



# New York State EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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## News and Notes

April 2020

Dear Colleagues,

New York State, along with the entire nation and world, is experiencing an unprecedented situation. I never imagined when I took on the position of Interim Commissioner that we would be faced with a global pandemic that would affect all of our lives in such a profound way. Working in partnership with Chancellor Rosa and the Board of Regents, I am happy to report that the dedicated staff here at the New York State Education Department (NYSED) have risen to the occasion to serve New York's students and adults to the best of our ability during this time. NYSED staff are working tirelessly to maintain crucial services for students, P-12 schools, colleges and universities, professional licensees, adult education programs, cultural institutions, and the people of New York State.

At this week's Board of Regents meeting, I gave a [comprehensive update on NYSED's response to the COVID-19 situation](#). Below, you can find details on each of the major announcements that we have made over the last month:

- [NYSED Provides Guidance and Resources in Response to Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Guidance on Graduation and Course Changes, Elementary- and Intermediate Level State Assessments](#)
- [Emergency Regulations to Ease the Burdens on Educators, Students, and Professionals](#)
- [Expanded Remote Learning Resources from NYSED and PBS](#)
- [Resources from the State Museum, Library, and Archives](#)
- [Guidance and Information for Licensed Professionals](#)

I know that you, as educators, are going above and beyond to support your students during this unprecedented time. I wanted to let you know that NYSED has launched a social media campaign called #EducatorsAreHeroes to raise awareness of the incredible efforts of New York's extraordinary, dedicated educators. If you would like to share an inspiring story about educators going the extra mile for their students at this time, please tag us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#) along with the hashtag #EducatorsAreHeroes.

I hope you, your families, and your school communities are staying safe and healthy. Thank you for all you do, now and always.

Sincerely,

Shannon Tahoe  
Interim Commissioner

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## **NYSED Provides Guidance and Resources in Response to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

NYSED has developed many comprehensive guidance documents and resources based on 15 Executive Orders to date; opened lines of communication with the field and stakeholders; and developed a system to accept and review continuity of learning, child nutrition plans, and childcare plans from school districts statewide.



All of the guidance, resources, and announcements are available on our [dedicated COVID-19 web page](#). In addition to providing information for P-12 schools, the web page provides links to guidance for [colleges and universities](#), [adult education programs](#), and [licensed professionals](#).

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## **Guidance on Graduation and Course Changes, Elementary- and Intermediate Level State Assessments**

This week, NYSED [announced the cancellation of the June 2020 administration of Regents Exams](#) and released guidance on modifications to requirements for students to graduate and earn their high school diplomas, credentials, and endorsements. In addition, due to the school closures related to COVID-19, NYSED delayed the rollout of state assessments aligned to the grades 3-8 Next Generation Learning Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics for one year, to spring 2022. Similarly, the alignment of state assessments to the New York P-12 Science Learning Standards will begin in spring 2023. Further, the state extended its current Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Testing contract by one year.

In March, Board of Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa and Interim State Education Commissioner Shannon Tahoe issued a statement announcing that [administrations of the 2020 elementary- and intermediate-level State assessments are suspended](#) for the remainder of this school year.

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## **Emergency Regulations to Ease the Burdens on Educators, Students, and Professionals**

This week, the Board of Regents adopted [emergency regulations](#) to ease the burdens and provide important flexibility for educators, students, professionals, and others to address interruptions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The amendments address numerous issues resulting from the interruptions districts, institutions of higher education and licensed professionals are experiencing caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



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## Expanded Remote Learning Resources from NYSED and PBS

Students from prekindergarten through 12th grade have access to [PBS educational programming](#) every weekday on-air. These efforts are helping to ensure that all students can have access to quality educational resources regardless of whether they have a computer or broadband at home. Parents and educators should check local listings for their local public television stations for additional information on schedules and channel lineup. You can find your local PBS station by using the [PBS Station Finder](#).



In addition, NYSED launched a new [Continuity of Learning website](#) featuring resources to provide districts and teachers with increased options to keep students engaged in learning. Among many other resources, the website features lists of digital content to enhance distance learning in a dozen subject areas including early learning, English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Physical Education, Science, Social Studies and Special Education. Educators will also find digital tools to assist in communicating with students and families and creating engaging instructional opportunities for students. NYSED's site also provides non-technological suggestions for schools and parents to consider when planning for continuity of learning. There are many ways students can continue learning that do not require access to a computing device. NYSED recently [added dozens of new resources](#) to the website and will continue to update and add resources as they become available.

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## Resources from the State Museum, Library, and Archives

Join the New York State Museum for [Virtual Field Trips](#) every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 1:00 p.m. (EDT). Visit with Museum educators, scientists, and historians as they take you behind the scenes of some of the Museum's exhibits and collections to highlight cool finds and facts from New York State!



The New York State Museum, Library, and Archives are temporarily closed to the public, but you can still find [online exhibitions from the State Museum](#), [online resources from the State Library](#), and [reference services from the State Archives](#).

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## Guidance and Information for Licensed Professionals

We would like to thank the many nurses, physicians, physician assistants, pharmacists, and other healthcare providers who are part of the COVID-19 response effort. Our staff in the Office of the Professions are working hard to continue to license these professionals as expeditiously as possible. Guidance and information regarding COVID-19 and topics related to the professions can be found on the [Office of the Professions' COVID-19 web page](#).

We would also like to thank the more than 85,000 health professionals who have volunteered to help with the COVID-19 emergency. We are currently honoring licensed health professionals and volunteers using the hashtag #HeroesOfCOVID19 on social media.

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