



# NEWS RELEASE

## Utah State Board of Education

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### Utah State Board of Education Votes to Waive Requirements and Suspend Assessment Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

SALT LAKE CITY – The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) is waiving certain requirements and suspending statewide assessment in light of national and state declarations of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These actions seek to minimize burden and allow flexibility at the local level to continue education and services in a way that best serves the needs of their communities. The Board also directed staff to continue to distribute state funding to local education agencies (LEAs). The Board’s motion, including a list of all rules to be waived, can be found on the USBE’s [Coronavirus Website](#), under “News and Updates.”

Rules to be waived include instructional day and hour requirements, transportation requirements, and extending deadlines for various programs that fall between April and May. These waivers are effective immediately and in place through June 30, 2020.

The waivers are conditioned on:

- Following state and local health official orders and timelines for dismissal, soft closure, or complete closure of schools;
- Implementing the local education agency’s School Closure Continuity of Education Plan;

- Providing as much notice and communication to students and parents of the suspension and reconvening of school services, including meal services.

“We sought to strike the appropriate balance between the Board’s oversight and accountability responsibilities, along with commonsense flexibility that LEAs need to support educators and families at this time,” said Board Chair Mark Huntsman. “This is likely just the beginning. We’ll continue actively monitoring and responding to this situation as it evolves.”

Further, the Board voted to suspend the requirement for the administration of statewide assessments this school year. The Board also directed the Superintendent to pursue all necessary waivers from applicable federal and state laws. These assessments in Utah include RISE for students in grades 3-8 and Utah Aspire Plus for students in grades 9-10.

“The prospect of schools being held accountable to administer required assessments and impacted by the resulting accountability determinations is an unnecessary distraction to the challenges of maintaining a continuity of instructional service, minimizing trauma and stress, and striving to meet the needs of each student,” said Assistant Superintendent Darin Nielsen.

Utah is joining more than 35 other states in seeking flexibility from federal laws requiring administration of statewide assessments. Given the high-stakes accountability nature of the assessment, it is not possible to administer the assessments in an online, unsecure environment.

“We are continuing to prioritize our students, families, and adults that serve them as we work to contain the spread of COVID-19,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sydnee Dickson. “This is a defining moment in our state. We need to be unified in our prevention and reaction measures in order to ensure our students and communities can be successful moving forward.”