Questions and Answers

Michigan’s 2019-20 Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plans

Updated: April 6, 2020

Introduction: The Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) is supporting intermediate school districts in this effort. As MAISA Executive Director Dr. William Miller said, “Michigan’s educators are committed to student learning. In this unprecedented time, we have been called upon to provide our students with continued learning opportunities and we are working together to meet the challenge. We hope these Questions and Answers assist you in that work.”

[Disclaimer: This living document is a plain-language guide intended to answer commonly asked questions about implementing the Governor’s Executive Order 2020-35. It will be updated as new questions are asked/answered or existing questions/answers are modified/clarified. Note: It does not supersede EO 2020-35 nor replace legal counsel. Remember to do your due diligence as you implement your Plans.]

1. What is the current status of Michigan education for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year?
   As of April 2, 2020, Governor Gretchen Whitmer’s (Executive Order 2020-35) suspended face-to-face learning for the rest of the 2019-20 school year—unless restrictions are lifted. But it ensures continuance of learning by setting remote learning guidelines for Michigan’s 1.5 million students enrolled in public schools.

2. How will schools educate students now that face-to-face learning is suspended until June 30, 2020?
   While school buildings are closed and teachers are not able to provide in-person instruction, teaching and learning will continue through Michigan’s public schools under an approved Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan.

3. What is a Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan?
   A Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan (“Plan”) is an official, approved document that describes how schools will provide teaching and learning during this time period. The Plan is a part of an application that school districts must submit, per the Governor’s Executive Order 2020-35, to waive 2019-20 requirements so schools can continue to receive state aid for operations.

4. How can schools access the Application and Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan?
   MI Continuous Learning Plan document

5. What’s the process to submit a Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan?
   Each Public School District and Public School Academy shall submit a completed Application that includes:
   a. an Assurance Document,
   b. Budget Outline, and
c. Continuity of Learning Plan
to its Intermediate School District (ISD). ISDs must review and approve completed Applications and submit them to the Michigan Department of Education (Kyle Guerrant, guerrantk@michigan.gov) starting April 8, 2020. Each district must have its plan approved by their regional intermediate school district before being implemented. Plans must be implemented no later than April 28, 2020. Public School Academies will submit their plans to their Authorizers.

6. Will schools have assistance in developing a Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan?
Schools will use the template that’s provided to develop their plan. If they would like assistance, they can contact their Intermediate School District or Authorizer. In addition, schools can access guidance from the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA), Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) or from other state associations to aid in completing their plan.

The MAISA General Education Leadership Network (GELN) has developed guidance for districts and ISDs. The MAISA Remote Learning Guidance for Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plans includes descriptions of quality implementation, sample district plans, and links to resources for district leaders and teachers, all directly connected to the plan requirements in the Governor’s Executive Order. Additionally, this guidance includes a tool for ISDs as they review and approve district plans.

MAISA Guidance
COMING SOON: MDE’s Guidance document

7. Will all Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plans be the same?
Every district’s plan will be different and will reflect what’s best and feasible for their community. [Note: Districts can partner with one another to create joint plans.] However they are designed, districts must ensure their plans are appropriate, equitable and accessible for students and families.

8. What needs to be included in the Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan?
A district plan will need to detail how districts will provide opportunities for students to learn remotely and how schools will manage and monitor their progress. It will also provide information on how students and parents or guardians will be notified about the local plan. It will also provide a best estimate of the date on which the district will begin implementation of the Plan, which must be no later than April 28, 2020. Each district must have its plan approved by its Intermediate School District. Public school academies must have their plans approved by their Authorizer.

9. How will schools provide Continuous Learning for their students?
Through their Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan, schools can deliver remote instruction using a variety of methods including printed materials, phone contact, email, online/electronic or a combination (hybrid) approach to meet student and local needs.
If the plan relies on some online instruction, the district should ensure every student who needs it has access to an appropriate device with an ability to connect to the internet. Students and families will not be penalized if they are unable to participate in their alternate learning plan.

10. **Will Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plans address students with special needs?**
Districts shall strive in good faith and to the extent practicable, based upon existing resources, technology, training, and curriculum, as well as the circumstances presented by any state of emergency or state of disaster, to provide equal access to alternative modes of instruction to students with disabilities for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. This includes the provision of auxiliary services under section 1296 of the School Code, MCL 380.1296.

The Office of Special Education has also encouraged the use of Contingency Learning Plans (not to be confused with a continuity of learning plan) for students with disabilities. This plan documents the extent to which a student’s IEP can be implemented in light of the current circumstances. MAISA is developing a model Contingency of Learning Plan and corresponding guidance for the field.

11. **When will the Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plans start?**
While many schools have been providing instruction, the Governor’s Executive Order requires all schools to begin providing instruction under the Continuous Learning Plans no later than April 28, 2020.

12. **Who will approve the Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plans?**
Intermediate School Districts and Public School Academy authorizers will work with their schools to review and approve their Continuous Learning Plans and to provide support, as needed.

13. **How will schools communicate about Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plans and expectations?**
Schools will use their regular means of communication to share information with staff, students, parents, guardians and the community about their Continuous Learning Plans and how they will be implemented.

14. **What happens if I don’t submit a Plan?**
The Plan is a part of an application that school districts must submit, per the Governor’s Executive Order 2020-35, to waive 2019-20 requirements so schools can continue to receive state aid for operations.

15. **Are Intermediate School Districts required to have a Plan?**
If Intermediate School Districts operate student programs (e.g. Center, Career and Technical Education, or Early College) they are required to have a Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan. That plan is to be submitted to the Intermediate School District Superintendent for review, comment and approval.

16. **What is the guidance on submitting the Budget Outline?**
The Plan must include a budget outline estimating additional expenditures associated with the Plan and sources of revenue to pay for those expenditures. As you address your budget and
operate your programs during this time period, be sure to amend your budget as needed and keep track of all your additional expenses, as some may require reimbursement.

17. **Where can I get more information?**
Contact your intermediate school district, Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA), Michigan Association of Public School Academies (MAPSA), your local school district, or read the Governor’s Executive Order 2020-35. You can also view these helpful resources:
- [MAISA COVID-19 Resource Page](#)
- [MASA Resource Center](#)
- [MDE Education Resources Page](#)

Please submit any further questions to: [https://forms.gle/dnKyVGXiju9Cysy26](https://forms.gle/dnKyVGXiju9Cysy26)