

FAQ on State and District Response to COVID-19 Outbreak

What procedures do districts or states have in place for teachers that may be at high risk for COVID-19?

Regional Educational
Laboratory
Northeast & Islands

From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

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COVID-19 has created a number of challenges for state, district and school leaders related not only to how they will reopen, but also how will they address staff that may be regarded as “high risk.” According to a report from [Kaiser Family Foundation](#), 1 in 4 teachers in the U.S. are at an increased risk for illness, such as COVID-19. Therefore, districts may face staffing shortages when they reopen due to teachers in the high-risk category opting to stay home.

1. The [Texas Education Agency](#) is advising school districts to follow the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\)](#) when determining if staff are regarded as high risk.
2. [Connecticut State Department of Education](#) is advising districts to follow the FFCRA act guidelines. Additionally, they have provided districts with alternative work arrangements for those that are deemed “high risk” for COVID-19, such as:
 - a. Working virtually with students who are not able to attend school
 - b. Assisting in the development and implementation of district professional development (PD)
 - c. Providing PD to train teachers on best practices for virtual teaching and learning
 - d. Serving as online tutors for students in need of assistance
3. If a teacher is in a high-risk group and does not feel comfortable returning to work, the Dallas Independent School district is offering alternate work arrangements but provides some [considerations](#) that a supervisor should consider, including:
 - a. Ensuring all essential functions can be performed remotely
 - b. Determining whether the teacher has an underlying condition
 - c. Considering whether benefit leave is more appropriate than an alternate work arrangement
 - d. Using the teacher’s PTO

Related links

- <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/how-many-teachers-are-at-risk-of-serious-illness-if-infected-with-coronavirus/>
- <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/SY-20-21-Public-Health-Guidance.pdf>
- <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffera-employee-paid-leave>
- <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Digest/2020-21/Reopening-FAQs.pdf>
- <https://www.dallasisd.org/cms/lib/TX01001475/Centricity/Domain/15337/AWA%20Request%20Form%20Employee%20and%20Supervisors%20Guide%207212020.pdf>

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