COVID-19 & Schools

Federal Education Update
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Overview

• **COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Recap**
  • What’s happened so far? Where are we now?

• **U.S. Federal Response**
  • How has the federal government already responded to COVID-19?
  • What additional measures is the federal government discussing now?
  • How will these legislative and regulatory actions impact schools?

• **Resources**
  • Learn how to stay informed and advocate for your schools

• **Q&A / Discussion**
COVID-19: How Did We Get Here?

- **12/1 through 1/11**: First case and death reported in Wuhan, China.
- **1/12 through 1/31**: Cases spread across Asia ahead of/during the Lunar New Year.; US and South Korea confirm first cases; World Health Organization (WHO) declares COVID-19 an international public health emergency
- **2/1 through 2/19**: Virus spreads across Asia and Europe; US cases begin to grow.
- **2/21 through 2/29**: Italy confirms first few cases and infection count surges to 655 within a week; US reports first death; WHO raises threat of COVID-19 global outbreak to ‘Very High’
- **3/1 through 3/6**: US cases continue to grow; Congress passes 1st emergency COVID supplemental
- **3/7 through 3/14**: WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic; Trump declares a national emergency; Congress passes 2nd emergency COVID supplemental
- **3/15 through 3/27**: Wuhan, China reports no new cases (hits peak) as virus makes its way across Africa. Countries begin announcing widespread closure of businesses, schools, etc. and cancelling/postponing large events. Congress passes 3rd emergency COVID supplemental (CARES Act)

COVID-19 Now: School Impact

As of March 31, 2020, 5:50 p.m.

• COVID-19 has forced widespread closures in varying degrees to all U.S. states and territories in an unprecedented disruption of K-12 schooling.

• School closures have impacted at least 124,000 U.S. public and private school, affecting at least **55.1 million school students**.

COVID-19 Takeaways

Trump Administration Guidance: Working Until April 30 to Slow the Spread

School operations can accelerate the spread of COVID-19.

- Governors of states w/ evidence of community spread should close schools in affected and surrounding areas.
- Governors should close schools in communities near areas of community transmission, even if those areas are in neighboring states.
- State and local officials should close schools where COVID-19 has been identified in the population associated with the school.
- States and localities that close schools need to address childcare and the nutritional needs of children.
- In states with evidence of community transmission, bars, restaurants, food courts, gyms, and other indoor/outdoor venues where groups of people congregate should be closed.

Source: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20_coronavirus-guidance_8.5x11_315PM.pdf
• **U.S. Congress**
  - Phase One: HR 6074, Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act
  - Phase Two: HR 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act
  - Phase Three: S 3548 CARES Act
  - Phase Four: TBD

• **Federal Agencies**
  - Agency guidance, waivers, and flexibilities
  - **Check regularly for updates:**
    - [https://aasa.org/LeadingEdge.aspx](https://aasa.org/LeadingEdge.aspx)
Phase 1: HR 6074, Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (3/6/20)

• $8.3B emergency package
  • 3x request from White House.
  • Includes $2.2B to help federal, state, and local health agencies prepare for and respond to COVID-19.
U.S. Federal Response: Congress

- Phase 2: HR 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act (3/18/20)
  - Nutrition Provisions
    - **$500 million** for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to provide nutrition assistance for children and their mothers who have lost their jobs as a result of the outbreak.
    - **$400 million** for The Emergency Food Assistance Program to help local food banks meet increased need for low-income Americans.
    - **$100 million** for nutrition assistance for Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories.
    - A provision that allows the Department of Agriculture to approve state plans to provide emergency Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) food assistance to households with children who would otherwise receive free or reduced-price school meals in the event that their school is closed (The MEAL Act).
    - Gives the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to approve state waivers addressing nutrition assistance with school closures even if it increases cost to the federal government.
    - Provisions to allow child and adult care centers to serve food to go, allow the Secretary of Agriculture to waive meal pattern requirements in child nutrition programs if there is a disruption in food supply, and allow the Secretary of Agriculture to issue nationwide school meal waivers during the emergency.
    - Allows participants to be certified for WIC without being physically present at a WIC clinic.
    - Suspends work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) during the emergency.
    - Allows states to request waivers for emergency CR-SNAP benefits to existing SNAP households up to the maximum monthly allotment.
Phase 2: HR 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act (Continued)

- **Health Provisions**
  - Provides free COVID-19 testing to all Americans, regardless of insurance.
  - Medicaid and CHIP, which cover over 45 million children between the two programs, will cover diagnostic testing, including the cost of a provider visit to receive testing, with no cost to the patient.
  - Increases states' federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for public health programs like Medicaid and CHIP for the duration of the emergency.
  - Increases Medicaid allotments for U.S. Territories.
  - The bill ensures that American Indians and Alaskan Natives do not experience cost sharing for COVID-19 testing.
Phase 2: HR 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act (Continued)

- **Paid Sick Leave, Unemployment Insurance, and Family and Medical Leave Provisions**
  - *Provides* employees of employers with under 500 employees the right to two weeks of fully-paid leave when they are sick, or two weeks of paid leave at 2/3 of their normal rate to care for a family member.
  - *Provides* employees of employers with under 500 employees the right to take up to 12-weeks of job-protected leave.
  - *Provides* $1 billion in 2020 emergency grants to states to meet the increased need for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits.
  - *Provides* several tax breaks for employers who give their employees mandatory paid leave during the emergency.
Phase 3: CARES Act (Passed 3/27)

- $15.5 billion for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program;
- $8.8 billion for Child Nutrition Programs to ensure students receive meals when school is not in session;
- $3.5 billion for Child Care and Development Block Grants, which provide child-care subsidies to low-income families and can be used to augment state and local systems;
- $750 million for Head Start early-education programs;
- $100 million in Project SERV grants to help clean and disinfect schools, and provide support for mental health services and distance learning;
- $69 million for schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education; and
- $5 million for health departments to provide guidance on cleaning and disinfecting schools and day-care facilities.
- The $13.5 billion in stabilization fund money could be used to provide K-12 students internet connectivity and internet-connected devices, and a separate item in the bill for rural development provides $25 million to support "distance learning."

Phase 4: TBD
U.S. Federal Response: Agencies

- **CDC:** Interim guidance for schools

- **USDA:** Waivers for schools to serve food in non-congregate settings (i.e., other than cafeterias)

- **ED:**
  - FERPA/Student Privacy
  - IDEA/Serving Students w/ Disabilities during COVID-19
  - COVID-19 Impact on Accountability & Assessments

- **FCC:**
  - E-Rate flexibilities and waivers on program rules
  - Allow beneficiaries to utilize funding to provide home wireless service to existing school devices and hotspots for students who lack internet access at home
Resources

• Other Resources
  • AASA
    • AASA COVID Resources: website
  • Department of Education (ED)
    • COVID-19 Website: https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus
  • Education Week
    • https://www.edweek.org/
  • POLITICO Morning Education Newsletter
    • https://www.politico.com/morningeducation/
Get Involved, Stay Engaged!

- AASA Legislative Team on Twitter
- AASA PEP Talk Podcast
- AASA Policy Blog, The Leading Edge
- Weekly & Monthly Updates
- Websites & Newsletters
  - EdWeek
  - Politics K12
  - Morning Education (Politico)
  - Real Clear Education
  - Cabinet Report
Questions?

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