



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

Darren Reisberg
Chair of the Board

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education

March 23, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

I want to begin with a special shout-out to Indian Valley Vocational Center in Sandwich. The school serves students from 10 districts and offers 18 different programs, including programs that educate future workers in health occupations, sports medicine, law enforcement, fire science, and emergency medical services. Last Friday, when ISBE put out a call for schools and Career and Technical Education programs to donate facemasks and gloves to the Illinois Department of Public Health, IVVC [truly stepped up](#).

Joe Barbic, the director of IVVC, sent an email to instructors that evening, and they showed up at the school early Saturday morning to gather all the supplies they had in their classrooms. IVVC ended up donating 8,500 masks and 10,000 gloves to the county health department one of the state's hardest-hit areas, Will County.

Can your school or CTE program step up? Health care workers on the frontlines of our state's response to COVID-19 need N95 masks, Nitrile gloves, indirect vent protective goggles and facemasks, and isolation gowns. If you can help, please email ppe.donations@illinois.gov.

I also have an update that many of you have been eagerly awaiting: ISBE has submitted a waiver application to the U.S. Department of Education to:

- Waive all federally required assessments in the 2019-20 school year;
- Waive the requirement to provide summative designations and identify schools for targeted and comprehensive support in the 2019-20 school year; and
- Waive the requirement to report on accountability indicators on the 2019-20 school year Report Card.

Once the waiver is approved, any school that is currently identified for comprehensive or targeted support in the 2019-20 school year will maintain that identification status in the 2020-21 school year and continue to receive supports and interventions consistent with the school's support and improvement plan in the 2020-21 school year.

View Illinois' waiver application online at www.isbe.net/Documents/Assessment-Accountability-Waiver-Illinois.pdf.

ISBE is also seeking relief from assessment-related requirements in state statute to secure complete assurance that state assessments do not need to be administered in the 2019-20 school year.

ISBE has included this information in our updated comprehensive guidance at www.isbe.net/Documents/COVID-19-Statewide-School-Closure-Guidance-3-23-20.pdf.

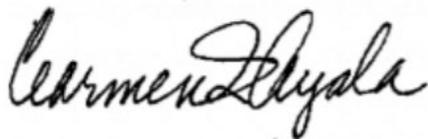
And for more good news, **schools can volunteer to provide child care for low-income essential workers without obtaining an emergency license.** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor last Friday closed child care centers statewide. But because many essential workers need child care, the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) is allowing schools to re-open as emergency child care centers without a visit from DCFS and without needing to obtain a license. For more information, visit www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/For-Communities.aspx.

ISBE is continuing to plan for the days beyond March 30. Today, we met with a diverse group of educators from across Illinois (virtually, of course) to begin developing recommendations about instruction and grading in a remote learning environment. The advisory group includes teachers, paraprofessionals, related service personnel, principals, district and regional superintendents, and students. Many group members bring extensive special education and multilingual education experience and expertise. We have established a solid foundation on the guidance document and are on track to release it this week.

Which reminds me, if your public school district has not completed our remote learning survey at the bottom of www.isbe.net/coronavirus, please do so as soon as possible. This feedback helps us monitor how teaching and learning is happening while in-person instruction is suspended.

Throughout the past several weeks, the thing I have appreciated most is the mindset with which Illinois schools are accommodating this unexpected and unprecedented upheaval. I noticed that Crete-Monee District 201 is providing free meals to all students, regardless of income, plus budget-friendly meals for the general public. At the bottom of the [district's flyer](#) was the simple phrase, "We look forward to serving you." I think that sums up the attitude of all of us at ISBE, as well as all the incredible educators around the state. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmen I. Ayala". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'C'.

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education
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