
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

April 22, 2020



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EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES — COVID-19: APRIL 21, 2020

School Closures. On April 17, 2020, Governor Kim Reynolds [announced](#) the closure of public and nonpublic schools for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Instructional time requirements will be waived for the remainder of the regularly scheduled academic year for schools that provide continuous learning through voluntary educational enrichment opportunities, required educational services, or a combination of the two.

Schools are required to submit a Return to Learn Plan to the Department of Education (DE) by July 1, 2020. The plans will outline ways learning disruptions will be addressed and may include summer school, enrichment activities, or other opportunities to address the needs of students. The requirement for schools to start no earlier than August 23 has been waived to give schools flexibility for the 2020-2021 school year.

Department of Education. The DE continues to provide updated [guidance and information](#) to families, school districts, area education agencies (AEAs), community colleges, and teacher preparation programs. [Webinars](#) with school district superintendents and education stakeholders continue to provide updated information and provide a forum for the DE to respond to questions.

The DE is also monitoring and providing [information](#) on federal funds that will be provided through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act ([H.R.748](#)). Under the CARES Act, funding with the most direct impact to K-12 schools will be distributed through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund. According to Congressional Research Service estimates, Iowa will receive \$26.2 million from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund and \$71.6 million from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) continues to provide employment services to job candidates with disabilities and continues to work with business partners. Job candidates have been provided interactive experiences through virtual career and job clubs. IVRS staff continue to work collaboratively through multiple platforms to provide job opportunities for difficult-to-place individuals. Virtual placement huddle meetings recently included a discussion on working with individuals who have criminal backgrounds.

Iowa Reading Research Center. In response to school closures, the Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC) has redirected its efforts from primarily supporting professional educators to supporting families who are trying to continue student learning at home. The IRRC has created a new [resource](#) to support continuous learning. Additional [information and projects](#) for supporting home learning are included on the IRRC website.

Iowa Department for the Blind. The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) has been providing webinars for vocational rehabilitation training for COVID-19-specific issues, including available mental health resources, how to maintain social distancing in stores, and grocery shopping strategies. Library services continue to keep patrons connected by providing 31 virtual library programs and servicing checkout of over 300,000 books so far in April. The Instructional Materials Center continues to provide guidance and produce accessible educational materials for students participating in continuous learning. Paraeducator trainings are being expanded due to increased participation, and [registrations](#) are currently being

accepted. The trainings include how to make accessible learning materials that utilize universal design principles, improve participants' knowledge of braille, and facilitate general development of skills.

Early Childhood Iowa. The Early Childhood Iowa Technical Assistance State Office has been hosting teleconference meetings with Early Childhood Iowa Area (ECIA) Boards to share strategies in addressing local needs and to provide State-level updates regarding responses and resources related to COVID-19. ECIA Boards are engaging with local child care businesses and [Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral](#). In addition to working with partners to ensure child care providers are linked to available financial assistance, some Boards are supporting the child care workforce by providing a hazard pay bonus to staff who choose to work in centers that have stayed open.

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