School Closures & E-Learning in the Time of COVID-19

Thursday, April 30, 2020 | 10:00 – 11:00 am CDT

Senator Jim Bolin, South Dakota | Representative Mary Kunesh-Podein, Minnesota
MLC Education Committee Co-Chairs

Senator Hearcel Craig, Ohio
MLC Education Committee Vice Chair

Mr. Sean Gill | Ms. Georgia Heyward
Center on Reinventing Public Education

Mr. Jeff Plaman | Mr. Adosh Unni
Minnesota Department of Education
This webinar is being recorded. The recording and presentation slides will be available this afternoon on the MLC Economic Development Committee page on the CSG Midwest website at www.csgmidwest.org

To reduce noise on the phone line, all participants will be in “listen-only” mode during the presentations.

The speakers will answer questions after their individual presentations:
- Type questions using the “questions” pane in the control panel
- Click on the “raise hand” button on the grab tab

Telephone users who wish to ask a question must enter the audio PIN

If you selected “Mic & Speakers” as your audio choice, please test your system’s settings prior to asking a question.
HOUSEKEEPING
CONFRONTING A CRISIS WEBINAR SERIES

BACKGROUND & GOALS

• This webinar series grew out of the desire by MLC leadership to provide our members with information on the impact of COVID-19 on the Midwestern states

• Goals
  o Examine the impact of COVID-19 in a number of state policy and program areas
  o Highlight state approaches to addressing the challenges posed by the crisis
  o Explore strategies to help the region emerge from the current crisis
  o Prepare for future public health emergencies
CONFRONTING A CRISIS WEBINAR SERIES

TOPICS

Six live, web-based teleconferences are being made available to a wide audience of state officials, policy experts and interested stakeholders.

In addition to the live webinars, each will be recorded and made available on the CSG Midwest website.

Each webinar is hosted by an MLC policy committee

1. COVID-19 & Public Health
2. Agriculture & Rural America
3. School Closures & E-Learning
4. Cross-Border Economic Ties
5. Criminal Justice & Public Health
6. Rebounding from the Economic Downturn
Members are legislators from 11 Midwestern states and four Canadian provinces

Committee officers

Senator Jim Bolin
South Dakota
Co-Chair

Minnesota Rep. Mary Kunesh-Podein
Minnesota
Co-Chair

Senator Hearcel Craig
Ohio
Vice Chair
Today’s webinar will cover:

• An overview and analysis of the rollout of e-learning

• A look at differences in e-learning plans among different school districts, including promising practices and potential areas of concern

• The potential impact on student achievement

• Policy implications and responses
SCHOOL CLOSURES & E-LEARNING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

PANELISTS

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District and State Distance Learning Plans

Sean Gill
Georgia Heyward
Research Approach

CRPE district database
Includes 82 districts and 18 charter management organizations serving over 9 million students.
- Information from district websites and social media channels
- Last updated April 21

CRPE 50 states & 7 territories analysis
- State DOE websites
- Week of April 13

MSU state policy tracker
Progress made, but fewer than half have comprehensive learning plans

Percent of Districts Offering Plans As Of:
- March 26
- April 21

[Chart showing percentages of districts offering different types of learning plans]
LEAs are providing devices, but still figuring out connectivity

Note: Based on approaches communicated on district websites and social media channels. Last updated April 21
Are districts helping students who struggle to access education on a “good day?”

- Just **20% of districts** are tracking attendance, but data could reveal who is missing out, such as students experiencing homelessness in Miami-Dade.

- While districts are expected to continue to serve students with disabilities, details on special education are scarce.

- We have not seen extensive or innovative approaches to working with special populations.
Why did some districts move faster?

**What sets districts apart?**
- Blended learning in use: 1:1 initiatives, Online apps
- Larger districts: capacity
- Strong and nimble local leadership

**What role do states have?**
- Help LEAs build technical infrastructure
- Capacity building
- States provide cover and urgency
70 percent of states set an expectation for remote learning to occur

States set expectations through:

- Governor/ DOE order
- Districts submit a plan
- Incentive: instructional minutes
- Consequence: state funds
But states leave too much to chance

- Guidance varies from open sources to vetted resources and frameworks: TX (SWD), SC (teachers), WY (comprehensive)

- Only 6 allocate funds to bridge the digital divide (AK, LA, ME, ND, PA, Virgin Islands)

  10 extend learning through state digital platforms (AL, AK, FL, ID, KY, OR, NC, SC, WI, Puerto Rico)

- Districts look to states for policy guidance. But not much there:
  - Attendance in 3 of 29 states: IA, ND, WY
  - Grading in 6 states: AL, AR, DE, OH, OR, SC
  - Learning loss and 2020-21 planning: AL has manual for 20-21. MO requires plan for 20-21
Recommendations: Prepare for Next Year

1) **Require contingency plans for 2020-21**
   
   → Communicate unambiguous expectations for learning
   → Give specific guidance using vetted resources and differentiate supports
   → Health and safety policies

2) **Use policy to mind the store**
   
   → Think twice about waiving instructional minutes, grading, and attendance. LEAs can still have flexibility in how they deliver.

3) **Use federal funds for infrastructure & capacity building**
   
   → Expand broadband, hotspots, state virtual platforms
   → Training in competency-based and remote instruction
   → Remediation: personnel and training

4) **Identify schools that have fallen behind**
   
   → Collect data about remote learning & triage supports
Please visit crpe.org for our latest data & research.
Profiled State: Wyoming

- Wyoming Superintendent of Public Instruction set clear expectation with date tied to funding & instructional minutes.
- Plans had to be submitted to include attendance tracking. Monitoring quality of plans.
- Offers support: regular training webinars, vetted resources: digital platforms and teacher training.
- Community College Commission established to assist with
  - seniors transitioning into post-secondary, workforce and the military.
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DISCUSSION

Questions?

Comments?
SCHOOL CLOSURES & E-LEARNING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

PANELISTS

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Distance Learning in Minnesota

- Announced Mar. 15, Planning Mar. 16-27, Distance Learning Mar. 30-end of SY
- Meeting the needs of families: over 5 mil. Meals, avg. 3,100 in childcare
- Equitable Distance Learning:
  - Access to educational materials
  - Daily interaction with teachers
- Planning and revision May 1&4
Saint Paul Public Schools

- Leveraged established practices
  - CREW – multi-age homeroom
  - 1:1 iPad w/ Schoology LMS
- Flexible schedule
- Daily check-in, adapting routines
on Leech Lake Band of Ojibway Reservation

- **Equity & Relationships:**
  - Hard copy materials mailed and delivered
  - Daily check-ins with teachers, phone & Remind

- **Student/Family Agency & Flexibility**
  - Choice matrix
Department of Education’s Role

- Commissioner’s leadership and communication, all hands on deck
- Covid-19 hub on website
- Responding to needs: professional development and support
What we’re learning

• Readiness to transition varied between Districts and schools
  • Fully online schools provided leadership
  • E-Learning day plans 100+ Districts and schools
  • Flexible learning days, hybrid courses, blended learning
  • Open Educational Resources and Learning Management System adoptions
  • Devices and Broadband

• Spotlight on Equity
  • Access to devices and Internet; home learning environment; pandemic stress
Policy implications: How Did We Get Here?

- Three Executive Orders
  - 20-02 established the planning period for distance learning
  - 20-19 provided the parameters around the distance learning period
  - 20-41 extended the distance learning period through the end of the school year
Policy Implications: What's in the Executive Orders?

- School buildings closed to all student activities except school-aged care.

- Also open to activities that MDE and Health identify as possible based on public health guidelines and that cannot be done through distance learning.
  - On 4/29, the first activities were authorized: testing for bilingual seals and hands-on course completion requirements

- Districts/charters must electronically post their distance learning plans.

- Districts/charters must make all attempts to allow remote working.

- Flexible spending authority from all accounts for specific purposes, including technology costs to deliver distance learning.
Policy Implications: What's Happening in Minnesota and in DC?

• The Minnesota Legislature has been considering some pieces of legislation
  • Broadband grants for distance learning
  • Hourly worker pay
  • Continuity supports for students and educators

• Federal CARES Act funding
  • GEER funding: around $43 million to spend on K-12 and Higher Ed
  • ESSER funding: 90% goes out to LEAs, 9.5% disbursement by SEA, .5% administrative
Thank you!

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DISCUSSION

Questions?

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RESOURCES

• Article in CSG’s Stateline Midwest: “As Schools Transition to New World of E-Learning, States Play Critical Role in Oversight and Assistance” »

• Center on Reinventing Public Education Database on School District Responses to COVID-19 School Closures »

• 2017 Minnesota Law on E-Learning »

• 2019 Illinois Law on E-Learning »

• Indiana Office of E-Learning »

• CSG’s COVID-19 Resources for State Leaders »

• For further information or research assistance, contact Tim Anderson at CSG Midwest: tanderson@csg.org
Thank you for joining us today!

Future Webinars:

- Maintaining Strong Cross-Border Economic Ties During the COVID-19 Crisis
  May 7 | 10:00 a.m. CDT

- Balancing Criminal Justice & Public Health in the Time of COVID-19
  May 14 | 10:00 a.m. CDT

- Relief & Recovery: Strategies to Rebound from the COVID-19 Economic Downturn
  May 21 | 10:00 a.m. CDT

Register on the CSG Midwest website

csgmidwest.org