

FAQ on State and District Response to COVID-19 Outbreak

How are districts addressing student promotion and retention?

Regional Educational
Laboratory
Northeast & Islands

From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

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As districts transition to remote learning, school leaders and teachers are no longer able to use traditional methods of determining student promotion and retention. Many state education agencies have provided their local school districts with guidance on promotion and retention. Most districts have not determined if remote learning will continue through the end of the school year. However, given the length of time students have already been out of the classroom, school leaders are exploring alternative methods of making promotion and retention decisions.

How are state education agencies (SEAs) addressing student promotion during school closures?

- Even though many states have not determined criteria for student promotion, Alabama has started the process with their local education agencies by having them complete an [academic continuity plan](#) (due in April), which will contain a plan on student promotion. Alabama is giving districts several options for promotion that may include:
 - Using the grades students have earned so far as final grades
 - Providing an assignment to measure mastery of standards
 - Averaging assignment grades from each week and using that as the final grade
 - Using a pass/fail system
- [Georgia](#) has offered assessment waivers—both federal and state-mandated—to all districts, which provides local districts with flexibility in modifying or setting up promotion and retention criteria. Some options the state is exploring include:
 - Districts adopt a “no zero” policy for all assignments and allow students to attempt the assignments multiple times.
 - Districts promote students who have demonstrated subject area competency regardless of the amount of time the student spent in the course.

How are some districts assessing student progress during school closures?

Many districts are being flexible with their grading system during school closures.

State	District	Approach to Learning	Promotion/Retention Decision
District of Columbia	District of Columbia Public Schools	Remote learning	The district will not penalize students for assignments they are unable to complete.
Illinois	Chicago Public Schools (CPS)	Remote learning	CPS will only count grades if it improves a student's grade and does not negatively impact their standing.
Arizona	Phoenix Union High District	Remote learning	The district has not determined criteria for promotion, but district leaders are allowing students to makeup missing assignments . Also, student grades cannot decrease, and grade increases can only occur with supplemental learning.

Other Additional Resources:

- There is a [new national database](#) in which a number of school districts have shared their early plans for teaching, learning, and supports during this pandemic.

Related links:

- <https://www.alsde.edu/covid-19>
- https://www.georgiainsights.com/uploads/1/2/2/2/122221993/sboe_waivers_for_leas_-_gadoe_guidance.pdf
- <https://cps.edu/Pages/EnrichmentLearningResources.aspx>
- <https://www.phoenixunion.org/Page/25627>

April 24, 2020

This document was prepared under Contract ED-IES-17-C-0008 by Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands, administered by Education Development Center. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.