

Information and resources regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) and California's response.

The California Department of Education (CDE) is monitoring the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and working closely with agency partners. Local educational agencies (LEAs) are encouraged to follow California Department of Public Health recommendations and should identify plans for communicating with families and consider learning supports for possible school closures.

Please refer to the CDE [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) web page](#) for resources and a letter from State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond to county and district superintendents, charter school administrators, and school principals regarding COVID-19 and guidance for kindergarten through grade twelve schools and school districts.

The CDE Assessment Development and Administration Division has protocols in place should schools close just before or during CAASPP and ELPAC testing. These protocols have been used when natural disasters or emergencies have occurred. The CDE will work directly with LEAs, schools, and the US Department of Education to facilitate next steps on a case-by-case basis. If a school or district expects or experiences a school closure that significantly undermines test administration, the LEA coordinator should notify the CAASPP Office by phone at 916-445-8765 or by email at caaspp@cde.ca.gov or ELPAC Office by phone at 916-319-0784 or by email at elpac@cde.ca.gov.

New Guidance from the Federal Government

A Factsheet on the [Impact of COVID-19 on Assessments and Accountability under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#) addresses a range of concerns about how extended school cancellations and absences may affect school accountability.

In addition to the possibility of waiving testing requirements, the Education Department may consider a targeted waiver for schools that don't meet the minimum student participation rate of 95 percent in state tests, the guidance says.

And the department will also consider targeted waivers for schools that see high rates of chronic absenteeism related to the coronavirus. Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia include chronic absenteeism as a school quality indicator in their ESSA plans.

Guidance on the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#), or FERPA, outlines how schools can honor their obligations to student privacy while communicating with the public about COVID-19 or while sharing information with health agencies that are working to track its spread.

"Through information sharing and coordination with public health departments, educational agencies and institutions can help protect their schools and communities," that document says.

Parents must provide consent before schools can release any personally identifiable student information publicly, it cautions, but some educational records and health data kept by schools may be released to relevant health agencies under FERPA's health or safety emergency exception.

Guidance on [Students with Disabilities and the Coronavirus](#) reminds schools that, if they "continue to provide educational opportunities to the general student population during a school closure" through activities like distance learning and online programs, they they must ensure that students with disabilities also have equal access to the same opportunities.

That guidance, which mirrors a directive the department previously released related the the H1N1 virus, also urges that homebound services and individualized education plan meetings may be required for medically fragile students who stay home to avoid getting ill.