

March 15, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

Today we hosted six tele-town halls with superintendents, regional superintendents, and other educational leaders across the state. More than 1,200 of you called in – and we are so grateful to have had the opportunity to connect with you. I am inspired by your willingness to step up and jump in, especially on a Sunday! I know Illinois' students are in good hands.

I would like to restate that the statewide mandatory school closure begins March 17 and extends through at least March 30. All of the days during this initial closure March 17-30 will be considered Act of God Days and will not be made up. ISBE is encouraging all school districts to provide learning opportunities to all students, through whatever means possible. Student work during this time should not be graded, as these days are not Instructional Days.

School districts have total flexibility over the calendar designation for tomorrow, Monday, March 16. School districts may elect to use an Emergency Day; a Teacher Institute Day, even if the district has already used all of its pre-planned Teacher Institute Days; a half-day of student attendance; or, if a district has already exhausted all of its Emergency Days, an Act of God Day.

Please be prepared to serve meals in non-congregate settings beginning on Tuesday. Our goal is that every school district has submitted the [Unanticipated School Closure Non-Congregate Meal Form](#) by the end of the day tomorrow. This is one of our highest priorities.

ISBE is in daily communication with the Governor's Office and public health officials about the possibility of the closure continuing beyond March 30. Please understand that the situation is incredibly fluid and that we may not be able to determine what will happen after March 30 until we get closer to that date.

To that end, ISBE is working with the Governor's Office to explore opportunities within the philanthropic community to ensure that every public school in Illinois has the technology needed to provide e-learning to all students in the immediate future, should the mandated school closure need to extend beyond March 30.

Public school district superintendents, we ask that you respond to the E-Learning Technology Needs Survey at the bottom of [www.isbe.net/covid19](http://www.isbe.net/covid19) as soon as possible to tell us exactly what you need to move to a 1:1 environment at all grade levels and to provide online instruction to students. One response per public school district should be recorded.

ISBE is developing robust guidance on special education and on staffing questions related to the mandatory statewide closure, as well as compiling the questions and answers from today's tele-town halls. In the meantime, please continue to reference:

- ISBE's latest guidance document at [www.isbe.net/Documents/ISBE-Guidance-Mandatory-Statewide-Closures.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/Documents/ISBE-Guidance-Mandatory-Statewide-Closures.pdf) (March 14, 2020)
- Governor's [Executive Order 2020-05](#) (March 13, 2020)
- Governor's [Executive Order 2020-06](#) (March 15, 2020)

We have seen remarkable leadership, service, and dedication from every corner of the state. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala  
State Superintendent of Education  
Illinois State Board of Education