes, schools should focus on **whatever alternative methods of instruction best support students.** Schools have the **flexibility to use virtual or traditional instruction, or a combination of those methods."**
  - ■ "If an LEA continues to provide educational opportunities to the general student population during a school closure, the **LEA must ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to the same opportunities,** including the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). To the extent possible, each student with a disability should be provided the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP."
  - ■ **Delivery of local content virtually by local educators provides the greatest continuity for students. It also requires that the school have significant resources**

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and training in place well before the closure. Delivery of vendor content by either local educators or vendors allows schools to leverage the instructional management systems and content of commercial providers. Schools may choose to have their teachers deliver content created by others or they may choose to purchase both the content and the delivery from a vendor.

- ○ Supports for Remote Teaching and Learning webpage
  - ■ Contains links to various **instructional resources** by subject
  - ■ Links to 3/24 Guidance, which gives considerations schools and district leaders should use when **developing distance learning plans**.
- ○ DESE provides links to existing guidance on distance education, including guidance for teaching SWD.
- ○ Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program (MOCAP) is providing expedited access to its virtual education resources from external vendors. External vendors have also indicated that they will provide accelerated training to teachers, to allow for quicker transitions during this crisis.

Nevada (65 mph) *New 3/30*

- ○ 3/20 Executive Order
  - ■ **Required that all districts submit distance education plans** to NDE for approval by 3/23. (All districts except Clark County, which educates the majority of the state's students, met this deadline.) Unlike typical distance learning plans, districts are **allowed to incorporate non-digital components.**
  - ■ Days between 3/23 and a district plan's approval will need to be made up at the end of the year. "In approving these Requests for an Emergency Program of Distance Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall prioritize the health and safety of pupils and County School District and Charter School employees. The Superintendent of Public Instruction **shall also consider the ability of the Emergency Program to continue the meaningful and substantive education of all children**."
- ○ 3/19 Press Release
  - ■ "NRS 388.826 defines distance education as the instruction which is delivered by means of video, computer, television, or the internet or other electronic means of communication, or any combination thereof, in such a manner that the person supervising or providing the instruction and the pupil receiving the instruction are separated geographically for a majority of the time during which the instruction is delivered. **The Governor's directive expands this definition to include paper correspondence to ensure students have access to educational opportunities regardless of their means, access to technology, or at-home support.**"
- ○ Provides subject-based resources that can be used by teachers and educators. Some, but not all, of the subject further divide their content by grade-level.
- ○ Provides a link to an extensive list of resources (compiled by SAGE publishing) to prepare teachers for distance learning on topics including instructional best practices, student engagement, family communication, and connecting with other teachers.

New Hampshire (65 mph)

- ○ 3/15 Executive Order
  - ■ Gov. Sununu ordered all public schools closed starting 3/16 and all schools needed to transition to distance learning no later than 3/23.

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- ○ [3/16 Special Education Guidance](#)
  - ■ "Our approach is a **three-tiered safety net of support for students with an IEP**: 1) Services may be of a nature that they can be provided in a remote instructional environment. This may include, for example, daily "check-ins" with a student, which may be able to be provided seamlessly in a remote instruction model. 2) Another option may be to have a limited number of students (hence lower COVID-19 risk) continue to come to the school for those specific services. This might be OT/PT, or perhaps speech therapy or student counseling. You may determine that these students can come to the school building for these limited services only. 3) When services cannot be provided, the child can expect to receive compensatory services (to make up for the special education and/or related services the child missed), or A combination of any of these options."
- ○ [3/19 Press Release](#)
  - ■ **"Many schools are providing laptops** for their students. **Comcast is offering free internet access for families that can't afford it**. And in areas with low broadband coverage, school districts are providing hard copies of materials. **Remote instruction does not necessarily mean online, and many schools are using analog methods.** school districts are working hard to provide remote instruction and support to students regardless of access to technology."
  - ■ "Some special education students will be able to receive support services in a remote instruction environment. Other services may require face-to-face, small group, or 1-on-1 delivery at the school or other location. These represent very low risk for the spread of COVID-19. For those students we cannot serve during this period, we will work with local districts to provide compensatory services."
- ○ VLAC, NH's virtual charter school (already used by some students in most districts), is providing a series of free webinars for parents, students, and educators to ease the transition to distance learning. [VLACS offers free webinars for parents, students, and educators](#)
- ○ NH has a new website devoted to remote learning http://www.nhlearnsremotely.com/

New Jersey (25 mph)
- ○ *New* 3/23 Guidance
  - ■ **"All students served by the district must be addressed in the plan,** including students in preschool if the district has state funded preschool and/or if the district services preschoolers with disabilities. The plans developed must include age-appropriate strategies and materials to meet the needs of all students. Districts offering preschool should remember to include contracted providers—private preschool providers and Head Start providers—in their planning activities. E**ach district plan must also include developmentally appropriate strategies and materials to meet the needs of all students with disabilities** including those educated in out-of-district placements. Districts are encouraged to consult with the school in which the student is placed to provide continuity of instruction to the maximum extent practicable."
  - ■ "Districts should consider **collecting information on which students have access to a device**, how that device is or is not shared, and what access each student has to a network."
- ○ [3/13 Guidance](#)
  - ■ Districts *may* offer distance learning, but are not required to do so.

New Mexico (50 mph) *New 3/30*

- 3/27 Press Release
  - "New Mexico public **education will shift to a learn-at-home model** as schools remain closed for the rest of the academic year"
  - "**Students with special needs will receive all feasible supports and accommodations that can be delivered while maintaining safe social-distancing.** School districts must continue to support the transition of children from early intervention into preschool special education. Schools offering behavioral health services will remain open for that purpose."
- District must submit a continuous learning plan to NMPED by 4/15. (However, there does not seem to be any guidance to help districts develop these plans.)
- 3/27 FAQ
  - **"Internet access will be an issue** for many families in New Mexico. Staff and students may lack the resources to connect remotely. PED **encourages districts and charter schools to reach out to local internet service providers to see what options are available for community members.** PED also encourages districts and charter schools to think about learning kits and other hands-on educational materials that meet the educational needs of students as well as family engagement needs. **PED is also looking at potential federal and state funding streams to help districts purchase things like laptops, tablets and mobile hotspots."**
  - "PED recognizes there are students with complex needs for whom the virtual/on-line program may not be a feasible option, even with additional accommodations or modifications. **The IEP team will need to discuss and document within the IEP or an addendum the agreed upon alternative plan** for providing the requisite special education and related services to those students."
- 3/25 Internet Guidance
  - Provides an extensive list of local and national options for internet access available during the crisis.
- 3/24 Resources for Educators and School Leaders
  - Provides link to distance learning educator training resources
  - **"Some schools and districts are well positioned to provide a computing device to staff and students, at school or at home, but not everyone has this capability.** There are options in some areas to borrow devices from local libraries or other organizations but many schools and districts will need to identify their own resources which could be used by those families in need. Unfortunately, now is not the optimum time to try and put into place a new initiative to provision computing devices to students so **many families may be required to find what they can and use that for their remote learning."**
  - Links to Schoology's Distance Learning Readiness Kit, however the link on the document is broken (as are a number of other links on the document).
  - Suggests various platforms to educators for conducting distance learning.
- 3/19 Guidance
  - Importantly, this toolkit is designed for temporary school closure. **PED will provide further, comprehensive guidance in the case of extended closure.**
  - Provides best practices for distance learning and digital educational resources for teachers, as well as a few teacher training documents /webinars.
- 3/13 Press Release (outdated)

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- ■ "Schools that are able to deliver distance learning to students **may choose to offer this option during the closure period**. PED will continue exploring all resources to provide educational opportunities to students while maintaining social distancing protocols and the prohibition of mass gatherings."

New York City (65 mph)
- ○ *New* 3/22 Letter to Parents
  - ■ "**Every school has been equipped with an online platform. Learning resources, including those for special education and multilingual learners**, have been developed and posted on our website—and there is so much more to come."
  - ■ "If your child needs a device to participate in remote learning, and you have not yet filled out a device request form, please visit coronavirus.schools.nyc/RemoteLearningDevices. **We will help you get a device with internet connection.**"
- ○ 3/17 Guidance
  - ■ Expectation is that all schools will provide remote, digital learning for all students.
- ○ iPad distribution
  - ■ "To keep students connected and able to participate in remote learning, the DOE is lending 300,000 internet-enabled iPads to students. Priority will be given to students most in need. All devices are granted on a temporary basis and will later need to be returned."
  - ■ Distribution started 3/23
  - ■ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WF4sDmJzWCNfTepqVYc3jd5tlUzHOGLI/view
    - ● Paper packets will also be available online and at food distribution sites.
    - ● DOE is in communication with service providers to get free WIFI for all students.
- ○ Chancellor Carranza's message to families 3/22
  - ■ "There will surely be bumps in the road as we all adjust to this new reality, and I want to thank you for the patience that will be demanded of you as we undertake this transformation together."

North Carolina (65 mph) *New 3/30*
- ○ NCDPI created a constantly updating website devoted to distance learning resources. This website includes:
  - ■ Instructional resources for teachers and families, organized by subject and grade.
  - ■ Training options on distance learning for teachers, including a long list of upcoming webinars
  - ■ Documents with key considerations for districts as they move to distance learning
  - ■ Information on online pedagogy presented in a simple, yet thorough way. This includes information on presenting information digitally for SWD.
  - ■ Guidance regarding access to devices, including low cost options for families, as well as separate guidance and access information for the internet.
- ○ 3/25 Update
  - ■ "Special education and related services support a student's involvement and progress in general education. As districts consider how the unique needs of students with disabilities are met during this time, consideration should be given to whether or not the LEAs activities are supplemental or mandatory distance learning required for all students. **Special education and related services should be accessible or delivered**

comparable to the district's instructional plan and reasonable in light of the student's unique needs."

Ohio (35 mph)
- *New* [3/27 Special Education Guidance](#)
  - "Districts offering instruction to all students, including via alternative delivery models like online learning, blizzard bags or mail are required to make a good faith effort to provide special education services for students with disabilities during the ordered school-building closure. **If a student with a disability cannot access the alternative delivery models being offered to general education students, the district should consult with the student's parents and/or caregivers to determine the needs of the student and identify the most appropriate means for meeting those needs during the ordered school-building closure period.**"
- [FAQs for Schools and Districts](#) (updated 3/23)
  - "**Schools should try to make a good faith effort** within available capabilities to support continued learning outside of school."
  - "Since the desire is for schools to make a good faith effort to provide educational services within available capabilities during this period, **there should be limited impact on minimum instructional hours requirements.**"
  - "We have confidence in the creativity and flexibility of our educators to work together and with community partners to provide what makes the most sense in these situations. **At the very least, identifying local resources, encouraging reading and writing practices during this three-week period, and other enrichment activities** can be conveyed to students if no other options available."
  - "If, however, a student with a disability cannot access the alternate delivery models being offered to general education students, then the district should consult with parents and/or caregivers to determine the needs of the student and **identify the most appropriate means for meeting those needs during the closure period.** In the interest of community health, districts should take steps to identify the most appropriate location for delivering those services, such as a daycare, home or other location. Compensatory services might need to be considered."
- ODE does not provide information on how to access the internet and/or technology via its COVID-19 web page.

Oregon (5 pmh) *New 3/30*
- [3/26 Guidance](#)
  - "During the closure, **schools must provide (to the extent possible) out-of-school supplementary education and learning supports**, school meals, and emergency child care."
  - "This guidance includes initial steps in this effort, and ODE will continue to develop and provide resources to districts, schools, families, students, and communities. The SEALS guidance will be posted to the ODE COVID-19 website this weekend."
- [COVID-19 Homepage](#) (last updated 3/20)
  - "Many **school districts are assessing the feasibility of providing online learning** in the event of extended school closures. In looking at this option, **it is important to consider the practical steps necessary to appropriately serve every student equitably** and the extent to which a traditional school environment can be quickly

replicated online. It is not a simple task, nor is it one that should be attempted without serious consideration of equity and access."

- At this time, Oregon does not have the statewide capacity, infrastructure or expertise to equitably move to online learning in the event of prolonged school closures. **ODE does not expect districts to transition to online learning as schools close for health and safety reasons.** Should districts opt for providing online learning, ODE has a responsibility to ensure all students are served appropriately.
- The ODE does not recommend schools consider a transition to online learning unless the district can ensure, at a minimum, each of the above considerations are met. ODE also does not recommend that district's seek to deploy new technological platforms at this time.

Pennsylvania (35 mph) *New 3/30*

- ○ "'We are **strongly urging school districts** to not wait, to not stand on the periphery, to really engage students,' Pedro Rivera, Pennsylvania's secretary of education, said in a call with reporters late Wednesday morning. While **schools aren't required to offer educational services** to students during the shutdown, Rivera said he hopes schools are moving forward with alternate modes of instruction or, at least, optional enrichment activities to keep students engaged at home." [Pa. education secretary Pedro Rivera to schools: Don't wait to offer remote instruction](#)
- ○ [3/23 Letter from the Secretary](#)
  - ■ "To assist schools during the extended closure, the state's 29 intermediate units are **ready to provide technical assistance to help develop continuity of education plans** for all students beginning tomorrow, Tuesday, March 24."
- ○ [Guidance/FAQs as of 3/25](#)
  - ■ "PDE will not penalize districts/schools that fail to meet the minimum 180-day requirements as a result of COVID-19 response efforts."
  - ■ "PDE **strongly encourages all schools** to provide some type of continuity of education for all students in the most appropriate and accessible ways possible"
  - ■ "These options can take a variety of forms, including online/digital learning opportunities; non-digital learning opportunities (e.g., materials sent home with students); and other approaches designed in partnership with local IUs and regional PATTAN centers. **The decision to employ one or more of these methods is made at the local level based on feasibility, availability of resources, access and equity considerations, and in accordance with aggressive social distancing guidance.**"
  - ■ "Whatever decision is made, schools **must work to meet the needs of all students, with particular attention to free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities and English as a second language (ESL) services for English Learners (EL).**"
- ○ Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance [website](#) has **extensive instructional and training resources**, including information about accommodating SWD and EL.

Rhode Island (65 mph)

- ○ Google Drive [link](#) contains:
  - ■ Instructional resources for all subjects
  - ■ Supports for EL and SWD
  - ■ Educator distance learning trainings

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- COVID-19 [homepage] provides link to **free internet access** for families
- All districts and schools need to have distance learning plans. Schools were off the week of 3/16 to allow educators time to plan. Distance learning started Monday, 3/23.
- "Many states have thrown in the towel," she said. "I'm not yet willing to throw in the towel. Some learning is better than no learning. I'm not going to sugarcoat it. It's never been done before, not here and not anywhere in America. I think we're ready to do it." [Providence Journal]

South Carolina (50 mph) **New 3/30**
- [3/16 Guidance]
  - SCDE is mobilizing their fleet of **school buses to act as WiFi hubs**, "Grab and go" locations for meals, and distribution locations for printed instructional materials.
  - "The SCDE will prioritize stationing Wi-Fi enabled buses or mobile hotspots in rural and other geographic locations where the percentage of free and reduced meal populations is 50 percent or greater."
  - Provides information about free internet available for low-income families through multiple providers.
- [3/12 Guidance]
  - SCDE is **requiring districts to submit 10-day instructional plans,** though given that schools are currently closed through April 30th, these plans will only cover a small portion of the time schools are closed.
  - Notes the SCDE has provided guidance to help develop these plans, though this guidance is not linked to, and is not readily available on the COVID-19 page.
- SCDE has provided an extensive and well organized [Google Drive folder] with free resources designed for both parents and teachers, which will continue to be updated.
- SCDE's COVID-19 [homepage] contains:
  - Maps of Food distribution sites and WiFi hotspots
  - Links to instructional resources
  - Links to federal special education guidance, though does not provide any state specific interpretations

Tennessee (50 mph) **New 3/30**
- [School Closure Toolkit for Districts: IT Supports for Distance Learning] (updated 3/25)
  - Provides options for districts/families for low- and no-cost options for cell phone and internet service, as well as devices.
  - Provides guidelines and strategies for implementing digital classrooms, including a 1-week accelerated schedule.
- [School Closure Toolkit for Districts: Special Populations] (updated 3/27)
  - Provides clear guidance and best practices for SWD and EL.
- [School Closure Toolkit for Districts: Academics and Instruction] (updated 3/24)
  - "As you make plans for digital learning and other opportunities to engage children, we encourage you to find ways to maintain your focus on the same things that matter in every classroom: student safety, building strong relationships with students and families, and **creating equitable access to learning by accommodating students' different learning needs.** District and school staff must make decisions about the best way to support student learning during time away from school. A **district must understand the digital capacity of its community, the devices available to students, and the**

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flexibility parents, teachers, and school leaders have to support the needs of students."
- ■ Provides **checklists for preparing for distance learning**, with specific **considerations and for paper and digital offerings, as well as by student grade level,** and sample schedules.
- ■ Has recommended digital resources for teachers building distance curricula.
  - ○ 3/23 Superintendent Call
    - ■ "**The Department strongly encourages districts to maximize student learning opportunities, where viable.** Please reference the Academics Toolkit for ideas and strategies, use your CORE offices for support, and look for a Distance Learning Guide to be posted later this week."
    - ■ Contains an extensive Q&A regarding SWD and distance learning.
  - ○ 3/16 Guidance
    - ■ Provides a variety of options for providing ESL services via distance learning.

Texas (65 mph)
- ○ *Updated* District Instructional Continuity Planning Framework
  - ■ TEA has provided **a 4-step process designed to enable districts to provide long-term distance education**
  - ■ TEA has provided extensive resources for each phase of the process to ensure district and school leaders are prepared for distance learning. This includes professional development and instructional resources. Exemplars from districts are also provided.
- ○ 3/19 Press Release
  - ■ "TEA has already stood up an **Instructional Continuity Task Force**. We recognize that not all students have access to computers and Internet at home. With that acknowledged, there are still proven 'low tech' solutions (e.g. workbooks, homework packets, phone calls with teachers, etc.), that will allow students to get the instructional support they need during this time outside of the classroom. Our Task Force is working to **ensure all school systems have access to the resources they need to support instruction remotely**, whether 'low-tech' or 'high-tech.'"
- ○ Provides resources for **free and low-cost internet access** Guidance to Districts on Providing Internet to Students
- ○ 3/20 Special Education Guidance
  - ■ "No defined or correct method"
  - ■ Districts need to be "flexible" and "make reasonable efforts"

Virginia (35 mph)
- ○ *New* 3/27 Memo
  - ■ "School divisions should also be aware that Internet Service Providers (ISP) and major wireless carriers have released special COVID-19 offerings to help keep people connected. **Divisions are encouraged to check with their local ISP's and mobile carriers for special offers.**"
- ○ *New* 3/27 Guidance
  - ■ "Options for supporting and delivering instruction may include but are not limited to: online instruction, virtual courses, instruction during summer school, TV-based instruction, packet delivery, or providing Internet hotspots to students or to the community through Internet providers."

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- "As local school divisions begin to explore options for virtual or online instruction and other instructional delivery methods, **these decisions should be done with careful consideration of providing equitable access and support for a variety of student learning needs.**"
  - *New* 3/23 Special Education Guidance
    - "The VDOE encourages school divisions to make local decisions that take into consideration the health, safety, and well-being of all their students and staff. As divisions begin to explore options for virtual, online or other instructional delivery methods these decisions should be done with careful consideration of providing equitable access and support for a variety of student learning needs. Additional consultation with special education staff as well as legal counsel should be a component of these planning discussions."
  - *New* 3/23 Press Release
    - "The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) **will issue guidance to help divisions execute plans to continue instruction, while ensuring students are served equitably, regardless of income level, access to technology, English learner status, or special needs.** This includes options for additional instruction through summer programming, integrating instruction into coursework next year, and allowing students to make up content."
  - *New* Open Resources VA
    - Provides open-source instructional resources, provided by VA educators
  - 3/18 Guidance
    - The state is taking a very cautious approach: "many school divisions are assessing the feasibility of providing online learning in the event of extended school closures. In looking at this option, it is important to consider the practical steps necessary to appropriately serve every student equitably and the extent to which a traditional school environment can be quickly replicated online. It is not a simple task, **nor is it one that should be attempted without serious consideration of equity and access**. Schools should thoughtfully evaluate their approach, understand their legal obligations, and maintain the standards for delivery of instruction and student supports."
    - The state is providing little in the way of leadership or guidance. The only resources linked from VDOE are to a couple US DOE resources.
  - 3/13 Press Release
    - "The Department of Education is working closely with divisions to minimize disruptions to our students' academic development by encouraging schools to provide students and families with educational resources throughout this time," said Dr. James Lane, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Washington (50 mph)
  - *New* Resources for Continuous Learning During School Closures
    - Contains **instructional resources** organized by grade and subject. It also indicates whether each resource is aimed at parents, teachers, and/or students.
    - Contains instructional resources **specifically to support EL and SWD.**
    - Contains online **PD focused on distance learning**
  - *New* 3/24 Special Education Q&A
    - **Many disability related modifications may be effectively provided online**, such as extensions of time for assignments, videos with captioning or embedded sign language

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interpreting, accessible reading materials, a speech/language services through video conferencing. **OSPI encourages districts to sit down with their leadership teams and brainstorm ways of providing services using unique, alternative methods.** Health and safety considerations should be the priority, including social distancing recommendations.

- ○ 3/23 Guidance
  - ■ In a dramatic reversal from previous guidance (see below), OSPI now says that "Although schools are closed and are not providing traditional in-person instruction, **education must continue.** Further guidance will be **grounded in compassion, communication, and common sense; rather than the traditional compliance** measures we are all familiar with in our education community."
  - ■ "We should **avoid assuming that continuity of education outside of a typical school building can only occur through online means**. Districts will provide instruction using printed learning materials, phone contact, email, technology-based virtual instruction, or a combination to meet student needs."
  - ■ Districts needed to start providing **distance learning by Monday, 3/30.**
  - ■ Provides "Guiding Principles" and a sample plan that districts can use as a model in preparation for distance learning.
  - ■ In a signal that states are beginning to share best practices, OSPI is direct districts to use Kansas' Continuous Learning Task Force Guidance
- ○ March 20th guidance
  - ■ Gives options for ensuring HS seniors can obtain credits to graduate, including online classwork, competency-based assessments, and using dual credit and CTE courses as core credits. Also notes state credit waivers available for non-core classes.
  - ■ OSPI is developing resources for SWD for participating in online environments, specifically for high school seniors.
- ○ 3/17 Letter to Superintendents and Labor Leaders
  - ■ "Districts and their labor leaders should work together to consider modifications to the educational program, calendar, and employee responsibilities so they can deliver educational services to our students to the greatest degree reasonably possible. This will include considering how to satisfy graduation requirements and ensure equity in the delivery of services."
- ○ *Previous Guidance*
  - ■ Closure FAQ (Updated 3/13)
    - ● "Schools should not be providing online learning services unless they can provide those services equitably."
  - ■ Parent Guide to COVID (Updated 3/7)
    - ● "OSPI believes that for most districts, it will make more sense to cancel school altogether than to organize a learning model that cannot be accessed equitably by all students."

Wyoming (65 mph) ***New 3/30***
- ○ 3/27 Guidance
  - ■ "**Each Wyoming school district must have an Adapted Learning Plan** approved by the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) **prior to April 6** to continue to receive state funding."

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- "Once approved, Adapted Learning Plans are valid through the end of the 2019-20 school year. Status checks will be conducted by the WDE with each district at the end of April, and if necessary in May, to ensure adherence to their plans. Failure to adhere to plans may result in a determination that full funding is not appropriate, or that missed school days need to be made up".
  - Emergency School Closure Adapted Learning Guidance
    - "For the purposes of an emergency school closure, the information provided below is g**uidance for districts *wishing* to implement Adapted Learning.** Assurances to maintain instructional fidelity for ALL STUDENTS remain the responsibility of the individual school/district. For emergency school closures, district/school **plans for Adapted Learning would not need to be submitted to the Wyoming Department of Education** (WDE)."
    - "The WDE is also **offering weekly virtual meetings** on Wednesdays from 2-3:30 p.m. MDT that are open to any district or school considering or working on Adapted Learning days"
    - Provides a thorough **checklist for districts developing remote learning plans**, as well as sample plans and communications from districts in the state.
    - "In light of this [OCR] guidance, **districts should make a reasonable effort to provide FAPE, always include guardians in the discussions, and document their efforts to continue to provide educational opportunities during the crisis.**"
    - Provides links to a series of distance learning training for teachers.
    - Provides links to 8 internet providers offering free service during school closures, as well as digitals tools, some of which have offline capabilities or that can work well on cell phones.
  - 3/20 Guidance
    - "The WDE is **exploring its ability to temporarily suspend or substantially reduce Chapter 41 requirements through emergency rules to maximize district ability to provide virtual education** to its own students. Remote education currently provides a flexible option for E-Learning between districts."

"Speed Criteria"

65 MPH
Requires all districts in the state to participate in distance learning and provides *at least 4* of the following:
- Provides districts and schools with guidance/templates for creating distance learning plans.
- Provides access to distance/online education training for educators
- Provides instructional resources for educators and families.
- Issues clear guidance around accommodating special education students.
- Works to address the digital divide through improved access to high-speed internet and/or devices (laptop/iPad).

50 MPH
Requires all districts in the state to participate in distance learning and provides *less than 4* of the following:

- OR -

Strongly encourages all districts in the state to participate in distance learning and provides *at least 4* of the following:
- Provides districts and schools with guidance/templates for creating distance learning plans.
- Provides access to distance/online education training for educators
- Provides instructional resources for educators and families.
- Issues clear guidance around accommodating special education students.
- Works to address the digital divide through improved access to high-speed internet and/or devices (laptop/iPad).

35 MPH
Encourages all districts in the state to participate in distance learning and provides *2-3* of the following:
- Provides districts and schools with guidance/templates for creating distance learning plans.
- Provides access to distance/online education training for educators
- Provides instructional resources for educators and families.
- Issues clear guidance around accommodating special education students.
- Works to address the digital divide through improved access to high-speed internet and/or devices (laptop/iPad).

25 MPH
Encourages all districts in the state to participate in distance learning and provides *1-2* of the following:
- Provides districts and schools with guidance/templates for creating distance learning plans.
- Provides access to distance/online education training for educators
- Provides instructional resources for educators and families.
- Issues clear guidance around accommodating special education students.
- Works to address the digital divide through improved access to high-speed internet and/or devices (laptop/iPad).

5 MPH
Allows districts in the state to participate in distance learning but provides *none* of the following:
- Provides districts and schools with guidance/templates for creating distance learning plans.
- Provides access to distance/online education training for educators
- Provides instructional resources for educators and families.
- Issues clear guidance around accommodating special education students.
- Works to address the digital divide through improved access to high-speed internet and/or devices (laptop/iPad).

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