

Questions and Answers

Curriculum and Instruction

1. How are we going to teach the kids in our county who live in areas where they can't take on-line classes because they have either no internet service or very poor service? Even if we have hot spots in parking lot, who is going to bring them? Are we going to have to issue Chromebooks to every student?
There are many different options that districts can employ based on the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan. This plan will be due by April 3, 2020. Local school districts can refer to the *ALSDE Academic & Technical Guidance for Emergency End-of-Year School Closures Manual* for further guidance.
2. Will there be a list posted of the critical standards for all subjects or just Reading, Math and Science?
Core subject area standards will be in a hyperlink in the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan.
3. Would it be a possibility for the state to select teachers (Master teachers) to present lessons per grade level for each subject for the APT possibility? This could be a PD opportunity for grade level teachers across the state.
According to the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan, APT can be an option for districts. Dr. Cindy Kirk, who serves as the Director of Education for APT, is on our SEAL Task Force and is working collaboratively to support our educational needs.
4. Systems like mine will struggle with virtual learning, but worksheets are not best practice. I'm struggling because of my situation. Will there be a group set up by system for all virtual learning, blended learning, mostly paper pencil? We struggle getting homework turned in each day.
There are many different options that districts can employ based on the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan. This plan will be due by April 3, 2020. Local school districts can refer to the *ALSDE Academic & Technical Guidance for Emergency End-of-Year School Closures Manual* for further guidance.
5. When will we have the priority standards Dr. Boyd referenced in WebEx?
Friday, March 27, 2020
6. If capable, can districts continue to provide instruction through their LMS?
Yes, absolutely. You will identify your instruction delivery method in your 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan.
7. Can we consider averaging the first three 9 weeks to get final grade for seniors?
This is an option that is identified in Sections C and D of the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan that will be developed by your district.

8. If we return to school, can we voluntarily take the ACAP for student experience, troubleshooting network/computer issues and baseline achievement data?
Alabama submitted a waiver to the USDOE for Assessment and Accountability, as well as select federal reporting requirements for the 2019-2020 school year. As a result, state required assessments will not continue for this school year.

9. Can teachers provide one-on-one OT small group (5 or less) instruction in school, home or community settings if mutually agreed upon?
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no in person instruction is allowed.

10. How will the Critical Standards be categorized and how soon can we get them?
a. Core Subjects?
b. Reading and Math only?
c. K-8?
d. Core High School Subjects?

Critical Standards are categorized by subject for K-8. For high schools, critical courses needed for graduation requirements have been identified in Section D of the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan.

11. If we move to an on-line delivery model, how do we handle the students that do not have access to the internet or devices?

There are many different options that districts can employ based on the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan. This plan will be due by April 3, 2020. Local school districts can refer to the *ALSDE Academic & Technical Guidance for Emergency End-of-Year School Closures Manual* for further guidance.

12. Will this delivery option be for enrichment only?

Enrichment only opportunities would end April 5, 2020, when schools re-open in a nontraditional method.

13. If we sent paper packets out covering these standards, how do we ensure the standards are taught?

a. Some of our parents are not able to teach.

Packets provided during enrichment are not to be graded currently. However, packets obtained and completed once schools re-open in either a non-traditional manner can be graded. To ensure mastery of standards, refer to the selected method from your district in your 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan.

14. How will this impact the implementation of the new Math standards for next year?

The 2020-2021 school year is a transition year for the Math standards.

15. Will our teachers be able to OMIT any CRITICAL STANDARDS that we have ALREADY taught?

The goal is to ensure all critical standards are assessed for mastery by the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Any previously mastered standards do not have to be retaught.

16. Several of us have very low numbers in classes... especially seniors. Is face-to-face instruction allowed if using small groups of students who can be appropriately separated? Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no in person instruction is allowed.
17. Will work be graded?
This would be determined with the completion of the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan by your district.
18. Will we require live sessions from teachers? Will they be required to report to work at some point?
This would be determined with the completion of the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan by your district. As employees report to the building, strict adherence to all social distancing guidelines is necessary.
19. What is the expectations for 4th nine week grades?
This would be determined with the completion of the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan by your district.
20. What is the expectation for kids being retained? Can we retain kids with only 3 nine weeks?
This would be determined from your district's selection of the grading option found in Section C of the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan by your district.
21. Can you provide work in a digital format when not all kids have access to the Internet at home—or is that making a difference in the quality of instruction for the have and have-nots?
Instruction must be provided to all students. However, it is the LEA's decision on how to provide equitable services through the completion of the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan. The delivery method options found in Section A of the plan provides the LEA with multiple alternatives to provide instruction.
22. What support will be provided for high poverty rural districts where many families do not have Internet or devices?
It is the LEA's decision on how to provide equitable services through the completion of the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan. The delivery method options found in Section A of the plan provides the LEA with multiple alternatives to provide instruction.
23. According to the Federal Secretary of Education, teachers will be asked to assess the students and determine their need for compensatory services. Will this be based on the

standards taught prior to the school closure or will it include standards that were to be taught April-June, that every student did not receive?
Per the Governor's order on March 26, 2020, all k-12 public schools will re-open on April 6, 2020, with a delivery method determined by the district in the completion of their 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan.

Special Education

1. What are the expectations on delivering instruction to special education students virtually? 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.

Examples:

For a visually impaired student - read the document over the phone or provide an audio recording.

Low-tech strategies – pickup or mailing of instructional packets, projects, assignments
Ensuring compliance with IDEA, Section 504, and ADA should not prevent any school from offering educational programs through distance instruction.

2. Can self-contained or medically fragile classes be considered for small group instruction? Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no in person instruction is allowed.
3. Any guidance on EL and special education instruction?
Instructional support material are located in the ALSDE Academic & Technical Guidance for Emergency End-of-Year School Closures Manual beginning March 27, 2020.
4. How will specialized plans be addressed? ELL, IDEA, 504?
Specialized plans are addressed in Section E of the 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan that will be completed by your district.
5. Would the State allow districts to use platforms already in place, or will the State dictate the platform?
The platform utilized should be a part of the districts' 2019-2020 Local Education Agency Academic Continuity Plan completed by your district.
6. Any guidance on IEPs and re-evals that were scheduled for April and May?
Making every effort to complete these processes in a timely/expeditiously manner is vital. However, where some evaluations require face-to-face, in person assessment or other interaction, it may not be possible in light of the health and safety mandates

currently in place due to the COVID-19. Document efforts/results and resume the process when school reopens, and health and safety mandates are lifted.

7. Has there been any thought on sharing best practices? What are other schools doing? By clicking this link, you will find some best practices that have been shared by National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) <https://ncsi-library.wested.org/resources>.
8. Is face-to-face instruction allowed if using small groups of students who can be appropriately separated?
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no in person instruction is allowed.
9. Will further guidance be given to LEAs regarding IEP timelines or extensions? Teams do not have adequate data and guidance to write appropriate IEPs at this time, nor do they have access to all required team members.
Yes, as the USDOE continues to provide states with updates guidance will be made available. 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.
10. Is there anything else we can do to get better guidance for special education?
The ALSDE will continue to work with the USDOE as well as our other national and state partners to provide further guidance as it relates to special education.
11. If we move to an on-line delivery model, how do we provide accommodations and modifications for students with special needs?
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:
https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/faq/rr/policyguidance/Supple%20Fact%20Sheet%203.21.20%20FINAL.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=

Finance

1. Will potential budget shortages affect the proposed school construction bond?
Possibly, our legislators will make the final decision.
2. Is there a potential for ETF money not being distributed to systems to fill budget shortage?
For this current fiscal year, we have approximately 300 million dollars in the Budget Stabilization Fund which serves as a mechanism to fund potential shortfalls.

3. Can we ask the Feds for a waiver on carryover limits for all federal monies?
Yes, we will ask for waivers where applicable. Our goal is to maximize flexibility for LEAs during these unprecedented times.
4. Will there be flexibility in how state and federal funds can be spent?
State funds can possibly be flexed through an approved waiver. Contact Mr. Andy Craig for particularities. For federal funds, we will ask for waivers where applicable. Our goal is to maximize flexibility for LEAs during these unprecedented times.
5. Will we be expected to make drastic cuts for 20-21 school year due to the effects the Coronavirus may have on the budget?
At this point, it is impossible to predict. The Budget Stabilization Fund serves as a reserve fund source to help supplement the Education Trust Fund during difficult economic times.
6. Any chance for emergency money (i.e. federal) for student devices, and WiFi hotspots?
As of today, the U.S. Senate voted 96-0 just before midnight ET in favor of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), a bill to provide approximately \$2 trillion in emergency supplemental funding in the wake of COVID-19. The U.S. House is expected to give the final approval of their version of the bill. This bill would provide \$30.75 billion in an Education Stabilization Fund, to be divided among governors (\$3 billion), higher education (\$14.25 billion), and SEAs for elementary and secondary education (nearly \$13.5 billion).
7. Will funds be available to assist with compensatory education for students if the IEP Team determines it to be necessary once we return?
Emergency funds will be a potential source; it is crucial for the LEA superintendent, CSFO, and Special Education Director to discuss these concerns.
8. Are raises, A & T money, and a bond issue totally off the table given the budget process is kind of topsy-turvy now?
These decisions will likely be delayed so that Education Trust Fund revenue can be further evaluated.
9. What can we do about our September 30 fiscal year date for expending FY2020 funds in Perkins, Federal Programs, 21st CCLC, etc?
We are hopeful that we will be granted flexibility waivers on carryover limitations. We are also hopeful that the CARE Act will give us broader waiver authority regarding carryover limitations.
10. Can we make some funds flexible -Transportation? Nursing? Books?-to move to other areas?
State funds can possibly be flexed through an approved waiver. Contact Mr. Andy Craig for particularities. For federal funds, we will ask for waivers where applicable. Our goal is to maximize flexibility for LEAs during these unprecedented times.

11. Can we go ahead and get our Enhancing Tech funds so we can do upgrades while buildings are closed to the public?
Assuming you are referring to the A&T funds, these funds are likely to be delayed along with the budget process. If you need flexibility with existing A&T funds, contact Mr. Andy Craig.
12. What process should school systems be following to document additional expenses incurred during this crisis?
Follow your district guidelines.

General Questions

1. Can Superintendents get the results of the survey recently completed?
Yes
2. Would the state consider buying a license for something like zoom so we would have interactive meetings with students who do have internet?
Google Hangout is a free interactive option that districts can utilize if they do not have funds to support the purchase of zoom.
3. This may be more of an Alabama Dept. of Public Health question, but as far as graduation ceremonies are concerned, we can't do them until we get an increase on the number of people that can be in one area.
The Alabama State Department of Education follows health guidelines established by the Alabama Department of Public Health during pandemics.
4. Will we be launching PowerSchool as scheduled? Data upload is scheduled for June 5th and 30th; with a launch mid-July?
Based on recommendations from superintendents and the SEAL Task Force, it was recommended that full implementation of PowerSchool be delayed for one year with pilot districts continuing for the 2020-2021 school year.
5. We closed earlier than the governors decree - do we remove these from the calendar or leave marked as excused absences?
Governor Ivey issued a State of Emergency due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) on March 13, 2020. If your district closed March 16th through March 18th, those days are covered under the State of Emergency. In addition, if your school was closed, no attendance should have been taken.