




STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner 

DATE: March 9, 2020

SUBJECT: Guidance to CT School Districts

Thank you for your efforts to keep students and staff safe, and for your work planning ahead. This guidance is subject to change as the situation changes in Connecticut. Districts should make decisions based first and foremost on the safety and well-being of students, staff and the entire school community, and with the input of local municipal public health officials.

School Closures and Distance Learning:

At present, the decision to close remains at the local level. The flowchart attached will help provide guidance.

The State Department of Education recommends that *if* districts make decisions, with the recommendation of municipal health departments or district health department directors, to close school for up to 2 weeks that those days are made up during vacations or in June. The State Department of Public Health is available for consultation. A second option, to provide distance learning in lieu of on-site schooling, must be approved by a waiver (attached). Districts must consider applicable state and federal laws and policies, including but not limited to employment laws, collective bargaining considerations, and special education. Consistent with our previous guidance, work with unions to ensure effective and equitable staff engagement in distance learning plans.

Closures that may extend past two weeks will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Use the Superintendent email address previously provided to you to communicate questions directed to the CSDE. Please keep your district emergency operations coordinator informed of questions and responses.

Postponing or Cancellation of Events:

Districts, in consultation with the municipal or district health department, should consider the directives made to state agencies by the Governor (below) in considering district planning for large events where there would be 100 or more people in attendance such as:

- Athletic events
- School plays/Spring concerts
- Field trips

Summary of Guidance from Governor to State Agencies:

- An immediate freeze on state employee travel for state business outside of Connecticut until further notice.
- Any State of Connecticut-organized large meetings, conferences, or gatherings anticipated to have more than 100 people in attendance will be evaluated as to whether these events should move to teleconference or be postponed.
- For events or meetings with large numbers of people within arm's length of each other, encourage those who are at higher risk due to age (70 or older), cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or chronic lung diseases like COPD, as well as those with severely weakened immune systems, not to attend or dial in.

The attached flow chart provides guidance on school closures, distance learning, and 180 day waivers. Please be sure to use the Superintendent Only e-mail address with any questions. Staff is monitoring this mailbox closely allowing for the quickest responses possible. Please DO NOT share the e-mail address; it is intended for prompt responses to superintendents.

If Connecticut experiences widespread sustained community transmission, public safety considerations including extended school closures as a public health prevention measure will be made at the direction of the Office of the Governor with input from Connecticut State Department of Education, Department of Public Health, and Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection.

Once again, thank you for your efforts.

Stay healthy.