

Steve Sisolak
Governor

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March 25, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to follow up with the latest information regarding our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see the information below regarding distance education in private schools, a new emergency declaration from Governor Sisolak, and the suspension of State assessment requirements.

Governor Sisolak's Emergency Declaration 005

On the evening of March 20, 2020, Governor Sisolak issued an additional emergency directive covering several issues related to our collective work, including:

- The **extension of the school building site closure** to align with the 30-day closure – school buildings will reopen **no earlier than April 16, 2020**, and only upon the approval of the Chief Medical Officer of the State of Nevada after a review of the risk of transmission within the geographic area defined by the Chief Medical Officer;
- The **suspension of State assessment requirements**¹, including SBAC, college and career readiness assessments, and end of course exams
- A reiteration of the essential nature of your work and that of your employees to continue to provide educational opportunities to Nevada's pupils.

The signed directive is attached.

Private School Programs of Distance Education

The emergency directive indicates that schools must begin offering distance learning to all pupils no later than March 23, 2020, or the next regularly scheduled school session day thereafter.

- Private schools are required to provide 180 days in session (NAC 394.060(3)). Private schools are also authorized to provide a program of distance learning to their students per NRS 394.134. Private schools are not governed by the public school distance learning statutes outlined in NRS 388.829, thus private schools do not have to meet the

¹ The annual Opportunity Scholarship was not included in Emergency Declaration 005. However, the Nevada Department of Education is currently exploring multiple options that would ease the burden of this requirement on private schools. As additional information becomes available, the Department will share it.

requirements of this statute, giving private schools the latitude to use distance education programming of their choice.

- Private school administrators must send the Nevada Department of Education an official letter on letterhead to the Private School Education Program Professional, Melissa Schroeder (mschroeder@doe.nv.gov), detailing the distance learning plan the school has in place. This plan should include how attendance will be recorded; what the student schedule each day looks like; how teachers and students will connect during the closure; and the mode of instruction used (e.g. type of technology used). **This letter must be sent to Melissa Schroeder no later than Tuesday, March 31, 2020.**

Please note that any private school that fails to submit an official letter to Melissa Schroeder by Tuesday, March 31, 2020, will be required to submit an updated school calendar to the Department of Education indicating its plan to make up lost instructional days due to the school building closures.

Thank you for all that you are doing to ensure that students, families, and employees are receiving the support they need during this challenging time.

Regards,

Melissa Schroeder, Ph.D. | Education Program Professional

Office of Student and School Supports-Private Schools

ESEA Equitable Services Ombudsman

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