# Superintendent’s Memo #071-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: March 13, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Updates Related to COVID-19 Following the Governor’s Order to Close Schools for a Minimum of Two Weeks

The Governor of Virginia ordered all K-12 schools in Virginia to close for a minimum of two weeks in response to the spread of COVID-19. A link to the Governor’s Press Release can be found [here](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2020/march/headline-854442-en.html). The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has been working closely with the Governor’s Office, the Virginia Department of Health, and other state agencies to ensure our public schools and communities have the most up-to-date information and resources to be proactive and to respond to concerns about COVID-19. The health and safety of our children and staff are our top priorities. We continue to hear from parents and our school leaders about their concerns and understand the fears any parent may have. The VDOE continues to support school divisions in accessing resources related to child care access, providing student meals, and continuing to provide learning opportunities for all students.

**Make-Up Days**

Per the Governor’s order related to the state of emergency, the State Superintendent will work with school divisions to provide flexibility via waivers for the school hours missed during the Governor’s order and for other school closures related to COVID-19.

**School Nutrition**

The VDOE is currently approving waivers to school divisions to authorize non-congregate feeding under the Summer Food Service Program. We have received updates from local school divisions that are setting up drive-thru pickups, using school buses, and using faith-based organizations as pickup sites, etc., in order to ensure children have access to meals. An additional Superintendent's Memo regarding school nutrition will follow.

**Continuity of Learning**

Should there be extended closures beyond the current order the VDOE encourages school divisions to consider options and ideas to engage students in reading, thinking and learning. Creating such opportunities should be done with careful consideration of providing equitable access and support for a variety of students. Due to the waivers that will be granted for school closures related to COVID-19, schools should not consider strategies for continuity of learning as make-up days.

Additionally, we recommend that school divisions be mindful of the impacts of increased screen time for students and incorporates suggestions for physical activity and wellness.

**School Finance and Funding**

The VDOE continues to provide updates to the guidance concerning Basic Aid Payments. Contingency plans are in place to allow the semi-monthly recurring payments for Standards of Quality (SOQ) and other Direct Aid accounts to continue to divisions. With the approval of waivers mentioned above, state funding will continue to be provided to school divisions. If there are partial waivers in the future, funding may be prorated based on the partial approval of a waiver of the 990 hour/180 day *Code of Virginia* requirement.

**Student Assessments**

Staff from the VDOE are evaluating options to provide flexibility in meeting testing requirements for the Standards of Learning tests, the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program and the ACCESS for ELs test administered to English Learners. More information and guidance will be provided as it becomes available.

**Resources from the Virginia Department of Education**

*#GoOpenVA - Open Educational Resources.* Virginia's teachers are encouraged to utilize the free instructional resources available through the #GoOpenVA website. These resources are available to all Virginia educators using their local division log-in credentials.

A selection of resources from local school divisions has been uploaded to the Open Educational Resource (OER) to the [*COVID-19 Extended Closing Resources Collection*](https://goopenva.org/curated-collections/22). School divisions are encouraged to add instructional content to Virginia's OER repository, in general, but items specifically related to this closure can be uploaded into this collection through the [goopenva.org](http://goopenva.org/) website. For additional information, please review [Superintendent's Memo 013-20](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/013-20.docx).

*Virtual Virginia Resources and Free Teacher Training to Support Virtual Learning.* Virtual Virginia is a program offered by VDOE at no cost to school divisions. Virtual Virginia is pleased to host a series of three webinars at no cost over the next few weeks for all Virginia public educators:

Foundations of Online Teaching Using Web Conferencing

*Thursday, March 19, at 4 p.m. EST*

Participants will learn how to create online classrooms, structure a live instructional session, and share best practices for synchronous instruction.

Supporting Instruction through Video Lessons

*Thursday, March 26, at 4 p.m. EST*

Participants will learn how to use free tools to record brief video lessons that can be shared with students.

Teaching Online with Virtual Virginia Digital Content

*Thursday, April 2, at 4 p.m. EST*

Participants will learn how to quickly get the most out of the Virtual Virginia Outreach Resources (listed below), create assignments, monitor progress, and much more.

Please encourage your staff to register for these webinars ([registration link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf5sh-F_BuC8p0-Nbn1X7f8QQs-WMA4z6DT9Jw61hVmG7YZGQ/viewform)).

*Free Resources to Support Virtual Learning.* Virtual Virginia offers 14 course resources in EPF, Math, Science, and Computer Science at no cost for teachers and students to use in blended delivery via the Virtual Virginia LMS.

* Economics and Personal Finance
* Personal Finance
* Economics
* Algebra I
* Algebra II
* Geometry
* Math Analysis/Pre-Calculus
* Earth Science I
* Biology I
* Chemistry
* Physics II
* Computer Science Foundations
* Computer Science Principles
* Computer Science Programming

These resources contain fully developed lessons aligned to Virginia Standards of Learning, videos, interactive applications, and assessments. Visit the Virtual Virginia website to learn more about how to begin using these free resources ([VVA Outreach Program](https://www.virtualvirginia.org/programs/outreach/)). Should you have any additional needs for support through Virtual Virginia’s digital content, please contact Sarah Warnick, Director of Products & Services (sarah.warnick@virtualva.org).

**Resources from the U. S. Department of Education**

*Serving Children With Disabilities.* The U.S. Department of Education created the [Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outbreak](https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf) document to outline state and local agency responsibilities to infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and their families, and to the staff serving these children.

*Student Privacy and FERPA.* The U. S. Department of Education’s Student Privacy Policy Office (SPPO) prepared [FERPA and Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions\_03\_12\_2020.pdf](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/USED/2020/03/12/file_attachments/1399185/FERPA%20and%20Coronavirus%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions_03_12_2020.pdf) to assist school officials working with public health officials in managing public health issues related to COVID-19, while protecting the privacy of students’ education records. Educational agencies and institutions, such as school divisions and schools, play an important role in slowing the spread of COVID-19 in schools and local communities. This document is available on the Student Privacy [website](https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/ferpa-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19). Please direct any relevant student privacy related follow up questions to [FERPA@ed.gov](https://email.ed.gov/OWA/UrlBlockedError.aspx?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=).

*ESSA Assessment and Accountability.* This fact sheet discusses the potential implications of COVID-19 on state assessment and accountability systems. This fact sheet also addresses other considerations regarding the use of Federal funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA). [ESSA Assessment and Accountability](ESSA%20Assessment%20and%20Accountability)

**Resources from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**

*Updated Guidance for School Settings.* [CDC COVID-19 Guidance for School Settings](CDC%20Guidance%20for%20School%20Settings)

**Other VDOE Updates and Previous Superintendent Memos**

Continue to visit the VDOE [website](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/office/covid-19.shtml) for additional updates and guidance on COVID-19 and public schools. The VDOE has also provided the following memos regarding COVID-19:

[Additional Resources Following First Cases of COVID-19 in Virginia](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/063-20.docx) (Word) – Superintendent's Memo 063-20, March 9, 2020

[Transmitting School Absentee Data to the Virginia Department of Health for the Purpose of Public Health Surveillance](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/062-20.docx) (Word) – Superintendent's Memo 062-20, March 9, 2020

[Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information and Resources](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/principals_memos/2020/1006-20.docx) (Word) – Principals Memo 1006-20, March 3, 2020

[Addressing Misinformation Related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/051-20.docx) (Word) – Superintendent's Memo 051-20, February 21, 2020

[Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCOV)](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/032-20.docx) (Word) – Superintendent's Memo 032-20, February 7, 2020