HIDOE Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic
Frequently Asked Questions

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Continuity of Learning

Is student work being assigned and completed during the COVID-19 closures are considered "enrichment" and won’t be graded?

Yes, in place of traditional in-person classroom instruction, teachers are utilizing an instructional enrichment approach that will continue to engage students in a modified approach to learning until school buildings can reopen. This enrichment will involve a mixed methodology approach, such as independent projects, study packets, distance learning, and e-conferencing, with an increased utilization of technology to the extent possible. HIDOE recognizes that some students will need opportunities beyond enrichment to meet graduation or promotion requirements, and guidance has been shared for providing such accommodations.

How will the loss of instructional time affect students’ preparedness and how will HIDOE address that?

These issues are being discussed by state and complex leadership. More guidance will be provided at a future date as the state moves closer to recovery from the stay-at-home quarantine period. The needed extent of HIDOE actions cannot be fully realized until the length of the school closure period becomes clearer.
Is the number of students participating in online/distance learning tracked?

Exact numbers of students participating in enrichment activities are not currently available. HIDOE expects all students to engage in Continuity of Learning plans whether online, via printed materials, or using some combination of both. If parents have questions about distance learning requirements, please contact your school administration.

How is Continuity of Learning being addressed in rural areas?

School administrators and teachers have been working to get available devices and enrichment packets to students. This need is determined at the school level, where administrators and teachers know what works best to support their individual students and families. The Department's complex and state offices support this effort - whether it is moving extra devices from one office to another or providing technical support.

What can be done to provide internet access in rural areas?

The Department has been working with various internet service providers who have reached out to offer free or reduced-cost internet service options to students and educators during the COVID-19 pandemic. Offers are available on internet service providers' websites or by calling their support offices. Schools are providing paper-based educational packets to students who do not have technology resources available at home so that they are able to participate and engage in remote learning opportunities.

What if some students or families cannot be reached during this time?

Every effort is being made by teachers and administrators to reach all students and families. It remains a priority to ensure that students stay engaged in learning while at home during the quarantine period. This may take time as some families facing hardships may have temporarily relocated or have lost means of communication. Additional HIDOE efforts to distribute enrichment packets to rural areas are being organized and may include pop-up distribution points at remote locations.
If parents or guardians have not been contacted, what should they do?

Parents or guardians who have not received enrichment materials for their child, either at school pick-ups or online, are asked to contact their school to make arrangements.

Graduation

How will the loss of instructional time impact high school graduations?

The Board of Education (BOE) unanimously approved HIDOE’s request to modify high school graduation and commencement requirements under Board Policy 102-15 for the graduating class of 2020. The plan recommends utilizing grades from the third quarter, which ended March 13, 2020, to determine the final grade for student courses. Approximately 90 percent of seniors were projected to graduate on time based on third quarter grades.

What will happen to students who were below proficiency at the end of the third quarter?

For students who do not meet proficiency, an extension or other options will be available, and further considerations are being made for students within block or multi-track schedules. The plan also includes additional considerations for academic honors including Advanced Placement (AP) assessments, International Baccalaureate (IB) assessments and dual credit, as well as workforce opportunities like Career and Technical Education and military designations.
**How will standardized assessments be impacted?**

The US Department of Education (USDOE) allowed states to apply for flexibility around federal assessment and accountability requirements due to COVID-19 impacts on Mar. 20, 2020. HIDOE’s expedited waiver request was approved, allowing for the cancellation of federally required assessments for the remainder of School Year 2019-20. These include Smarter Balanced Assessments in English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics; Hawaii State Science Assessments and Biology 1 end of course exams; Hawaii State Alternate Assessments; and the Kaiapuni Assessment of Educational Outcomes (KĀ‘EO). The BOE unanimously voted to approve the Department’s waiver request at its meeting on Apr. 2, 2020.

**Will all public high school graduations be cancelled?**

There will be no traditional graduation ceremonies this school year. This was an emotional decision because we understand the importance of this milestone to our seniors. The safety of our community, however, is paramount and alternative graduation celebrations are being planned instead. Schools will work within strict safety parameters to design celebrations that best reflect their communities while meeting critical social distancing rules. Administrators will work with student leaders and faculties to develop these. Each high school will announce their celebration date to be held in the month of May, and their unique approach with their graduates beginning the week of Apr. 20.

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**Grab-and-Go School Meals**

**Who can receive a Grab-and-Go school meal?**

All children ages 18 and younger can receive one school meal each for breakfast and one each for lunch daily. The children do not have to be enrolled at the school site and do not have to be public school students.

**Where can I take my children or where can they go to receive a school meal?**

Over 65 public schools statewide are serving as meal distribution sites. [Click here for a list of locations](#). New sites will be added to this list, so please bookmark this page.
My child does not attend public school, can he/she receive a school meal?

Yes, all children ages 18 and younger can receive a school meal. They do not have to attend the school where meals are being served. Meals are being provided to children regardless of if they attend public, charter, private or home-based schools. The goal of the program is to ensure that all children receive nutritious meals during the school closure period.

Does my child need to be present to receive a school meal?

Yes, the US Department of Agriculture requires that all children receiving a meal be present.

Are any exceptions allowed?

Parents and guardians of children with special needs or disabilities can call the school location to make arrangements prior to arrival. There are sometimes special needs cases in which non-routine activities or other unique circumstances can pose significant hardships for caregivers. Call the administration of the school meal pick-up site to make arrangements.

When will new meal distribution sites open?

New school sites will be announced after supplies, transportation and staffing are coordinated. The list of school meal distribution sites will be updated as new school sites are established, so please bookmark this page.

What’s the procedure for receiving a meal?

Each distribution site will have a drive-thru line. All drivers and children are asked to remain in their vehicles and to follow staff instructions. Some sites will have an additional walk-up line. Everyone on or near campuses are asked to follow proper social distancing measures and health guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
My child has a special dietary restriction, how can I make arrangements for meals?

For special diet accommodations, please send an email to specialdiets@k12.hi.us with as much detail as possible.

Keeping Schools Safe

What health and safety measures are being taken on school campuses?

Only essential school staff are allowed on campus and only in limited locations. All students, teachers and other staff are complying with the statewide stay-at-home order issued by Governor Ige on Mar. 23. Essential workers are complying with safety measures to stop the spread of COVID-19 including wearing masks, social distancing, thorough cleaning and ensuring that hands are frequently washed.

Are school facilities like cafeterias available for public use?

Permits for rental use of school facilities are temporarily suspended during the school closure period. Only essential school staff are allowed on school campuses at this time. The permit system will be reinstated at a future date to be determined, but only after the current health situation has ended.

Can I jog, run or walk on school grounds for exercise?

No. Only essential school staff are allowed on school campuses at this time. All others are asked not to enter school grounds, including parking areas, playcourts, tracks and all areas of campus, for the health and safety of students and staff.
Community Support

How can the community make donations to help support schools, such as supplies for meals or masks for staff?

Community donations are very much appreciated and welcomed. For donations of school meal supplies, masks, gloves and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), contact the Office of Facilities and Operations at 808-748-5000 or email cherisse.shikada@k12.hi.us. For smaller donations to specific schools, contact the school administration.