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## FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

### CSG MIDWEST WEBINAR — SCHOOL CLOSURES AND E-LEARNING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

**Webinar.** The Council of State Governments (CSG) Midwest held a webinar on April 30, 2020, related to school closures and e-learning. E-learning is defined as learning that utilizes electronic technologies to access educational curricula outside of a traditional classroom.

**Statewide Digital Platforms.** According to the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE), the following states have statewide or territory-wide digital e-learning platforms: Alabama, Alaska, Florida, Idaho, Kentucky, Oregon, North Carolina, South Carolina, Wisconsin, and Puerto Rico. The CRPE provided recommendations on using federal funds for infrastructure and capacity building including:

- Expanding broadband, providing student Wi-Fi hotspots, and building statewide virtual platforms.
- Training in competency-based and remote instruction.
- Addressing achievement gaps by providing for remediation through training and additional personnel.

**Minnesota Department of Education.** Representatives from the Minnesota Department of Education (DE) provided examples of two school districts addressing remote learning differently during school closures. One was identified as a digital district, with the following information provided:

- Grades 6-12 are using a digital platform, with iPad devices provided to every student.
- The school day schedule is comprised of a morning academic block, lunch and independent learning time, and an afternoon academic block.
- Student engagement is at 90.0%.

The second school district was identified as a paper district, with the following information provided:

- Hard-copy educational materials are mailed or delivered.
- Student check-ins are completed by telephone or email.
- A choice matrix is used by students to complete assigned work.

The Minnesota DE continues to provide information and guidance by maintaining a COVID-19 hub on its [website](#). The DE is also responding to COVID-19 by providing professional development and support in the areas of social-emotional needs, family engagement, and online learning strategies. Schools within the state that were already fully online have been used as a support for schools statewide, and over 100 districts had already established [e-learning day plans](#).

**Minnesota Legislature.** The Minnesota legislature is considering the following legislation:

- [HF 3029](#), which provides for broadband grants for distance learning.
- [HF 4415](#), which provides for sustaining hourly worker pay and addresses school loss of fees.

LSA Staff Contact: Lora Vargason (515.725.2249) [lora.vargason@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:lora.vargason@legis.iowa.gov)

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