

CARES Act Recommendations for District Expenditures

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), signed into law on March 27, 2020, allows states and school districts to devote more of their federal resources to technology infrastructure to support distance learning for students and for professional development for teachers who are teaching remotely, many for the first time. The MDE recommends that school districts consider local need as well as short-term availability of the one-time CARES Act funding in the prioritization of expenditures. [Read complete recommendations here.](#)

REQUIRED ACTION FOR SUPERINTENDENTS: 2020 Bus Driver Summer Training Request – Due May 11

Pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. [§ 37-41-1](#), all public-school bus drivers are required to be re-certified every two years through the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Division of Pupil Transportation. Drivers trained last summer were MDE certified through July 31, 2021. Drivers whose MDE certificates expire on July 31, 2020, and all new drivers, must be scheduled for a driver training class this summer. Please complete and return the [Bus Driver Training Request Form](#) by May 11.

Seal of Biliteracy Program

Districts that intend to participate in the Seal of Biliteracy program must email the following information to Limeul Eubanks (leubanks@mdek12.org) in order to participate:

1. A copy of your district's adopted policy and the date that it was board approved.
2. A signed copy of the [District Participation Form](#) (found on page 31 of the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines).

Please submit information by May 15. Email any questions to both Limeul Eubanks at leubanks@mdek12.org and Sandra Elliott at selliott@mdek12.org.

REQUIRED ACTION FOR SUPERINTENDENTS: Learning-at-Home and Summer Enrichment Plan Due May 15

We appreciate the time you took in early April to respond to the initial request from the MDE regarding current efforts to support students who are learning at home. **In light of the closure of school buildings for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year, please see the updated plan template attached, requesting further detail in accordance with Governor Tate Reeves' Executive Order 1476.**

Per Executive Order 1476, school districts shall operate with essential personnel to offer distance learning or other instructional means necessary for students to achieve completion of grade-level essential instruction for the 2019-2020 academic school year. Additionally, school districts shall submit to the SBE plans for summer learning and enrichment measures necessary to (a) mitigate disruption from the Spring 2020 school closure due to COVID-19 and (b) to enhance learning in preparation for the 2020-21 academic school year. Per Executive Order 1476, summer learning and enrichment measures are to be provided to all students in all schools.

Please save your district's [MDE District Learning-at-Home & Summer Enrichment Plan](#) as “*District-Name-2019-20-Learning-at-Home-Summer-Enrichment-Plan*”, where “*District Name*” is the name of your school district. Complete the plan and return the file to Rana Hood (rhood@mdek12.org) via email no later than 5 p.m.

on Friday, May 15, 2020. If you have questions about completion of the plan, please contact Dr. Nathan Oakely at noakley@mdek12.org.

REQUIRED ACTION FOR SUPERINTENDENTS: Digital Access Surveys for Families and School Employees Due May 14

As school closures continue and as the state develops plans to direct resources to the areas of greatest need, the MDE has prepared two brief surveys for districts to circulate: one to their families, the other to their teachers, administrators and other staff who are/will be working from home. The surveys focus on devices at home, home internet access, and the quality/reliability of that connection.

Aggregated results from districts will be shared with the governor's office for planning purposes. Because of the critical nature of these questions – and how the results will shape state policy to address the internet connectivity challenges across the state – please do your best to reach as many families as possible and to achieve as high as response rate as possible. **Teachers and school district employee who live outside of the district where they work should indicate on the survey the district where they live.** This will provide a more accurate picture of where internet access gaps exist across the state.

The MDE prepared two different formats of the surveys. You may choose the approach best suited to your district. If you have any questions, please contact MDE's Chief Information Officer, John Kraman at jkraman@mdek12.org.

Option 1: Fillable PDF Survey

You can print the surveys and distribute them as hard copies, you can email them and collect them electronically, or you can cut and paste the questions into a different survey method your district prefers.

- Please email your compiled results using [this response spreadsheet](#) by 5 p.m., Thursday, May 14, to survey@mdek12.org
- This approach will require you to collect and tally the results. The spreadsheet has one tab for family results and second for teacher results.
- While using the fillable PDF (or the questions from it) will require the extra step of compiling responses, you will be able to monitor results and help your families and teachers complete it.
- [Family Survey \(PDF Version\)](#)
- [Spanish-Language Family Survey \(PDF Version\)](#)
- [Teacher Survey \(PDF Version\)](#)

Option 2: Web-based Survey

You can send the links to your families and teachers for them to fill out using a computer or smart phone. Responses will go directly to the MDE.

- Please ask your families and teachers/staff to complete the survey by 5 p.m., Thursday, May 14.
- This approach will leave the compiling of responses to the MDE.
- While using the web-based survey will save you the step of compiling results, you will not have the ability to monitor results and help your families and teachers complete it.
- [Family Survey \(Web Version\)](#)
- [Spanish-Language Family Survey \(Web Version\)](#)
- [Teacher Survey \(Web Version\)](#)

Do You Have Questions for MDE?

Please check the [MDE COVID-19 Information](#) webpage **before** emailing your questions to MDE staff. The answers to most of the questions we receive are addressed on the webpage. We also regularly add guidance, **answers to new questions** and links to our daily update email on this webpage. Daily updates are posted in the [Administrator News](#) section of the [EdUpdate](#).