

AASA Update: COVID

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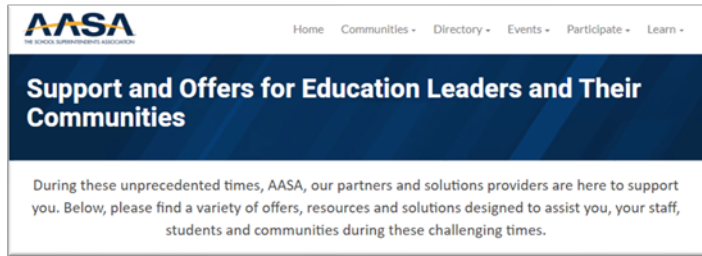


COVID-19 Response

Communication

AASA changed our communications to members and all school district leaders to focus on providing available guidance, support and materials.

- Worked with the CDC to publish all initial guidance
- Respond immediately to all credible media request
- Built a Resources web page which is updated daily
- Designed a Community site for educational leader to share content and discuss topics of interest
- Curtailed emails unrelated to the challenges being faced in district and ways to help



Support

- Leadership Network has created or partnered with superintendents or thought partners to host 30+ webinars. The first 9 sessions saw over 3,400 registrations.
- AASA created a Support & Offers site to share all the help from partners, sponsors and even kind strangers
- The new AASA STEM Solution powered by JASON Learning offers online learning plus printable packets for students without access at no cost through May 30.



COVID-19 Response and Impact

Programs

- Cancelled, rescheduled or reconfigured all planned meetings beginning in mid-March.
- Have successfully negotiated with many venues to save on room block or cancellation policies.
- Holding virtual meetings with Academies and Cohorts and planning the pivot to continue to support our educational leaders during the pandemic and beyond.
- Postponing our international cultural exchange.

Advocacy

The COVID pandemic is dominating all aspects of our federal advocacy work. We are engaged in multiple policy area discussions:

- Assessment and accountability relief
- Flexibilities within ESSA, IDEA and school nutrition programs
- Ensuring funding for education technology rolls through the E-Rate program
- Currently engaged in negotiations related to the 4th COVID supplemental
- Released initial survey of COVID impact on districts. Plan to repeat every 3 months so AASA is ready to detail school district impacts from COVID and any economic fall out

Governance

- Holding weekly calls with the officers to inform on broad COVID updates, AASA response and impact on organizational operations
- Weekly (if not more) updates to our state executives and executive committee
- Cancelled the May State Leadership meeting and holding the April Executive Committee meeting remotely

AASA COVID-19 Task Force

Convened 30+ superintendent leaders from across the country

Released resolution for reopening schools

Drafting recommendations for reopening schools

- Operations
- Academics
- Staff & Student Safety
- Costs
- Leveraging (and trusting) available information



U.S. COVID-19: Federal Response

U.S. Congress

- Phase One: Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act
- Phase Two: Families First Coronavirus Response Act
- Phase Three: CARES Act
- Phase Four: Interim Bill
- Phase Five: HEROES Act/TBD

Federal Agencies

- Agency guidance, waivers, and flexibilities
 - **Check regularly for updates:**
<https://aasa.org/LeadingEdge.aspx>

PHASE 1: CORONAVIRUS PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT (3/6/20)

- \$8.3B emergency package; 3x request from White House.
- Includes \$2.2B to help federal, state, and local health agencies prepare for and respond to COVID-19

PHASE 2: FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT (3/18/20)

- Nutrition Provisions
 - \$500 million for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to provide nutrition assistance for children and their mothers who have lost their jobs as a result of the outbreak.
 - \$400 million for The Emergency Food Assistance Program to help local food banks meet increased need for low-income Americans.
 - \$100 million for nutrition assistance for Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories.
 - A provision that allows the Department of Agriculture to approve state plans to provide emergency Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) food assistance to households with children who would otherwise receive free or reduced-price school meals in the event that their school is closed (The MEAL Act).
 - Gives the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to approve state waivers addressing nutrition assistance with school closures even if it increases cost to the federal government.
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- Provisions to allow child and adult care centers to serve food to go, allow the Secretary of Agriculture to waive meal pattern requirements in child nutrition programs if there is a disruption in food supply, and allow the Secretary of Agriculture to issue nationwide school meal waivers during the emergency.
 - Allows participants to be certified for WIC without being physically present at a WIC clinic.
 - Suspends work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) during the emergency.
 - Allows states to request waivers for emergency CR-SNAP benefits to existing SNAP households up to the maximum monthly allotment.



PHASE 2: FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT (CONTINUED)

- HEALTH PROVISIONS

- Provides free COVID-19 testing to all Americans, regardless of insurance.
- Medicaid and CHIP, which cover over 45 million children between the two programs, will cover diagnostic testing, including the cost of a provider visit to receive testing, with no cost to the patient.
- Increases states' federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for public health programs like Medicaid and CHIP for the duration of the emergency.
- Increases Medicaid allotments for U.S. Territories.
- The bill ensures that American Indians and Alaskan Natives do not experience cost sharing for COVID-19 testing.

- PAID SICK LEAVE, UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE, AND FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE PROVISIONS

- Provides employees of employers with under 500 employees the right to two weeks of fully-paid leave when they are sick, or two weeks of paid leave at 2/3 of their normal rate to care for a family member.
 - Provides employees of employers with under 500 employees the right to take up to 12-weeks of job-protected leave.
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- Provides \$1 billion in 2020 emergency grants to states to meet the increased need for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits.
 - Provides several tax breaks for employers who give their employees mandatory paid leave during the emergency.



Phase 3: CARES Act (Passed 3/27)

- \$15.5 billion for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program;

- \$8.8 billion for Child Nutrition Programs to ensure students receive meals when school is not in session;
- \$3.5 billion for Child Care and Development Block Grants, which provide child-care subsidies to low-income families and can be used to augment state and local systems;
- \$750 million for Head Start early-education programs;
- \$100 million in Project SERV grants to help clean and disinfect schools, and provide support for mental health services and distance learning;
- \$69 million for schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education; and
- \$5 million for health departments to provide guidance on cleaning and disinfecting schools and day-care facilities.
- The \$13.5 billion in stabilization fund money could be used to provide K-12 students internet connectivity and internet-connected devices, and a separate item in the bill for rural development provides \$25 million to support "distance learning."

Using CARES Funding

Under the CARES Act, States and districts are set to receive \$13.2 billion for K-12 in the CARES Act. The money must be spent by September 2021 although it's not clear whether the funding can be directed at costs already incurred related to the pandemic (but that is our hope). There is an urgent push by Governors to expedite the process for moving these funds to districts which AASA supports, but it still could be at least two months before they show up in districts' coffers.

Once the funds are out here is how you can use them:

- Any activity authorized in ESSA, IDEA and Perkins CTE
- To coordinate with public health departments to prevent, prepare and respond to COVID-19
- To address the unique needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English-learners, racial and ethnic minorities, homeless and foster care youth
- PD for staff on sanitation and minimizing spread of pandemic and purchasing supplies to clean and sanitize buildings
- Planning for and coordinating long-term closures including how to do meal services, how to provide tech/online learning, how to carry out IDEA, etc.
- Providing mental health services/supports
- Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and afterschool programs, including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months, and addressing the needs of vulnerable children
- Any other activity necessary to maintain the operation and continuity to employ existing staff

COVID 4 and Beyond

COVID 4 package (4/23/20)

- The proposal includes \$310 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program, including setting tens of billions set aside for smaller lenders, \$25 billion for testing, and \$75 billion for hospitals.

COVID 5: AASA priorities include:

- \$175 b for education stabilization fund
- \$25 b for categorical programs (IDEA and Title I)
- \$4 b for and thru E-Rate
- Policy relief, incl flexibility in IDEA; MoE enforcement on states; fixing equitable services guidance, and liability protections, among others
- House introduced the HEROES Act, a partisan bill dead on arrival in the Senate. Senate not expected to act until late June at the earliest.

AASA Advocacy: COVID-19 and You

Five areas of action!

- IDEA Call to Action: Let Congress know we need policy relief (a la flexibilities or waivers) specific to the COVID Pandemic
- E-Rate/Homework Gap: Congress must include \$4 billion for E-Rate to help close the homework gap
- Funding Letter: Outlines top funding level asks for COVID-5
- Equitable Services: Let Congress know how flawed USED guidance will impact your district
- COVID-19 Impact Survey: Help us tell the story of how COVID impacts schools and how districts are responding
- *All details on the blog.*

Questions?

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