



A Union of Professionals

# Preparing for COVID-19 School Closures

## Checklist for Distance Learning Questions You Should Ask Now

The AFT is providing useful and regularly updated guidance for how teachers, school staff and local K-12 leaders can be prepared for the coronavirus. Make sure you ask the right questions to see if your school's or district's planning is comprehensive, clear and collaborative.

- *COVID-19—How to Be Prepared*  
[bit.ly/3cvprep](https://bit.ly/3cvprep)

And while we recognize that schools are not just places where children and young people go for academic learning, but also places for nutritional support and social, emotional and health services, this checklist for distance learning preparation is focused on remote learning in the case of possible multiday school closings.

- *Is Your Workplace Ready for the Coronavirus?*  
[bit.ly/3cvworkplace](https://bit.ly/3cvworkplace)



### Technology Access

- Has the district developed alternative procedures and multiple methods to provide access to instruction (e.g., web-based distance instruction, telephone trees, mailed lessons and assignments, instruction via local television or radio stations)?
- Do staff and families have adequate information about access to these plans?
- Many districts have single sign-on portals to teaching and professional learning resources. What access to technology does your school system have? Do teachers and school staff have access to this technology, including home internet?
- What information does your district have about the percentage of students who do not have reliable access to internet where they live? What specific plans are in place to send material home if there is no access to technology?
- What provisions are being made to ensure equity gaps will not be exacerbated by a lack of internet and instructional technology access?
- Is your district thinking specifically about the roles of non-classroom teachers in distance learning and closure situations, particularly paraprofessionals and specialized school staff, such as counselors and school nurses?



### Preparation and Training

- Have all appropriate staff been trained in the use of the district's available technology and had the opportunity to test it from their homes? Are the same training and testing options available for students and families?
- Have teachers been afforded time to prepare a closure syllabus with assignments at the ready for unexpected closures (similar to sending home summer reading assignments or summer projects)?



### Contacts during Closures

- What remote "help desk" assistance will be available to ensure users can get assistance with tech issues, login problems, etc., in the event of school closures?
- Do staff have contact information for parents, and do parents have contact information for teachers?

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## Technology Platforms

- Many online learning companies have aggressively increased their marketing efforts in anticipation of increased need. Is your district making emergency purchases? If so, are teachers and other appropriate staff involved in the review of quality and usability through your union?
- Who is responsible for ensuring that there is no price gouging stemming from the perceived urgent nature of technology or online curriculum purchases?



## Support for English Language Learners

- Do distance learning plans specifically address the needs of English language learner students and non-English speaking parents?
- Do your ELL students' families have the information they need in their preferred language?
- Given that we are in a very tense immigration enforcement environment and that Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials could be deployed to people's homes for deportation, do your students and their families know their rights?
- Check out *Rights of Immigrant Students* [bit.ly/3studentrights](http://bit.ly/3studentrights)



## Support for Students with Disabilities

- What provisions are being made for the many students with disabilities for whom distance learning is not a viable option and who have mandated individualized education programs requiring support from specialized school personnel?
- What types of supports are needed for students with disabilities who use assistive technology to communicate?

- For students who require school personnel support for personal or medical care as part of daily living, how will their needs be addressed?
- Local education agencies vary in structure and processes when providing supports for the myriad special education communities—self-contained classrooms, private-public placements, itinerant hospital settings, group homes, etc. Who will be the point person responsible for monitoring implementation to critical care services during school closures?



## Helpful Resources



### sharemylesson

By Educators, For Educators

- Join the **Share My Lesson Remote Learning Community: Preparing for the Coronavirus**. You will find resources on at-home learning to share with parents, be able to participate in a discussion with other teachers in your grade, and be able to upload resources you find helpful to share with other educators.  
[sharemylesson.com/coronavirus/remote](http://sharemylesson.com/coronavirus/remote)



## ¡Colorín colorado!

- For your ELL students, visit **Colorín Colorado**.
  - *Coronavirus Resources for Schools* [colorincolorado.org/coronavirus](http://colorincolorado.org/coronavirus)
  - *Serving and Supporting Immigrant Students* [colorincolorado.org/immigration](http://colorincolorado.org/immigration)