



EO 2020-35: Executive Action on K-12 School Closure for 2019-2020 School Year

Overview:

- We are in a public health crisis. The health, safety, and well-being of our students and educators are the top priorities. Certain rules governing K-12 education don't make sense in the current context.
- Despite the crisis, education must continue. We have an obligation to our students to provide opportunities to learn during the pandemic.
- Instead of thinking about strict compliance, we need to focus on other "c" values – communication, common sense, compassion, creativity, and collaboration.
- Teaching, learning, and the mode of delivering instruction will look different across districts. A one-size-fits-all approach is unrealistic.
- When schools re-open for the 2020-21 school year, additional interventions and services will need to be provided to students. In the meantime, we must ensure our seniors are able to graduate and successfully make postsecondary transitions.

Critical elements of the Executive Order (EO)

School Closure/Days and Hours/Attendance/Calendar

School Closure: School facilities are closed for the remainder of this school year, unless the Governor indicates it is safe to reopen and lifts the restrictions. This also includes sports and extracurricular activities.

Days and Hours during Mandated Closure: Forgive 13 days due to state mandated closure, above and beyond 6 "snow days." Allow another 5 professional development days to count toward instructional time to help educators transition to new modes of instruction delivery.

Attendance: Waive 75% attendance rule since the state emergency was declared.

Facilities: The EO will make clear that district facilities may be used by public school employees and contractors for the purposes of facilitating distance learning, as long as they practice social distancing (no in-person work unless necessary and also maintaining six feet of distance from other employees).

School Calendar: Allows districts to adopt a balanced calendar for the 2019-2020 school year and/or to begin the 2020-2021 school year before Labor Day without having to seek additional approvals.

Continuity of Learning & COVID-19 Response Plan

Continuity of Learning Application Process:

- In order to waive additional day/hour seat time requirements, districts must submit a Continuity of Learning & COVID-19 Response Plan application.
- The application will be approved via a two-step process: First the application must be reviewed and approved by the Intermediate School District (ISD) or charter school authorizer. Upon approval by the ISD/Authorizer, will submit plans to the MI Department of Education (MDE) and the “waiver” for remainder days/hours will be automatically granted.
- A plan must be approved in order for a district to continue to receive state aid for the 2019-2020 school year.

Continuity of Learning Plan and COVID-19 Response Plan Components:

- Description of how districts will continue to provide instruction, by any type of delivery method
- Commitment to continue providing food distribution
- Commitment to pay all school employees
- Commitment to continue providing mental health services
- Commitment to support efforts to provide child-care to essential workforce

Important Notes:

- If the plan relies on some online instruction, the district should ensure every student has access to an appropriate device with an ability to connect to the internet.
- Students and families should not be penalized for an inability to fully participate in the plan.
- Districts may partner with each other or with external organizations/vendors in order to implement the plan.
- All content/curriculum decisions are decisions made locally.

Other Provisions

Assessment/Reporting: Cancel spring assessments. Suspend all statutory requirements that utilizes assessment data (A-F, Read by Grade 3, educator evaluation, Partnership District goals) for one year only. For rising seniors, postpone SAT until the Fall. Allows other high schools students to take PSAT in the Fall.

High School Graduation/Michigan Merit Curriculum: Districts must develop a plan/process to give grades to seniors, award credits needed for graduation, certify transcripts, and confer diplomas. Districts encouraged to award credit for prior learning/content mastery and/or utilize project based learning, a portfolio/resume approach, or a culminating activity.

Special Education: Districts must support students and their Individualized Education Program (IEP) to the fullest extent possible, but recognizes that districts may need to provide compensatory services to students with special need when the emergency is lifted. Districts must comply with all U.S. Department of Education and MDE guidance. Strongly encourages MDE to seek additional guidance and flexibility from the U.S. Department of Education related to students with IEPs and 504 plans.

Teacher Certification and Continuing Education: Gives Superintendent additional flexibility to issue initial educator certifications and renewals, to address barriers caused by COVID-19.

MPSERS: School closure will not affect contributions or accrual of service credits for MPSERS.

Collective Bargaining: This EO should be implemented in a way that is consistent with collective bargaining agreements.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Supplies: Permits and encourages districts to donate unused PPE, cleaning supplies and other materials to the organizations in their community that need them.