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Florida Department of Education Private School COVID-19 Q&A

The purpose of this document is to provide additional guidance and clarification related to COVID-19 private school closures. As more information comes forward, this document will continue to be updated and released to private school administrators.

1. **Q: What does it mean to be closed through May 1st?**

A: While education is ongoing through distance learning, all public K-12 school campuses in Florida were strongly recommended to remain closed through May 1, 2020, based on the most recent guidance from the CDC. Private K-12 schools in Florida are strongly encouraged to follow suit. Schools should operate virtually or through other non-classroom-based (distance learning) means. This may include:

- Educational packets provided to parents with teacher assistance provided as needed.
- Online learning platforms.
- Hybrid of packets and online resources.

2. **Q: How will the implementation of online instruction impact statutory requirements in s. 1002.421(1)(i), F.S. for “direct student contact” in scholarship participating schools?**

A: The Commissioner of Education has issued an order waiving the requirement for direct student contact, as required in s. 1002.421(1)(i), F.S. Virtual learning will count toward attendance requirements for private schools. Schools will need to have a mechanism to monitor and record attendance during this period. Please do not send this documentation to the SFO or the FLDOE, but do retain it in your school’s records.

3. **Q: Will private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit, Family Empowerment, Gardiner, and Hope Scholarship Programs still be required to administer Statewide Assessments or NRT Assessments pursuant to s. 1002.385, 1002.394, 1002.395 and 1002.40, F.S.?**

A: No. The Commissioner of Education has issued an order waiving the requirement for private schools participating in the Florida Tax Credit, Family Empowerment, Gardiner, and Hope Scholarship Programs administer Statewide Assessments or NRT Assessments. This applies to the 2019-20 school year only.

4. **Q: Will scholarship payments continue for the remainder of the school year?**

A: Yes. There will be no interruption in the delivery of scholarship checks.

5. **Q: Are private schools entitled to Federal funds that may be used to help students access online/remote learning materials such as laptops/internet access?**

A: Private schools, which are interested in this option, are highly encouraged to reach out directly to school districts and urge their consideration. There’s no individual entitlement to federal funds for private schools. Districts may, at their discretion, request to transfer funds from the Title II, Part A program to Title IV, Part A, which may provide greater flexibility to purchase technology for student use. Districts shall continue to provide equitable services to private schools. Districts shall follow Title IV, Part A equitable service procedures and consult with private schools regarding use of their

allocation. However, transferability from Title II, Part A program to Title IV, Part A is a district decision (after consultation), and a district is not compelled to utilize this flexibility. If the district does not transfer funds then private schools cannot transfer funds.

6. **Q: Where can information be found about Advanced Placement (AP) exams?**

A: The College Board has developed a website dedicated to providing students, educators, and families with information related to AP in light of COVID-19. Please refer to this website for the latest updates on modified AP exams, instructional support and exam prep:

https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/about-ap/news-changes/coronavirus-update?SFMC_cid=EM288604-&rid=67096081

7. **Q: Does the state have direction, guidance, or specific resources to support instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs) through distance learning?**

A: There are numerous free sites with bilingual materials that students and parents can use to encourage literacy skills in English and other languages. These sites include:

<http://bilinguis.com/>

<http://lingolibros.com/free-books>

<https://www.readconmigo.org/>

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/>

<http://www.fldoe.org/em-response/resources-families.shtml#ell>

For a further clarification and additional resources, see the following webinar from FDOE that also contains resources and answers a number of questions:

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/19861/urlt/COVID-Super-SALA.pdf>.

8. **Q: Are there resources available to help school districts, educators, and families ensure continuity of learning during this time?**

A: Yes, FDOE has created two resource pages at its COVID-19 response website

<http://www.fldoe.org/em-response>:

- [Free Resources for Families & Teachers](#); and
- [Best Practices for Distance Learning](#).