Alabama State Department of Education
Academic and Technical Guide for Emergency End-of-Year School Closures Manual

March 30, 2020

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2020 ALSDE LEA Academic Continuity Plan Support & Resources
https://tinyurl.com/ALSDE-COVID-19-LEA-Plans

SECTION A: PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

To slow the spread of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Alabama, Governor Kay Ivey announced on March 26, 2020, that all public K-12 schools shall implement a plan to complete the 2019-2020 school year using alternate methods of instruction as established by the State Superintendent of Education. Local school districts shall make staffing decisions and determinations related to access to school buildings in accordance with all applicable public health orders and the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Alabama Department of Public Health.

During this pandemic, the ALSDE is committed to providing ongoing updates and guidance for both schools and parents as it relates to the COVID-19 impact on Alabama's schools. For the most current information, please visit ALSDE's COVID-19 webpage. This manual is designed to assist districts with the development of their LEA Academic Continuity Plans and provides thorough details which are aligned with each of the required plan components.

SECTION B: INSTRUCTIONAL/ASSESSMENT DELIVERY OPTIONS SUPPORT

The ALSDE is committed to providing essential technical guidance and support mechanisms to assist LEAs in completing this unprecedented school year by allowing flexibility—with statewide parameters—and for as much as practical, proceed with graduation and promotion procedures by June 5, 2020. ALSDE has coordinated multiple statewide efforts to assist LEAs with sample differentiated instructional delivery supports & resources.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY SUPPORT, RESOURCES, AND EXAMPLES
✓ **ACT Academy:** Find the best resources from the top publishers to help your students practice for the ACT® or PreACT®! ACT Academy offers thousands of videos, games, and authentic ACT quizzes that are personalized to meet each student's learning gaps.
✓ **Alabama Public Television (APT):** Beginning April 6, Alabama Public Television (APT) will modify regularly scheduled programming on its main channel weekdays to offer specific pre-K-12 resources between the hours of 8:00 am - 6:00 pm. Program modifications will take place throughout the duration of school closures and will address a wide variety of content areas. Educators and parents will have access to supplemental lesson plans and curriculum materials to facilitate meaningful use of the content. See your local TV listings, satellite or cable guide to identify the station serving your area or call APT toll free at 1-800-239-5233. Alabama Public Television is identified as "PBS" by some listing providers. Station information can also be found online at APTV.org. In addition to broadcast, APT offers free, online resources. APT's resources are Alabama state standards aligned, customizable, and can be fully integrated with digital teaching platforms like

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Google Classroom and Remind. You can create your own free account to save and organize content at aptv.pbslearningmedia.org. Updated APT Resources.

✓ **Alabama Education Remote Learning Site (Powered by EBSCO):** EBSCOed.com is an online platform that provides parents, teachers, and students with a central portal for available learning materials designated by grade bands.

✓ **Homework Hotline:** Alabama Public Library Service provides free homework help, tutoring, and test prep at HomeworkAlabama.org with extended hours of 10:00 am-11:00 pm for Homework Help & Academic Tutoring for 60+ subjects.

✓ **ACCESS Virtual Learning:** Information on ACCESS Virtual Learning's Franchise Model, which provides free instructional content for districts to use, can be found here.

✓ **K12.Org Inc:** A website that offers free access to K12's virtual learning platform, K12 curriculum, and K12 support. More information, including K12 contacts, can be found here.

DIGITAL USERNAME AND PASSWORD EXAMPLE DISTRIBUTION PROCESS

Take precautions while distributing students' usernames and passwords to parents in order to keep them secure. Note possible options below:

✓ To authenticate, use information both you and the parents know.

✓ One option is to text the parents the password, and then force the password to be changed on the first login. If the parents cannot accept texts, call them and give the password over the phone.

✓ Avoid emailing usernames and passwords in the same email. You could email the username with a message that says you are sending out the password via text.

✓ If there is no phone on file, sending parents a letter in the mail is much safer even though it is a slower process.
Additional information for this section can be accessed here.

ASSESSMENT DELIVERY SUPPORT, RESOUCES, AND EXAMPLES

✓ **Scantron Achievement Series:** Scantron's Achievement Series is a web-based grade-level assessment platform that allows educators to develop and administer test, capture results, and produce standards-based reports.

✓ **ACCESS Virtual Learning:** Information on ACCESS Virtual Learning's Credit Advancement, and Credit Recovery options can be found here.

✓ **K12.org Inc:** Free access to K12's virtual learning platform, K12 curriculum, and K12 support. More information, including K12 contacts, can be found here.

✓ Additional information can be accessed here.

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SECTIONS C & D: GUIDANCE FOR FINAL GRADES & LIMITED COURSE SCOPE DELIVERY

MEETING THE ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

District administrators and high school staff **must** prioritize meeting specific graduation requirement needs. As part of this emergency school closure, high school seniors need reassurance that staff members are working to ensure they graduate.

ACCESS Virtual Learning

Students in Grades 9 – 11 who are already enrolled in an ACCESS Virtual Learning course will need to continue completing their coursework, and schools should encourage students to complete as much work as possible. Students will still be able to communicate with their ACCESS teachers through the D2L email system. During this time, passwords will not be required for course assessments. School administrators, school counselors and facilitators should monitor students' grades in iLive and contribute to encourage progress, if needed. Contact your ACCESS Regional Support Center for assistance. Information on ACCESS Virtual Learning's Franchise Model, which provides free instructional content for districts to use, can be found here.

Credit Requirements

Alabama's high school diploma is based on completing a set number of high school graduation credits. As a first step, district and school staff should determine which classes and credits students **NEED** to complete in order to meet the Alabama High School Graduation Requirements. This should include assessing the current class schedule for classes providing required credits, such as fourth year mathematics and third/fourth year science courses. This data can be sorted by number of students enrolled to prioritize coursework. Analysis should identify which classes and credits students need to complete credit requirements for graduation. Schools should provide multiple options for students to meet course standards across required content areas.

Earning Credits/Graduation Requirements

Options that help students meet credit requirements include:
- ✓ Credit Through Completion of Instruction: Examples include online/virtual coursework, instructional packets, project-based learning, portfolios, or work-based learning.
- ✓ Credit through Credit-Eligible Courses and Embedded Credit: Examples include coursework completed through approved CTE pathways. ALSDE Approved Credit-Eligible Courses and ALSDE Embedded Credit Guidelines
- ✓ Credit through Credit Advancement/Credit Recovery Examination/Assessment(s): Examples include formative and summative course content, online ACT/PSAT test preparation, dual credit, industry recognized credential or certification, college admissions/placement assessments, etc. ALSDE Credit Advancement and Credit Recovery Guidelines

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Local Graduation Requirements

Considering the imperative to prioritize learning opportunities (credit recovery primarily) to the required credits needed to earn a high school diploma, ALSDE encourages districts implementing additional locally determined graduation requirements to consider a temporary local waiver for the Class of 2020.

For districts that choose to maintain local graduation requirements ALSDE encourages districts to allow alternatives if social distancing and safety measures cannot be maintained and to provide seniors sufficient support in completing these requirements. For example, video or other electronic submissions to meet local graduation requirements must be considered.

AHSAA & NCAA Considerations

Dr. Mackey continues to work collaboratively with the AHSAA to ensure that ALSDE's guidance doesn't contradict or align with the guidance provided for our student athletes. ALSDE is working closely to align guidance and future updates with not only the AHSAA's information but also the NCAA.
   ✓ AHSAA information regarding school closures can be found here.
   ✓ LEAs should be aware of NCAA athletic eligibility guidelines when developing their district academic continuity plans. The latest information and updates from the NCAA can be found here.

EARLY COLLEGE CREDIT PROGRAM OPTIONS

These unprecedented school closures will necessitate close collaboration between K–12, post-secondary, and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) to support students engaged in dual enrollment and/or dual credit opportunities. As our colleges and universities have moved to distance learning models, it is critical to collaboratively establish procedures that ensure equitable access for all students to ensure completion of the course.

Advanced Placement (AP)

CollegeBoard is rolling out alternative testing options, with a plan to have more information published in the beginning of April. Districts should continue to work through their AP coordinator and can keep track of options and opportunities for students on the CollegeBoard's website. Schools can provide continued AP learning opportunities by utilizing the free, daily online practices in AP Classroom. The CollegeBoard has developed a one-page resource on how to access these instructional supports. Beginning in early April, free online video lessons developed by AP teachers will be available for the topics and skills typically taught in the final weeks of each AP course. Videos will be posted on the CollegeBoard's AP YouTube channel.

Students earning a passing grade in an approved AP or IB course may satisfy an Alabama graduation requirement. They do not need to take or pass the corresponding exam to use an AP or IB course as a graduation pathway.

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International Baccalaureate (IB)

The May 2020 examinations will not be administered. Students will be awarded a Diploma or Course Certificate reflecting their standard of work based on the quality control already built into the programs. IB has extended deadlines for coursework elements for students that cannot complete course work due to school closures. Additional information, including FAQs, may be found on the IBO website School coordinators will receive additional information to be shared with educators, students, and parents.

Students earning a passing grade in an approved AP or IB course may satisfy an Alabama graduation requirement. They do not need to take or pass the corresponding exam to use an AP or IB course as a graduation pathway.

CLEP (College Level Examination Program)

CLEP offers computer-based examinations in 34 subjects that are administered at various test centers. With CLEP exams, students can earn dual enrollment credit for what they already know if they make a qualifying score. There are free Online Courses in CLEP subjects to prepare students for the exam. Visit CollegeBoard CLEP for more information.

OTHER ALABAMA-SPECIFIC ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Based on the current "State of Emergency" related to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Mackey has used his authority to waive certain annual state requirements such as the **Grade 3 Cursive Writing** report and the **Alabama Civics Exam** requirement for all seniors.

As the situation progresses, there may be other annual state requirements that may require additional time and information prior to being submitted. For example, the LEA Credit Recovery Plan and the LEA Summer School Plan usually have required due dates in May. These dates will need to be altered based on the Alabama Department of Public Health's updates related to the health and safety regulations. Because of this unprecedented national health crisis and the uncertainty of the next few months, there may be other state requirements that may have to be amended or waived, and the ALSDE will provide additional guidance as updates become available.

Driver Education

As with all other courses, LEA Academic Continuity Plans should reflect what works best for each individual school district. For example, some districts may choose to award credit for grades earned during the classroom instructional portion of driver education; however, not include grades for any incomplete behind-the-wheel driving labs. School districts could offer behind-the-wheel driving labs to those same students once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted (late summer, prior to the beginning of the new school year, or during the new school year, etc.).

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SECTION E: STATE AND FEDERAL ASSURANCES & INFORMATION SUPPORTING SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND PROGRAMS

Individualized Education Programs (IEP)

Specialized plans are addressed in Section E of the *2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan* that will be completed by your district. Based on each district's current status, teams may not have adequate data to complete appropriate IEPs at this time, nor do they have access to all required team members. However, making **every effort** to complete these processes and **documenting these efforts** in a timely/expeditiously manner are vital.

With evaluations or other services that may require face-to-face, in-person assessments or other interaction, it may not be possible considering the health and safety mandates currently in place due to the COVID-19. Document efforts/results and resume the process when school reopens, and when health and safety mandates are lifted.   As a general principle, during this unprecedented national emergency, public agencies are encouraged to work with parents to reach mutually agreeable extensions of time, as appropriate. As the USDOE continues to provide states with updates guidance will be made available.

Support for Virtual Learning with Students with Disabilities

Distance learning has the potential to look different for all students, including students with disabilities and students with 504 plans. Individualized supports and services should be provided to those for whom an online model is appropriate, accessible, and reasonable. All options must be considered considering 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 or broadband is a barrier, educators may use equally effective alternate access.

Examples may include:
- ✓ For a Visually Impaired Student - Read the document over the phone or provide an audio recording.
- ✓ Low-Tech Strategies – Pickup or mail instructional packets, projects, assignments, followed by an email, phone call, or other communication methods.

Based on guidance from the *USDOE Supplemental Fact Sheet Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities,* March 21, modifications and accommodations to virtual may include:
- ✓ Extended time for assignments,
- ✓ Captioned videos,
- ✓ Videos with embedded sign language,
- ✓ Accessible reading materials, and
- ✓ Speech/language services.

The link to the supplemental document can be found here

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Ensuring compliance with IDEA, Section 504, and ADA should not prevent any school from offering educational programs through distance instruction. Free technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) web access team is available for questions regarding web platform selection and development for student learning, and to ensure compliance with the civil rights laws that OCR enforces. Districts should contact OCRWebAccessTA@ed.gov for technical assistance. A few other resources include an OCR Short Webinar on Online Education and Website Accessibility and a fact sheet on Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Schools While Protecting the Civil Rights of Students. Additional resources for supporting students with special needs can be found here. The link to the Special Education Services Q & A document dated 03/27/2020 is located here.

English Learners (EL)
As LEAs focus on supporting English Language Learners, it is essential to make every effort to provide effective two-way communication with families in a language that they understand. Instruction and assessments should be tailored to students' English Language proficiency needs in all four language domains (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing). Additional Guidance to Support English Learners Resources

SECTION F: ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE & OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

ALABAMA LITERACY ACT IMPLEMENTATION
With the urgency to assist districts in this unprecedented End-of-Year school closing, we know that supporting districts in the Literacy Act implementation remains vital to our future success. Over the last two weeks, ALSDE staff have been working collaboratively to ensure that we provide districts with the information and updates to meet the timelines as applicable. We realize there may be some of the Literacy Act components that will be altered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the *Alabama Literacy Act LEA Uniform Report* requirement asks districts to report end-of-year reading deficiency numbers and percentages for all students in grades K-3. However, most schools' screener data was gathered in January 2020, so this will not be the most accurate data. As we finalize the uniform report mechanism, we will provide additional reporting options to include "Not Applicable" for information which has been altered as a result of COVID-19. The ALSDE will provide ongoing support, updates, and flexibility (as applicable) to ensure that districts can successfully implement the Literacy Act requirements while also understanding that districts are faced with multiple challenges to not only finish the school year but also reopen next year with many unforeseen dynamics related to this health and safety crisis.

- ✓ **Early Reading and Math Assessment Systems:** The ALSDE Memorandum providing updated processes and procedures for districts to access the vendor workshop can be found here. While this isn't the traditional face-to-face method previously planned, we hope that this opportunity will allow districts to continue with the

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selection process and complete their assessment system selection by the extended May 8, 2020, deadline.

✓ **Literacy Act Implementation Guide**: The Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) has been working diligently to complete this guidance manual by March 31, 2020. If there are unpredictable circumstances, the guide may not be posted until Friday, April 3, 2020. Thank you for your patience as we continue to navigate this crisis while also providing districts with the resources needed to implement early literacy.

✓ **Alabama Literacy Act LEA Uniform Report:** Pursuant to the Literacy Act, districts will report various required data. However, with the COVID-19 crisis, the ALSDE realizes some of the information will not be attainable while other information will be accessible. Once the districts have successfully closed their schools, we will provide the reporting mechanism and guidance in an official memorandum. Our first priority remains assisting districts with this unprecedented end-of-year school closure; however, we will also maintain a laser focus on critical early literacy priorities outlined in the Literacy Act.

✓ **Hiring Regional Personnel and ALSDE Summer Learning Opportunities:** ALSDE has adjusted their timeline while continuing to work on the processes, procedures, and guidance for hiring regional literacy specialists and for summer learning offerings, the current priority is on providing clear and current guidance on the end-of-year school closures. Updates will be communicated at a later date.

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SETTINGS

While staff in alternative settings may deliver instruction differently from comprehensive schools, all the guidance included in this bulletin applies to alternative schools. Districts and schools should build upon the flexibility inherent in their unique alternative model to meet the needs of seniors.

CLEANING OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides recommendations on the cleaning and disinfection of rooms or areas of those with suspected or with confirmed COVID-19 have visited. It is aimed at limiting the survival of novel coronavirus in key environments. These recommendations are updated as additional information becomes available. These guidelines are focused on community, non-healthcare facilities (e.g., schools, institutions of higher education, offices, daycare centers, businesses, community centers) that do and do not house persons overnight. These guidelines are not meant for cleaning staff in healthcare facilities or repatriation sites, households, or for others for whom specific guidance already exists.   These guidelines are not meant for cleaning staff in healthcare facilities or repatriation sites, households, or for others for whom specific guidance already exists.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations: Interim Recommendations for US Community Facilities with Suspected/Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019

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COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE SUPPORT FOR ALL STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Many seniors and their families feel they have lost some of the best parts of their senior year, and many end-of-year senior traditions remain in question. School counseling and other educators should explore offering virtual support services, especially as a systemic way to stay connected with youth of concern.

Some of the relevant resources to help with the design and implementation of a virtual support system include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ American School Counselor Association's guidelines, position statement, and webinar related to providing virtual school counseling support services.
- ✓ National Institute on Mental Health's child and teen coping strategies for reducing stress related to traumatic events.
- ✓ Guidelines developed by the National Association of School Nurses and National Association of School Psychologists on how to talk with students about COVID-19.

Depending on students' needs, some additional trauma-informed and social-emotional supports schools may want to consider providing include:

- ✓ Offering supervised/staffed digital forums for seniors to connect, manage stress and anxiety, share positives, and acknowledge the challenges they are dealing with.
- ✓ Inviting seniors to suggest ideas on how to connect or implement new/different rituals to mirror senior year traditions that may not be possible while current social distancing and safety measures are in place.
- ✓ Regularly updating students and families on where basic needs can be met or where supports are located in the community (food, housing support, financial support, etc.).

Reassuring seniors that colleges nationwide are being asked to provide flexibility with final admission selections, including completion of specific course requirements, and increase support for this year's transition to postsecondary education.

EDUCATE/LEAD ALABAMA

- ✓ EDUCATE/LEAD ALABAMA are formative systems that are not tied to employment.
- ✓ Consult with your local board attorney and district policies and procedure for other personnel-related issues.
- ✓ If the 2019-2020 EDUCATE/LEAD ALABAMA systems are not closed out for this unprecedented school year, they will not be considered a citation for future ALSDE compliance monitoring.

E-RATE CONSIDERATIONS

On March 18, 2020, the FCC waived the gift rules governing the E-rate and Rural Health Care programs until September 30, 2020. Specifically, the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau has waived the gift rules until September 30, 2020, to enable service providers to offer and RHC and E-Rate program participants to solicit and accept improved connections or additional equipment for telemedicine or remote learning during the COVID-19 outbreak. Information can be found here.

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LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALISTS VITAL ROLE IN THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS

In the ever-changing information and education landscape, the instructional role of school librarians is vitally important for staff and students. As print and digital literacies, inquiry, and reading motivation have become crucial elements of teaching and learning, school librarians as educators and information specialists play a key instructional role in successful schools. To accomplish the mission of the Alabama Library Media Program, school librarians must be equipped and ready to support the education of students in a variety of roles. More information on the resources you school's library media specialist can provide can be found here.

OTHER EXAMPLE STATE/DISTRICT PLANS & SUPPORT MECHANISMS

A number of example plans from other states and school districts can be found here.

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LEA INFORMATION & ALSDE ASSISTANCE

The Alabama State Department of Education's phone number is 334-694-4700. All information related to COVID-19 and school closures is available on ALSDE's COVID-19 webpage.

Office of Student Learning
Dr. Elisabeth Davis, Assistant State Superintendent
334-694-4692
edavis@alsde.edu

AMSTI	**ARI**	**Instructional Services**
AMSTI, 334-694-4727	*ARI, 334-694-4632*	*Instructional Services,*
Dr. Sandy Ledwell	*Karen Porter*	*334-694-4768*
sledwell@alsde.edu	kporter@alsde.edu	*Sean J. Stevens*
		sstevens@alsde.edu

Arts Education
Andy Meadows
ameadows@alsde.edu

Library Media
Cristin Dillard
cdillard@alsde.edu

Science
Dr. Michal Robinson
mrobinson@alsde.edu

English Language Arts
Jessica Morton
jessica.morton@alsde.edu

Mathematics
Cathy Jones
cjones01@alsde.edu

School Counseling
Dr. Willietta Conner
wconner@alsde.edu

Sean J. Stevens
sstevens@alsde.edu

Health/Physical Education
Jonathan Thompson
jonathan.thompson@alsde.edu

Social Studies
Nettie Carson-Mullins
ncarson-mullins@alsde.edu

Graduation Requirements
Instructional Services, 334-694-4768
Sean J. Stevens, sstevens@alsde.edu

Attendance & Student Enrollment
Prevention & Support Services, 334-694-4717
Dr. Marilyn Lewis, mlewis@alsde.edu
Dr. Kay Warfield, kaw@alsde.edu

Career and Technical Education (CTE)
Division of CTE/WFD, 334-694-4876
Jennifer Burt, jburt@alsde.edu
April Shrader, ashrader@alsde.edu

Credit-Advancement/Credit Recovery
Instructional Services, 334-694-4768
Andy Meadows, ameadows@alsde.edu

English Learners (EL)
Dr. Elisabeth Davis, 334-694-4692
edavis@alsde.edu

Early College Credit Programs
Instructional Services, 334-694-4768
AP & IB
Dr. Michal Robinson, mrobinson@alsde.edu

Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit
Sean J. Stevens, sstevens@alsde.edu

Federal Programs & PowerSchool
Evaluation & Innovation, 334-694-4710
Angela Martin, amartin@alsde.edu

Office of School Improvement
Dr. Molly Killingsworth, mkillingsworth@alsde.edu
Dr. Melissa Shields, mshields@alsde.edu

Special Education
Special Education Services, 334-694-4782
Crystal Richardson, crystalr@alsde.edu

Student Assessment
Student Assessment, 334-694-4817
Maggie Hicks, mhicks@alsde.edu

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