



STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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State Superintendent of Education

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## **NEW Superintendent’s Extending Access To Learning (SEAL) Task Force to Assist Districts during COVID-19 Closure Period**

**Montgomery, Ala.** – The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is taking a proactive approach to assist districts during the COVID-19 closure period.

State Superintendent Dr. Eric Mackey is assembling a Superintendent’s Extending Access to Learning (SEAL) Task Force comprised of educators and other state partners from across the state who will bring a wealth of expertise and experiences to this critical work.

Dr. Mackey will host the first task force meeting Thursday, March 19, 2020, and will continue to meet with the group virtually every week until further notice. This task force will lead Alabama’s efforts to identify short- and long-term priorities for schoolwide operations, both functionally and instructionally.

Dr. Mackey emphasizes, “We know there is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to schoolwide operations, so this task force will help us ensure that statewide guidance encompasses multiple facets for all of Alabama’s districts. While we do not know what the future holds, we want to assure Alabama’s educators, parents, students and community stakeholders that we are committed to helping all of our districts get through these uncertain times while identifying and offering access to all available resources, both operational and educational, through a variety of delivery models.”

Through the work of this task force, a systemic framework will be developed to provide districts with timely information, as well as work collaboratively to research and identify all available options in collaboration with other states’ leaders facing some of the same situations.

The task force will first work to identify various research-based learning pathways and resources that are available to meet the needs of all districts in Alabama, evaluate the capacity of current statewide “non-traditional” instructional delivery methods, and develop a statewide plan for short and long-term implementation.

They will also prioritize specific operational and instructional components that must be addressed to ensure that when schools do reopen their doors, high schools students are still on track for college and career plans, as well as have a plan for elementary and middle school-aged student “gaps” that may arise during the unpredictable closure period.

“Just as individual communities rally around their families during challenging times, Alabama’s education community is no different. We all want to provide our children with all of the resources they need during this time, but it will take a collaborative effort of this magnitude to be successful. Our ultimate goal is to supply consistent communications, quality instructional plans to help students maintain learning momentum during this closure period and minimize the disruption to the extent possible for all students.”

As of today, Wednesday, March 18, all 142 of Alabama’s public school districts will be closed and have provided students with short-term “optional enrichment learning activities through a variety of delivery methods, including hard copy, digital, and blended models.”

However, we must be prepared in the event that schools do not reopen April 6. If that scenario becomes reality, Mackey’s new task force will be prepared to provide districts with short- (end of school year or through summer) and long-term (August 2020) options to meet the needs of Alabama’s students.

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