



Andy Tuck, *Chair*  
Marva Johnson, *Vice Chair*  
*Members*  
Ben Gibson  
Tom Grady  
Michael Olenick  
Ryan Petty  
Joe York

## Florida Department of Education (FDOE) Office of Independent Education & Parental Choice (IEPC) COVID-19 Q&A

### 1. Q: What does it mean to be closed through June 3<sup>rd</sup>?

**A:** 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 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.

### 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 to administer Statewide Assessments or NRT Assessments. This applies to the 2019-20 school year only.

### 4. Q: How is the FDOE ensuring continuity of learning in private schools participating in state scholarship programs?

**A:** 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.

**5. 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.

**6. Q: Can FDOE waive the requirement that parents still need to sign scholarship checks?**

**A:** 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.

**7. Q: Are students receiving scholarships limited to the two-course cap for virtual instruction?**

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

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

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

**9. 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>.

**10. Q: Are there resources available to help schools access cleaning, disinfectant, and hygiene supplies?**

**A:** 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 at <https://www.floridadisaster.org/counties/>.

**11. 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](#).