



Good afternoon – I know that we have been sending you a ton of information in the last few days. We are trying to combine information and synthesize the enormous amount of emails we are getting about the impacts of the COVID Pandemic.

Today we bring you an update on three topics:

- Reminder to Ratify any Closure Decisions
- State Board of Education (SBOE) Decisions
- Special Education Learning Requirements

We know that you are facing uncertain times and enormous decisions. Please know we are here to assist in any way we can. If you have questions that you would like us to address, please send them our way. We are all still working from home so please feel free to call our cells or email us. Please stay healthy and be well everyone.

Reminder to Ratify

Even though the State Board of Education (SBOE) closed all schools until April 20, your Board still needs to have a discussion on what that looks like for your local district/charter. As such, you need to meet and ratify that closure. At the same time you should be discussing the other elements of the decisions the SBOE made earlier this week. See below.

In addition, if you change your calendar, you need to notify the State Department of Education.

SBOE Decisions

The SBOE met earlier this week and approved several motions. Those motions are all efforts to assist your districts and charters as we navigate the next few weeks/months. Those actions were:

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- Waiving the college entrance exam and the senior project for seniors; (later, President Critchfield said any senior who was on track to graduate WILL graduate this year).
- Exempting juniors for the 19/20 school year from the college entrance exam graduation requirement;
- Waiving the requirement for administering the ELA, Math, and Science ISAT requirements as well as alternate assessments for students with disabilities;
- Submitting a waiver to the Federal Government to remove the ISAT as an ESSA accountability requirements; and
- Approving temporary transportation reimbursement standards for delivery of food or educational services.

Informational items addressed by the State Board of Education:

- Instructional Hours: This was not addressed by the board because those hours are in Statute and not in Administrative Rule. The SBOE only has authority to amend or suspend administrative rule. State officials will be monitoring the impact on instructional hours in coming weeks.
- Food services: The SDE sent information to local districts and schools about continuing food service. Because USDA regulations can be tedious and restrictive, the SDE is working with federal officials to get as much flexibility as possible.
- Special Education: The Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights sent out guidance to create flexibility around online learning and special education. Special Education Directors met virtually yesterday to discuss ways to move forward. For reference, the link is here.
- Continuance of Operations: The State Board has been hearing that evaluation observations have been a concern, especially as it relates to career ladder allocation. IDAPA rule 08.02.02.120 does allow district/charter schools to conduct one (1) documented observation in situations where certificated personnel are unavailable.
- Classified/Non-Certified positions: The State Board of Education encourages districts to be creative in continuing to pay and employ classified employees. Their duties may look different than it has before. Additionally, ISBA is creating a document to provide guidance about the Emergency FMLA that was included in the Families First Coronavirus Act recently passed by Congress.

Karen