



Office of Independent Education & Parental Choice

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School Closure

While **education is ongoing** through distance learning, all public K-12 school campuses in Florida were strongly recommended to remain closed through June 3, 2020, the remainder of the academic school year, based on the most recent guidance from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (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.

Scholarship Compliance

Attendance Verification and Direct Student Contact

Commissioner Richard Corcoran issued [Emergency Order No.2020-EO-1](#) on March 23, 2020 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.
- In lieu of requirements outlined in s. 1002.421, F.S., related to attendance verification and regular and direct contact with students, the IEPC office asks you to submit to your Regional Manager a statement outlining how educational content is being delivered and monitored, as well as, how attendance is being monitored and recorded as part of your compliance renewal for the 2020-21 school year. Adherence to this requirement is due **no later than June 1, 2020.**

Scholarship Compliance

Norm-Referenced Tests & State Assessments

[Emergency Order No.2020-EO-1](#) waives the requirement for private schools participating in the below programs to administer Statewide Assessments or NRT Assessments pursuant to s. 1002.385, 1002.394, 1002.395 and 1002.40, F.S.

- Florida Tax Credit,
- Family Empowerment,
- Gardiner, and
- Hope Scholarship Programs

This waiver applies to the 2019-20 school year only.

Scholarship Payments

There will be **no interruption** in the delivery of scholarship checks.

Can FDOE waive the requirement that parents still need to sign scholarship checks?

- No for the March 2020 scholarship warrants, yes thereafter through June supplemental warrants. Scholarship warrants which have been issued to date, are made payable to the parent and must be endorsed by both the parent and school in accordance with the established policy and process. Because both state and federal law place liability for improper paying of checks squarely on financial institutions-- see, e.g., Louisville & N.R. Co. v. Citizens' & Peoples' Nat. Bank of Pensacola, 77 So. 104 (Fla. 1917) or United States v. Carr, 706 F.2d 1108, 1112 (11th Cir. 1983)-- the decision to honor a warrant without a parental endorsement constitutes a risk which can be assumed only by the financial institution. However, for a temporary period of time, supplemental scholarship warrants from April through June will be made payable directly to the school. These warrants will not require a parent's signature for redemption

Scholarship Students & Virtual Education

Are students receiving scholarships limited to the two-course cap for virtual instruction?

Yes, with an important exception. Students may enroll in additional virtual courses if the following conditions are met:

- The courses are offered by a state-approved virtual provider; and
- The state-approved virtual provider is providing the courses free of charge.

If the student enrolling in a free virtual course lacks access to a learning management system (LMS), the virtual provider may charge a nominal fee solely for the purpose of utilizing an LMS to access the free course content.

Additional Resources

Where can information be found about Advanced Placement (AP) exams?

- 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.

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

- 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 further clarification and additional resources, please see the following [webinar](#).

Additional Resources (Continued)

Are there resources available to help schools access cleaning, disinfectant, and hygiene supplies?

- Yes. To facilitate a statewide, locally driven response for receiving emergency cleaning supplies, private schools should contact their County Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) with a detailed list of supplies needed. Local requests roll-up to the State EOC where they look at all the requests as a whole and direct responses locally. You can locate your County EOC [here](#).

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

- Yes, FDOE has created two resource pages at its COVID-19 [response website](#):
 - [Free Resources for Families & Teachers](#); and
 - [Best Practices for Distance Learning](#).



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