
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

March 25, 2020



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EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES — COVID-19 RESPONSE: MARCH 2020

School Closures and Legislation. On March 15, 2020, Governor Kim Reynolds gave the [recommendation](#) that Iowa schools close for four weeks. On March 17, 2020, Governor Reynolds signed [Senate File 2408](#), which includes a waiver of instructional time requirements for school districts and accredited nonpublic schools that close to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Department of Education. The Department of Education (DE) is continuing to provide updated [guidance](#) to school districts, area education agencies (AEAs), and teacher preparation programs. Guidance is being provided in the following areas:

- After-school programming
- Early ACCESS services
- Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP)
- Graduation
- Online learning
- Preschool
- School improvement grant applications
- School meal programs
- Special education

The [State Board of Education](#) will hold a teleconference meeting on March 26, 2020.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) continues to provide individualized services focused on competitive, integrated, and community employment to eligible persons with disabilities. Work availability is varied, with some business partners experiencing layoffs while others are hiring and looking to fill needs. IVRS has also provided an unemployment information [video](#) in American Sign Language on its website.

Services to students with disabilities are continuing through job exploration and opportunities counseling, work-based learning, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self advocacy. One-to-one services are being offered through multiple platforms. Additional opportunities are being offered including virtual job shadowing and virtual business tours.

The Disability Determination Services Program, funded by the Social Security Administration (SSA), is continuing; however, initial consultative medical examinations for referrals have stopped because of the face-to-face contact required by the SSA process. A challenge faced by IVRS is maintaining reliable virtual connections, but IVRS staff continue to work together to share learned practices.

Iowa PBS. Governor Reynolds has asked Iowa PBS to provide the press conference [video](#) of ongoing news conferences from the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). Iowa PBS is also providing programming and support statewide. Multiple special informational programs have been aired and are available on [iowapbs.org](#). Iowa PBS has provided multiple online educational resources including the following:

- [Virtual Learning Camp](#) on Facebook beginning March 23, 2020, for educational skills and activities.
- Parent [resources](#) to use to talk with children about COVID-19. Information on healthy habits, educational games, and activities are also available.

- At-home learning [resources](#) for families and children.

Iowa Department for the Blind. The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) is continuing to take referrals by phone or through its [website](#). Field staff members have suspended in-home client visits but continue to provide services by phone and by electronic communication. The support and braille learning groups are working to continue to meet by telephone. The Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped has increased from 10 to 20 the number of audiobooks being placed on cartridges and sent to patrons. Additional education offerings by the IDB include the following:

- IDB Read is a live reading of a book followed by discussion. The service will begin the week of March 30, 2020.
- Technical support is offered every Wednesday from 8:00 to 11:00 am.
- Braille Bits Online will be a twice-weekly podcast conducted over Zoom beginning March 30, 2020.

Early Childhood Iowa. Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) collaborates with multiple State agencies to provide community guidance for family support and child care programming. ECI is partnering with the Iowa Women's Foundation to identify financial resources to assist child care programs. ECI also supports the efforts of individual ECI local boards to coordinate providing meals to child care centers experiencing lost partnerships with schools or changes in resources. Additional [information](#) is included on the ECI website and includes the following:

- Updates and guidance on family support programs.
- Child care updates and a child care availability map.
- Child care guidance.
- Temporary job opportunities and updates.

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