

This page is being continuously updated. If you've opened this document more than once, please clear your history/cache and refresh the page to view the most up-to-date version.

All new/updated information is highlighted throughout this FAQ.

In This FAQ

- [General](#)
- [Seat Time and Distance Learning](#)
- [Special Education](#)
- [LA 4](#)
- [Federal Child Nutrition Feeding Programs](#)
- [Assessment and Accountability](#)
 - [Statewide Assessments](#)
 - [Accountability](#)
 - [Educator Evaluation and Certification](#)
 - [Teacher Preparation](#)
 - [Instructional Preparation](#)
 - [Student Technology Support](#)
- [Data Systems](#)
- [Nonpublic School Choice Programs](#)
- [Teacher Leader Summit](#)
- [Events](#)

General

Q: How will we know if there are any additional confirmed cases in Louisiana?

A: The Louisiana Department of Health posts daily updated case numbers online at <http://ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus/>.

Q: What symptoms are associated with COVID-19?

A: The most commonly-known symptoms associated with COVID-19 include: fever (83-98 percent), cough (76-82 percent), and shortness of breath/difficulty breathing (11-44 percent). Less commonly exhibited symptoms include nausea, diarrhea, and sputum production.

Q: Can an individual showing potential symptoms of COVID-19 be tested in Louisiana?

A: Yes. Healthcare providers, such as hospitals, have the capacity to determine individuals in need of testing.

Q: What preventative actions can be taken?

A: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Louisiana Department of Health recommend protecting yourself and students in your care by taking some [basic precautions](#):

- Wash your hands often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- If you think you are sick, consult your healthcare provider.

Q: Should individuals and families have a plan for COVID-19?

A: There are actions we all can take as individuals to be prepared for COVID-19. The same actions you take to prevent the spread of flu put you in a good position for addressing any respiratory illness - cover your cough, wash your hands (especially after being in public spaces, shaking hands), stay home if you are sick, and get your flu shot. Individuals and families should also monitor the [CDC COVID-19 website](#), as well as the [Louisiana Department of Health website](#), for additional information, including updated travel advisories before making plans to travel internationally.

Q: Where can we find more information about COVID-19?

A: If you have questions about coronavirus, please contact the Louisiana 211 Network by dialing 211. Or, you can text the keyword LACOVID to 898-211 for the most current information about the outbreak as it becomes available. The [CDC COVID-19 website](#), as well as the [Louisiana Department of Health website](#), are also helpful resources.

Q: Has the State of Louisiana issued an emergency proclamation related to COVID-19?

A: Yes. On Friday, March 13, 2020, Gov. John Bel Edwards signed a proclamation that, among other actions, closed all K-12 public schools statewide as Louisiana seeks to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the state. Read the [Governor's proclamation](#).

Q: If a school system's Spring Break is scheduled the week of April 13, may the school system suspend Spring Break or move Spring Break to the period of mandatory facility closure?

A: Yes, with proper notification to parents.

Q: If non-12 month staff or teachers work to provide instruction or services, will school systems encounter legal issues if we need to make up school time and need to pay staff and teachers for more time worked?

A: School systems need to consult with their own legal counsel as contracts and policies may vary.

Q: Are there waivers relative to charter board meetings, for example, allowing board members to vote via phone instead of in-person?

A: The Governor has requested that the legislature suspend quorum requirements for open meetings. Such would apply to charter board meetings as well.

Q: Where can school systems find guidance on appropriate cleaning procedures for facilities and buses?

A: The CDC has issued [guidance on cleaning](#).

Seat Time and Distance Learning

Q: Relative to attendance, what are the waiver opportunities for students who may not have the necessary 63,720 instructional minutes per year?

A: The annual 63,720 instructional minute requirement has been suspended via the [Governor's proclamation](#).

Q: Can our school system transition to an online learning platform or other distance education modality for the remainder of the school year?

A: Yes, instructional minute requirements have also been suspended for distance education courses and curriculum delivery via the [Governor's proclamation](#).

Q: Is there a state approval process for general online providers?

A: There is not a state approval process for general online education providers. School systems have the choice and autonomy to approve and use any online provider that delivers instruction within the provisions of Bulletin 741 Section 2326.

School systems also have an option to utilize online providers that have been vetted and approved as [Course Choice providers](#) by BESE. Supplemental Course Allocation (SCA) funds can continue to be used to pay associated course costs with these providers through June 30, 2020.

Q. Will the Department provide distance and homeschool learning tools to support school systems during this time?

A: Yes. The Department has released a suite of resources to support school system leaders with academic and planning during this extraordinary time. They include:

- [Continuous Education Guide](#): Guidance and tools to support school system leaders as they analyze available instructional and technology resources, develop an approach to providing distance learning opportunities, and implement a distance learning plan.
- [Academic Resources Guide](#): A comprehensive listing of academic resources available for distance learning formats, organized by subject and curriculum provider.

The Department is also working with Louisiana Public Broadcasting (LPB) to provide the following for students, parents and educators:

- [“At-Home Learning”](#) website includes links to Department-produced guidance.
- Educational programming closely aligned to Louisiana student learning standards, whenever possible. Access the [LBP broadcasting schedule](#).

Q: Are school systems required to offer distance learning, or is this optional? Will a school system be penalized for not providing formal distance education and instead providing access to materials and resources? Will days or minutes need to be made up?

A: School systems are not required to offer distance learning. Schools may offer complete distance learning, as capabilities exist. The required 63,720 instructional minute requirement per year shall also be suspended and minutes will **not** have to be made up.

Q: Are students required to participate in distance learning if it is offered?

A: School systems may offer distance education and may keep track of which students are participating.

Q: What is the definition of “distance learning”? Does this include access to online curricular materials or the use of platforms like Google Classroom?

A: Distance Education includes ongoing and regular teacher-initiated interaction for the purposes of teaching, evaluating, and providing assistance throughout the duration of the course and curriculum delivery. This may include but is not limited to synchronous or asynchronous instructive interaction, including emails, videoconferencing, satellite learning, online chats, phone calls, and feedback on homework and assessments.

The components of a distance education program can be found in [Bulletin 741 Section 2326](#).

Q: How are Carnegie units addressed under minutes requirements? Will Carnegie credit be awarded by grade only?

A: The Bulletin 741 §2314 instructional minute requirements for course credit have been waived. Students can earn Carnegie credit by successfully completing all course requirements for the distance education courses authorized by the school system.

Q: If teachers are offering lessons through YouTube or other student-directed formats, must teachers take attendance? Can attendance be project-based (i.e., based on the completion of longitudinal projects)?

A: If school systems offer distance education, **the school system must take student attendance** every school day, and the teacher of record for each class must take attendance at the beginning of each class period.

Q: Is the Zoom platform CIPA compliant?

A: The LDOE provides CIPA Guidance in [Louisiana's Data Governance and Student Privacy Guidebook](#).

Q: What is the protocol for 12th-grade students who need to pass currently enrolled courses?

A: These are local school system decisions based on student needs. The school system may opt to employ distance education options to continue student learning or may opt to re-engage in instruction when the student returns to school

Q: Will JumpStart credential completion remain a mandatory requirement for JumpStart diploma students?

A: The Bulletin 741 Section §2319 Career Diploma IBC requirement has been waived through August 31, 2020.

Q: What opportunities are available through Supplemental Course Academy/Course Choice for students to access online learning opportunities?

A: The Supplemental Course Academy/Course Choice program [Frequently Asked Question document](#) has information available regarding students currently enrolled in courses and opportunities for new enrollments including an [Intersession catalog](#) of options and [directions for registering for intersession courses](#).

Q: What ACT preparation is available through Supplemental Course Allocation/Course Choice and other providers through June 30?

A: Several Supplemental Course Allocation/Course Choice providers and additional providers will have content available through June 30 for [ACT preparation](#).

Special Education

Q: What are the most important considerations for a school system shifting to distance education/online learning?

A: It is critically important for school systems to communicate with parents and guardians during and after the school closure regarding their child’s special education and related services. During the school closure, special education and related services may be impacted, and parents must understand what this means for their child during the school closure and when the child returns to school.

School systems should continue to provide special education and related services, to the extent possible. School systems should consult the Department’s IDEA Timelines and Documentation During Extended School Closure guidance for information about compliance with federal and state special education law.

School systems should continue to provide academic support to students with disabilities through

The determination of how a free and appropriate education (FAPE) is to be provided may need to be different during school closures that are a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The provision of FAPE may include, as appropriate, special education and related services provided through distance instruction provided virtually, online, or telephonically.

School systems should develop a plan to document any delays or instructional adjustments to the delivery of special education and related services. After an extended closure, school systems are responsible for reviewing how the closure impacted the delivery of special education and related services to students eligible for special education services. A data review should be conducted on all students with disabilities. If the student lost progress, teams will need to reassess services and determine whether the student requires compensatory education.

Q: Does a school system have flexibility to adapt the instructional method of delivery of special education and related services for distance education/online learning?

A: The U.S. Department of Education, in a [Supplemental Fact Sheet](#) issued on March 21, clarified that during this national emergency, schools may not be able to provide all services in the same manner they are typically provided. It may be unfeasible or unsafe for some schools, during current emergency school closures, to provide hands-on physical therapy, occupational therapy, or tactile sign language educational services. Many disability-related modifications and services may be effectively provided online. These may include, for instance, extensions of time for assignments, videos with accurate captioning or embedded sign language interpreting, accessible reading materials, and many speech or language services through video conferencing.

Q: What are some opportunities to continue to provide related or direct services to students with disabilities?

A: School systems can consider both low-tech and high-tech options for providing related or direct services to students with disabilities during the school closure. The provision of FAPE may include, as appropriate, related services provided through distance instruction provided virtually, online, or telephonically.

The Department released the [Partnerships for Success](#) vendor guide, which includes an informal list of organizations, utilizing innovative methods of delivery including teletherapy options, that can provide related or direct services to students with disabilities. The guide includes a list of certified providers, the services they provide (e.g. speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, school psychological services), and the method of delivery (e.g. virtual/teletherapy).

Q: What if there is a delay in providing special education and related services--or a delay in making decisions about how to provide services--as school systems shift to distance education/online learning?

A: Per the U.S. Department of Education, in a [Supplemental Fact Sheet](#) issued on March 21, it is important to emphasize that federal disability law allows for flexibility in determining how to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities. The determination of how FAPE is to be provided may need to be different in this time of unprecedented national emergency. FAPE may be provided consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing special education and related services to students. Where, due to the COVID-19 outbreak and resulting closures of schools, there has been an inevitable delay in providing services – or even making decisions about how to provide services - IEP teams must make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed when schools resume.

Q: If a school system shifts to distance education/online learning during a closure, is the school system responsible for providing special education and related services?

A: If a school system makes distance education/online learning available for all students during a closure, it must also consider how it will provide online services for its students with disabilities to ensure equal access. School systems must ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, students with disabilities can be provided special education and related services identified in their IEP or their Section 504 plan.

Per the U.S. Department of Education, in a [Supplemental Fact Sheet](#) issued on March 21, where technology itself imposes a barrier to access or where educational materials simply are not available in

an accessible format, educators may still meet their legal obligations by providing children with disabilities equally effective alternate access to the curriculum or services provided to other students. For example, if a teacher who has a blind student in her class is working from home and cannot distribute a document accessible to that student, she can distribute to the rest of the class an inaccessible document and, if appropriate for the student, read the document over the phone to the blind student or provide the blind student with an audio recording of a reading of the document aloud.

Q: In the event of a school system closure, is the school system responsible for providing special education and related services?

A: If a school system has extended school closures, the school system will remain responsible for FAPE of its students eligible for special education services with an IEP. If a school closure causes educational services for all students to pause within a school or school system, then the school/school system is generally not required to provide services to the affected students eligible for special education services during that same period of time. The school system should also consider whether the student could benefit from instructional telephone calls, online learning, and other distance-based learning approaches, to the extent available.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued [a Q&A document](#) on providing services to children with disabilities during the coronavirus outbreak.

Q: What should the school system do if an IEP or reevaluation is due during the school closure?

A: The U.S. Department of Education has provided [guidance](#). IEP teams are not required to meet in person while schools are closed. If an evaluation of a student with a disability requires a face-to-face assessment or observation, the evaluation would need to be delayed until school reopens. Evaluations and reevaluations that do not require face-to-face assessments or observations may take place while schools are closed, so long as a student's parent or legal guardian consents. These same principles apply to similar activities conducted by appropriate personnel for a student with a disability who has a plan developed under Section 504, or who is being evaluated under Section 504. School systems should develop a plan to support maintaining timelines and to document clearly if a delay occurs, the nature and extent of the delay and the plan to move as quickly as possible to prevent any further delay.

Q: If a school system shifts to distance education/online learning, does the school system need to conduct a change of placement IEP team meeting after 10 consecutive days of school closure?

A: OSEP has clarified that if a school system makes distance education/online learning available for all students during a closure, it is considered an alternate mode of instructional delivery. It **does not** constitute a change of placement. In other words, a school system does not need to follow the prior notice rules in 34 CFR § 300.503 or have an IEP team meeting to make a formal placement determination under 34 CFR § 300.116. If members of the IEP team believe that online or virtual

learning should be a part of the IEP once school reopens, the IEP team would need to meet and incorporate that into the IEP.

Please see other Q&As in this section for additional considerations regarding equal access, compensatory services, and the impact on individual students at high-risk for complications.

Q: If a student with a disability at high-risk for complications is excluded from school during a COVID-19 outbreak, is the exclusion considered a change of placement under IDEA?

A: If the exclusion is a temporary emergency measure (generally 10 consecutive school days or less), the provision of services such as online or virtual instruction, instructional telephone calls, and other curriculum-based instructional activities, to the extent available, is not considered a change in placement. If the team decides that an individual student has high-risk needs that should be met through homebound instruction, then the school system must issue a prior written notice proposing the change in placement. Parents should participate in a discussion during an IEP team meeting held by telephone or video conference.

Q: Will school systems receive flexibility or extensions on mandated timelines for special education compliance, such as initial evaluations and reevaluations, during the COVID-19 school closure?

A: Federal and state law and state policy define specific timelines for the provision of special education and related services. BESE approved initial waivers for a number of educational policies, including initial evaluation policies that impact students with disabilities. See [the BESE Emergency Waiver Memo](#) for the list of specific educational policies that impact students with disabilities.

Federal regulations govern additional special education compliance timelines including but not limited to Part C to B transition, initial IEP development (30 days from determination of special education and related services), and reevaluation timelines. The U.S. Department of Education has issued [guidance](#) on available flexibilities for IDEA Part B timelines. In general, school systems should develop a plan to support maintaining timelines and to document clearly if a delay occurs, the nature and extent of the delay and the plan to move as quickly as possible to prevent any further delay.

Q: Are school systems permitted to provide special education and related services at satellite sites?

A: If a school system continues to provide special education (e.g. specialized instruction) and related services (e.g. speech language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy) at a satellite site, the school system should follow each student's IEP, including instructional goals and service minutes. See the Q&A above for considerations with Distance Education and for students with disabilities who are at high-risk for complications due to a COVID-19 outbreak.

LA 4

Q: Does the attendance requirement still apply for LA 4 payments?

A: Absences related to COVID-19 will be excused absences.

Q: What happens to LA 4 monthly payments if a school closes?

A: LA 4 payments will continue and will be based on enrollment.

Federal Child Nutrition Feeding Programs

Q: Can I continue to provide meal services during the mandatory closure of schools?

A: Yes. Meals may be offered to children at school sites via the Seamless Summer Option (SSO). School Breakfast Program (SBP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP) meal patterns must be followed, with the flexibilities offered to schools, described below. Meals must contain all required components at this time (students are not allowed to select).

Q: Am I required to serve meals at all of my sites during the COVID-19 closure?

A: No. A school system may decide to provide meals at all sites or to consolidate operations at fewer sites.

Q: Are schools required to offer both breakfast and lunch meals?

A: No. Schools have the discretion to offer breakfast, lunch, or both. Through use of the Meal Service Timing Flexibility Waiver, schools may issue both breakfast and lunch simultaneously to children.

Q: How do I request approval from the State Agency for schools that wish to offer meals?

A: The Child Nutrition Program (CNP) [online agreement](#) must be updated to include the application for the Seamless Waiver for all school sites that plan to serve meals ([Seamless Waiver Application Instructions](#)). To expedite approval, email childnutritionprograms@la.gov with a complete listing of schools where meals will be served.

Q: What flexibilities are offered to schools that wish to offer meals?

A: School systems may request four USDA Feeding Waivers via the Seamless Waiver Application:

1. [Non-Congregate Feeding](#) (grab n' go, curbside pickup, etc.)
2. [Meal Service Timing Flexibility](#)
3. [Operation of SSO by Non-Area Eligible Schools Food Authorities](#)
4. [Alternate Feeding Method/Delivery of Meals](#) (transporting meals to off-site locations)

The school system should list the waiver options that it wishes to exercise in the “sponsor comments” section of the Seamless Waiver application.

Q: Is notification to households still required during this time?

A: Yes. Schools must notify households of the availability of meals at specified sites and times through normal means (i.e. flyers posted at schools, school system websites, etc.).

Q: Are school systems responsible for providing meals to Type 5 charter schools?

A: If a school is operating an open feeding program, meals are available to all students 18 years of age and younger, regardless of where the child is enrolled in school. School systems/schools decide whether to operate meal programs, although if they do operate an open feeding program, they must serve all children.

Q: Are students required to pick up meals, or may caregivers pick up or receive meals on a student’s behalf?

A: Although it is preferable for children to be present to pick up their meals, we understand that might not always be feasible. *For now*, caregivers can pick up meals on behalf of a child/ren. The LDOE will communicate any changes USDA provides regarding this.

Q: Are transportation costs eligible for reimbursement in the event that school systems decide to deliver meals?

A: No. Only meals are eligible for reimbursement through the USDA’s child nutrition program.

Q: Have the required components of a reimbursable meal been waived?

A: No. Schools must provide all required meal components to receive reimbursement.

Q: Must school systems update their CNP application and provide meals, or is a charter school able to partner with the school system by referring families to food delivery sites?

A: School systems (including charter schools) are not required to operate feeding programs during the school closure. If meals will not be served, the school system does not need to update the CNP application. School systems that do not offer feeding programs should refer families to schools operating food pick-up or delivery sites. Only the school system providing the meal may claim reimbursement. Districts, charter schools, private schools, and early childhood centers are encouraged to collaborate when possible to ensure that all children in the community continue to receive meals.

Q: Can school systems provide meals to students who are enrolled in a different school system? If so, must the school system claim and account for these students?

A: Yes. Schools operating open feeding programs must provide meals to all children 18 years of age and younger regardless of the school/school system in which the child is enrolled. In addition, overage

students enrolled in public K-12 schools, including students with disabilities through age 22, are eligible for free meals at open sites. Children’s meals must be counted and claimed by the school site that served the meal.

Q: Must school systems track the number of meals served or the individual students who are served?

A: Yes. School systems are reimbursed by the meal and should keep count of all meals served to children 18 years of age and younger. Each site must maintain documentation (hash mark sheet, meal counter/clicker, etc.) as a record of number of meals provided to eligible children for each meal service provided.

Q: If a school provides meals to “full pay” students in private schools, must those students pay for meals?

A: No. Meals served at an open feeding program are free for all children (including reduced and full pay students) whether they attend public or private schools.

Q: Is there a plan for serving dinner?

A: Schools may serve a *maximum* of two of the following meals per child, per day: breakfast, lunch, snack, and dinner. Schools may not serve both lunch and dinner on the same day.

Assessment and Accountability

Q. What are the current 2019-2020 academic year waiver requests?

A. BESE and the chairman of the House Education Committee [requested](#) that the following Louisiana state laws be waived for the entirety of the 2019-2020 academic year. Gov. John Bel Edwards signed off.

RS 17.10.1	School and district accountability and the inclusion of value-added in educator evaluation
RS 17:24:2	LEAP statewide testing and pupil progression
RS 17:154.3	Minimum number of days a classroom teacher must work in a school year
RS 17:391.2, et seq.	Public school accountability and assessments
RS 17:3881, et seq	Teacher performance evaluation, teacher credentials based up value-added data
RS 17:3901, et seq.	Teacher evaluation, 50 percent of evaluation based on value-added data derived from student assessments

R.S. 17:3997(D)	Charter school teacher evaluations based upon value-added data derived from student assessments
R.S. 17:4023	Required student assessments for non-public school students participating in the Louisiana Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence program
R.S. 17 221	Compulsory attendance law

Statewide Assessments

Q: How will the state handle testing as schools are closed?

A: On March 20, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education [approved Louisiana's waiver request](#) of assessment, accountability, and reporting requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act. This means Louisiana will not require standardized testing for the 2019-2020 school year. Moreover, since testing data is required to be used in accountability systems, like Louisiana's annual report cards, the state will also exclude testing data from performance measures for the current school year.

Q: What happens to shipments arriving from the assessment vendor?

A: The Department is currently working with all assessment vendors to monitor and adjust the shipments of secure testing materials.

Q: Has the national test administration of ACT, scheduled for April 4, 2020 been postponed?

A: Yes. ACT has announced that the April 4 national test will be postponed until June 13. All individuals who are registered to take the ACT in April will receive emails from ACT with directions for free rescheduling of registration for June 13 or another future administration. Information is available on ACT's website.

Q: Is the state working with ACT to identify new dates for testing windows?

A: Yes. Schools that selected March 17 standard time paper-based testing currently have secure materials stored in a secure location. All secure materials should be returned, however, and not saved for a future administration. If secure materials have not been picked up by FedEx, district test coordinators should:

- Contact ACT at 1-800-553-6244, ext 2800 and schedule a pickup
- Bring secure materials to FedEx for return to ACT

Q: Has ACT testing been rescheduled?

A: Depending on the duration of the stay-at-home order, the Department is working with ACT to provide a state-wide administration of the ACT on the following dates:

- **Initial Paper-Based:** June 2
- **Online:** June 2-4
- **Accommodated Testing Window:** June 2-8

These administrations would be for all students in grade 11 and seniors who have no ACT score on file with the Department (see ACT No Match list). Seniors with an ACT score can test at the expense of the school system. Because no SPS will be released this fall, there is no penalty for grade 12 students who do not have an ACT on file for 2019-2020.

Q: What ACT Prep Opportunities will be available to students?

A: BESE approved opportunities to continue taking ACT through Prep programs through the Course Choice program June 30, 2020 as part of the BESE waiver process. This action will provide school systems the opportunity to enroll students in ACT Prep programs from 5 different [ACT Prep providers](#) such as Princeton Review, Cambridge, etc. through June 30. Additionally, the Department will be sharing free ACT Prep opportunities through the [March2Success](#) program which provides an free, non-obligational online study program to help students prepare for standardized tests, improve school work and review materials.

Q: What ACT preparation is available through Supplemental Course Allocation/Course Choice and other providers through June 30?

A: Several Supplemental Course Allocation/Course Choice providers and additional providers will have content available through June 30 for [ACT preparation](#).

Q: What guidance has been provided for Advanced Placement, CLEP, and International Baccalaureate Assessment?

A: The current guidance from the College Board and IB can be found [here](#).

Q: What guidance has the College Board provided for spring 2020 Advanced Placement Exams?

A: The College Board released information on Friday, March 20, 2020. The Department has reconciled a set of [AP Assessment Updates](#) and [AP Exam FAQs](#).

Q: When will the LEAP window close given the new April 27 start date? What is the rationale around high school testing remaining the same?

A: New testing windows have not yet been determined. The LDOE is closely monitoring school system closures and distance learning and working with our testing vendors and school systems to inform decisions around statewide assessments. At this time, the grades 3-8 LEAP window would open no

earlier than April 27. Many factors (e.g., graduation requirements, school calendars, number of devices, etc.) will inform the decision.

Q: Can students complete practice tests remotely, at home, or elsewhere?

A: Yes. The LDOE has a [Parent Guide to the LEAP 2025 Practice Tests](#) that provides information about the practice tests as well as instructions on how to access the practice tests. Please note when accessing the practice tests through the *Parent Guide to the LEAP 2025 Practice Tests*, student responses are not saved and reports are not generated but there is a link to answer keys that allow parents to check answers while the student is responding online. Paper tests are available for grades 3 and 4.

Q: How should school systems handle LEAP Connect materials?

A: The LEAP Connect 2020 UPS pickup deadline for test materials was Monday, March 16. District Test Coordinators should contact the UPS at 866-857-1501 to schedule a pickup. If you were not able to return materials by the deadline due to school closures, District Test Coordinators should notify DRC Customer Service.

[Accountability](#)

Q: How does the school closure affect state and federal accountability?

A: Bulletin 111, Section 4501 and 4503, already provides for a one-year waiver of school and district performance scores and letter grades for schools closed from disaster for 18 or more consecutive days. The waiver is limited to the year in which the disaster occurred. In a [memo from the BESE president](#), additional policy requirements around instructional time and graduation credential attainment were waived.

The BESE president and chairman from House Education Committee sent a [memo](#) to the Governor reiterating this rule and further requesting that state law requiring school performance scores and letter grades be waived for one year. The state superintendent is submitting a letter to the U.S. Department of Education asking for a waiver of compulsory testing and reporting of accountability results.

Q: Has cohort graduation data certification been postponed?

A: Yes. It did not open during the week of March. Accountability contacts will receive information as soon as rescheduling is finalized.

[Educator Evaluation and Certification](#)

Q: Will educators be evaluated in the 2019-2020 academic year? If not, how will certification renewals be handled?

A: The Governor waived laws relative to educator evaluations for the 2019-2020 academic year. This included laws that require effective evaluations in order to renew or advance teacher or leader credentials.

School systems can continue to use and upload evaluation data for formative support and feedback in the Compass Information System. This information will be for internal school system use only.

In the coming weeks, the Department will provide additional guidance on certification renewal and advancement requests will be handled.

The Department will request additional policy waivers regarding requirements for VAM, which will not be produced this year.

[Teacher Preparation](#)

Q: May universities recommend undergraduate candidates for certification if the candidates were unable to complete 270 clock hours of student teaching or the yearlong residency?

A: Yes. If school or university closures due to the COVID-19 outbreak prevent undergraduate candidates from completing the required number of student teaching hours, universities may recommend candidates for certification so long as they have successfully completed their courses. Each university will have its own policy relative to successful completion of courses during this time.

Q: Has Praxis testing through ETS been canceled or postponed?

A: Yes. All Prometric testing centers are closed until April 16, 2020. Non-Prometric testing centers are closing on a case-by-case basis. Please refer to the [ETS website](#) for more information.

Q: Given that Praxis exams are currently unavailable, may I admit candidates into an undergraduate teacher preparation program?

A: Candidates cannot be admitted into an undergraduate teacher preparation program until they have passed the Praxis Core (or received the appropriate score on the ACT or SAT exam). In cases where candidates have not passed the Praxis Core (or received the appropriate score on the ACT or SAT exam), providers may register candidates and allow them to begin coursework. However, providers must communicate to candidates that they are not admitted until they have passed the requisite exam.

Q: Given that Praxis exams are currently unavailable, may I admit candidates into an alternate teacher preparation program?

A: Candidates cannot be admitted into an alternate teacher preparation program until they have passed the Praxis Core (or received the appropriate score on the ACT or SAT exam) and passed the Praxis

content exam. In cases where candidates have not passed the Praxis Core (or received the appropriate score on the ACT or SAT exam) or have not passed the Praxis content exam, providers may register candidates and allow them to begin coursework. However, providers must communicate to candidates that they are not admitted until they have passed the requisite exams.

Q: Is there an option for candidates to act as a teacher of record prior to admission into an alternate certification program?

A: Candidates wishing to teach prior to being admitted into an alternate certification program may do so by applying for a Temporary Authority to Teach (TAT).

Q: I recently completed a teacher preparation program, but cannot be recommended for licensure because I need to pass a Praxis exam and they are not available. What are my options?

A: The Department is monitoring the availability of Praxis tests and will release guidance in May around how new program completers can apply for certification to teach this fall, in the event that Praxis tests are unavailable.

[Instructional Preparation](#)

Q: Can our school system transition to an online learning platform or other distance education modality for the remainder of the school year?

A: Distance education is allowed under current BESE policy.

If school systems offer distance education, the school system must take student attendance every school day, and the teacher of record for each class must take attendance at the beginning of each class period.

For special education students: excluding a child from school on a temporary, emergency basis while utilizing distance learning will generally not require convening the child's IEP team to consider a continuum of placements. Once the exclusion reaches 11 consecutive school days, however, it is no longer considered temporary, and the IDEA's procedural protections for changes in placement apply.

Furthermore, exclusion of a child due to his or her susceptibility to an epidemic, no matter its duration, must be based on the child's unique susceptibility, as determined by established high-risk criteria, not on mere stereotypes regarding the child's disability.

Q: What planning resources are available to school systems?

A: The LDOE has released a suite of resources to support school system leaders with academic and workforce planning during this extraordinary time. They include:

- [Continuous Education Guide](#): Guidance and tools to support school system leaders as they analyze available instructional and technology resources, develop an approach to providing distance learning opportunities, and implement a distance learning plan.
[Academic Resources Guide](#): A comprehensive listing of academic resources available for distance learning formats, organized by subject and curriculum provider.
[Staffing Guide](#): A guide to support school system leaders as they determine which essential functions must continue during school facility closures and how to create a staffing plan to ensure the continuation of those functions.

[Student Technology Support](#)

Q: How can we help students access computers?

A: Schools need to review their current device policies to decide if students will be able to utilize school-owned student devices at home in order to continue learning opportunities. To address school system/school concerns relative to tracking and managing school devices off-campus, the Department is working with Absolute Software to create a low-cost offering that will provide hardware tracking, monitoring, and reporting as well as investigating and recovering stolen/missing devices.

Q: What resources are available if students do not have internet at home and/or need assistance with accessing the Internet?

A: FCC Chairman Ajit Pai has launched the “Keep Americans Connected Pledge,” which many [broadband carriers](#) have signed. For the next 60 days, its provisions will:

- not terminate service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic;
- waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and
- open its Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them.

Additionally, limited income households can apply for \$5 to \$10 per month internet access ([AT&T Access](#), [Cox Connect2Compete](#), [CenturyLink Lifeline](#)). [Charter Communication](#) will offer free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi access for 60 days to households with K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a subscription.

Q: Will the current E-Rate application deadline of March 25, 2020, be extended?

A: Yes. The FCC has extended the deadline for schools to submit Funding Year (FY) 2020 FCC Form 471 applications by an additional 35 days. E-Rate applicants will now have until Wednesday, April 29, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. EDT to submit. This also means, any school system that may need to post a new Form 470

for additional service(s), can file a form 470, post an RFP for 28 days and file a Form 471 for FY2020 E-Rate funding.

The FCC has also directed USAC to provide all applicants undergoing Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) reviews with an automatic, 14-day extension for all PIA requests.

Waivers for additional deadlines and Requests (Form 486, Form 472, COMAD, invoicing, etc.) have been requested and are under review.

Applicants are encouraged to also monitor USAC's webpage (<https://www.usac.org/>) and news feed for relevant information in addition to Department communications.

Q: Are school systems required to provide internet access?

A: If a school system enrolls a student in a distance education program, the school shall ensure that all students enrolled in a distance learning course are provided with the necessary course materials and technical support.

Q: How quickly do you anticipate access to hotspots and WiFi? What does it mean for a hotspot to be "open" and how will caregivers access these hotspots?

A: FCC Chairman Ajit Pai has launched the Keep Americans Connected Pledge, which many [broadband carriers](#) have signed. For the next 60 days, its provisions include opening its Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them. Information specific to the pledge can be found [here](#).

Data Systems

Q: What adjustments have been made for statewide data collection periods?

A: Data system EOY collections with deadlines in May–June will proceed as normal. Data system collections with deadlines in March will be extended once normal business hours resume. All other data system work will be at the discretion of the school systems and their vendors.

- Sending of files to eScholar (Staff ID, Unique ID, LocationID, etc.)
- Sending of EdLink 360 extract files to the EdLink FTP server

Q: Who should I contact for assistance with LDOE data systems?

A: Email requests from school systems for support will proceed as normal. LEAs may contact the system data manager or systemsupport@la.gov. Vendor discussions and weekly check-ins (eScholar, Hoonuit, EdLink 360 Pilot) will proceed as scheduled.

Q: Are Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development Program (NSECD) payments going to be paid as scheduled also?

A: Yes, all payments for NSECD and other early childhood programs will be issued as scheduled.

Nonpublic School Choice Programs

Q: Are payments for the Louisiana Scholarship Program, School Choice Program for Students with Certain Exceptionalities, and Tuition Donation Credit Program going to be made as scheduled?

A: Yes, all payments for all school choice programs will be issued as scheduled.

Q: Will award notifications for the Louisiana Scholarship Program and School Choice Program for Students with Certain Exceptionalities proceed as scheduled?

A: At this time, Louisiana Scholarship Program awards and awards for continuing students in the School Choice Program for Students with Certain Exceptionalities are still on track to be released in April or early May.

Teacher Leader Summit

Q: What is the status of the 2020 Teacher Leader Summit?

A: In light of ongoing COVID-19 health concerns and at the direction of local and national authorities, the 2020 Teacher Leader Summit will not occur this May, as scheduled. The Department will shift to a virtual session presentation platform for as many sessions as possible. Additional details, including the list and schedule of these sessions, will be announced in the coming weeks via upcoming newsletters.

All registrants will automatically be unregistered from the event. Those who paid for a ticket will automatically receive a refund by the end of April to the card on file. Confirmation of the cancellation will be sent to the purchaser's email address. The Department will cancel all hotel rooming blocks listed in the [Overview Document](#). However, individuals should contact the hotel directly if they require proof of cancellation. Please contact ldoeevents@la.gov with questions.

Events

Q: Have any events or meetings been postponed or canceled?

A: Out of an abundance of caution, the following events or convenings will be postponed or canceled:

- Student of the Year events (Postponed; more information about virtual interviews will be sent to participants)

- April School System Planning Call (Canceled; presentation will be posted to the [School Improvement Library](#) on April 8)
- Spring 2020 Counselor Institutes (April; rescheduled as virtual institutes)
- 2020 Teacher Leader Summit (May, in-person convening canceled; virtual session offerings will be shared in coming weeks)