



Update on COVID-19 Education Legislation

MAY 29, 2020



PROTOCOL FOR TODAY'S VIRTUAL MEETING

- Join us by video rather than by phone and add your full name on your tile
- Mute your audio unless you are speaking
- Virtually “raise your hand” to be recognized by today’s moderator
- Type your questions into the chat box on the right side of your screen
- Do not share your screen under any circumstances
- This meeting will be recorded. The archive and slides will be publicly posted:
<https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/covid-19-virtual-meetings.aspx>

AGENDA FOR TODAY'S MEETING

- Welcome
- Legislative Session Activity Update with Michelle Exstrom, NCSL
- P-12 Legislative Update with Jorge Casares, NCSL
- Postsecondary Legislative Update: Andrew Smalley, NCSL
- Questions/Discussion
- NCSL Resources



COVID-19 LEGISLATION: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT 2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS

March

- 14 states ended their sessions in March.

April

- AR, CT, and KY (3)

May

- AK, AL, AZ, KS, IL, MI, MN, MS, OK, and SC (10)

June

- DE, LA, NH, NY, and RI (5)

July and August

- CA, NC, and MA (3)

End of Year

- DC, OH, MI, NE, NJ, PA, PR, VT (8)

TBD

- CO, GA, HI, IA, and TN (5)

No Session

- ND, NV, MO, and TX (4)

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/legislative-sessions-and-the-coronavirus.aspx>

CHATTER IN THE CHAT BOX

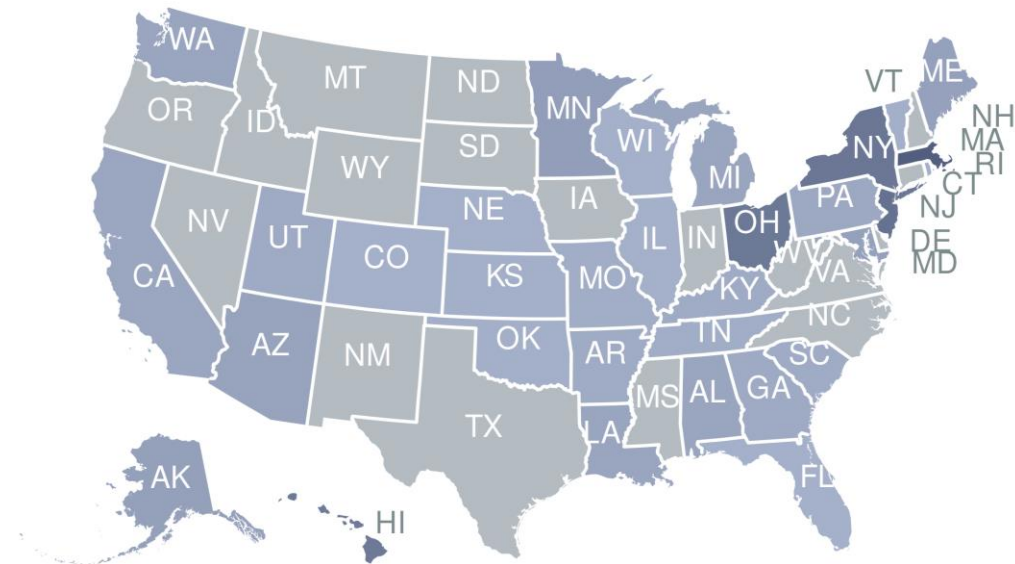
Type in the Chat Box:

- Is your state finished with legislative session for the year, or will you be resuming regular session or going into special session?

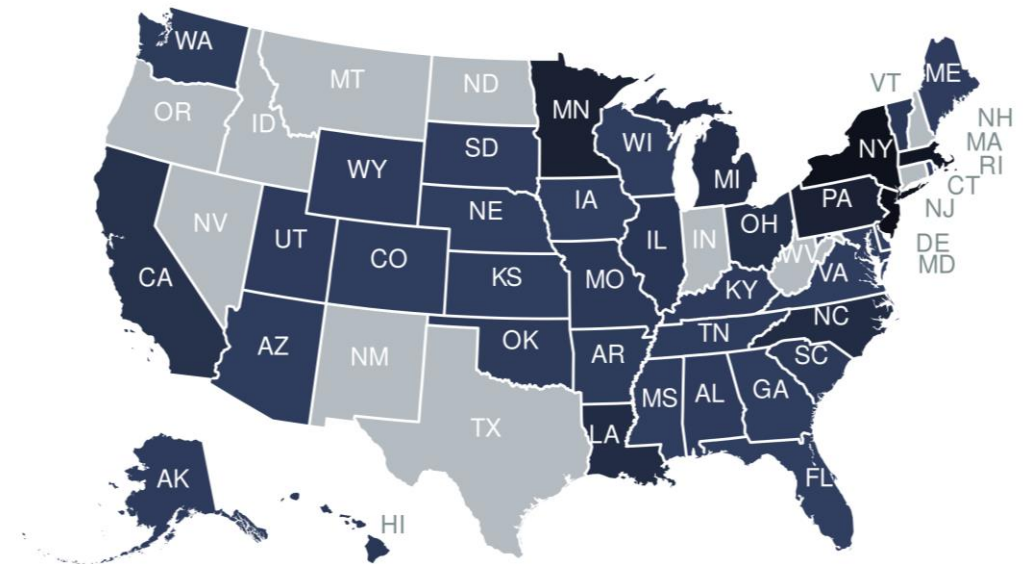


INTRODUCED LEGISLATION RELATED TO COVID-19

03/27/2020



05/28/2020



NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES

COVID-19 LEGISLATION: P—12 EDUCATION

Waivers

- States first provided waivers to school districts to allow for schools to be shut down as the pandemic began.
- These were waivers for requirements related to:
 - instructional hours;
 - promotion requirements; and
 - testing.

Example Legislation

Ohio HB 585 (Pending) – Waives certain primary education requirements to account for school closings related to COVID.



COVID-19 LEGISLATION: P—12 EDUCATION

School Employee Welfare

- Many states introduced legislation to protect the well-being of school staff.
- These bills aimed to:
 - ensure sick time for employees;
 - provide employees with adequate cleaning supplies and sanitary work environments; or
 - ensure that teachers are paid during school closures.

Example Legislation

New Jersey A.B. 3856 (Sent to Executive) – Appropriates \$10 million for the sanitation of healthcare, residential, and other facilities, including schools.

New York A.B. 10153 (Enacted) – Provides school district or school board employees with 14 paid sick days if they are required to quarantine.



COVID-19 LEGISLATION: P—12 EDUCATION

Addressing the Digital Divide

- States introduced legislation to help schools bolster their technology supplies.
 - Remote learning called for districts to act quickly to provide laptops and internet services to children.
 - State departments of education had to move to remote learning and learn to use online resources.
- States are also considering legislation related developing the infrastructure needed for future online learning.

Example Legislation

North Carolina S.B. 859 (Pending) – Requires the state board of education and the department of public instruction, in collaboration with the Friday Institute at North Carolina State University, to expand the School Connectivity Initiative to improve student access to broadband internet by leveraging CARES Act funds, federal funds, and state allocations. Appropriates \$176 million for the expansion.



COVID-19 LEGISLATION: P—12 EDUCATION

Interesting Legislation

- North Carolina H.B. 1131 (Pending) – Appropriates \$75,000 in nonrecurring funds to the nonprofit organization, North Carolina Foundation for Public School Children, for the North Carolina Teacher Cadet Program to provide services related to the expansion of the educator pipeline.
- New Jersey S.B. 2383 (Pending) – Requires the commissioner of education to establish a three-year “Bridge Year Pilot Program” for high school students in the graduating classes of 2021 and 2022 to provide them an opportunity to make up for the interruption to the scholastic and athletic activities and learning.



COVID-19 LEGISLATION: POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Refunds and Reimbursement

- While most colleges have offered refunds or credits for unused services such as room and board, legislators have introduced bills to ensure that students receive refunds for these fees.
- Students have petitioned & filed lawsuits for tuition refunds.

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Bills Introduced

Example Legislation

Maine HB 1549 (Pending)- Requires a postsecondary institution that temporarily suspends classes to reimburse students on a pro rata basis for any unused fees. If classes are not conducted remotely or through an alternate method as determined appropriate by the institution, tuition must be refunded.



COVID-19 LEGISLATION: POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Student Loans

- Most federal student loan borrowers received relief under the Federal CARES Act to suspend interest, defer payments and collections through the end of September.
- States are considering legislation to expand loan relief for other borrowers.

11
Bills Introduced

Example Legislation

Ohio HB 603 (Pending)- Requires the Chancellor of Higher Education to waive interest rates and suspend payments on state student loan programs for up to sixty days.

Pennsylvania HB 2403 (Pending) - Provides that the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency shall suspend the collection of interest payments until 30 days after the end of the declaration of disaster.



COVID-19 LEGISLATION: POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Financial Aid

- States have introduced legislation to modify existing financial aid programs with additional flexibility.
- Other bills would create new programs to support essential workers or healthcare professionals.

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Bills Introduced

Example Legislation

Tennessee HB 2742 (Enacted)- Authorizes the Student Assistance Corporation to temporarily suspend, modify, or waive deadlines and eligibility requirements for student financial aid programs.

New York SB 8271 (Pending) – Would provide financial aid grants (up to \$1,500) to individuals who served as essential workers during the state of emergency declared as a result of COVID-19.



COVID-19 LEGISLATION: POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Emergency Preparedness

- Legislators are also considering bills that would require higher education institutions and governing boards to create plans and address the emergency created by the pandemic.
- These bills also address requiring institutions to plan and outline guidelines for online/distance learning.

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Bills Introduced

Example Legislation

Maryland HB 187 (Enacted)- Requires public institutions of higher education to submit an outbreak response plan to the Maryland Department of Health on or before August 1 each year, beginning in 2021.



COVID-19 LEGISLATION: POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Other Legislation

- Bills have also been introduced to provide higher education institutions with protection from liability as they reopen or provide resources including PPE during the pandemic.
- Bill to ensure credit and transfer of pass/fail grade courses.
- States are considering legislation to address the funding and financial stability of colleges and universities.

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Bills Introduced

Example Legislation

Massachusetts HB 4659 (Pending) – Provides that any institution that in good faith, offers or provides Emergency Aid shall be immune from suit and liability, except in the case of willful, wanton or reckless misconduct.



DISCUSSION: WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR STATE?

Discussion:

- What was your legislature's biggest legislative accomplishment this year in education, or do you have a bill you would like to share with your colleagues?



QUESTIONS: TYPE THEM IN CHAT BOX OR UNMUTE YOUR LINE TO ASK



NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES

NCSL LEGISLATIVE TRACKING RESOURCES

- Education Program Bill Tracking (<http://tiny.cc/edcovidbills>)
 - Includes education bills in more than twelve categories across P-12 and topics
- NCSL COVID-19 Bill Tracking (<http://tiny.cc/covidbills>)
 - Includes bills related to health, employment, elections, criminal justice and other topics.



UPCOMING EDUCATION COVID-19 VIRTUAL MEETINGS

All Meetings are at 3 p.m. ET:

- Lessons Learned from Around the World – Tuesday, June 2
- Stories from the Districts: A Discussion with School Leaders – Friday, June 5
- The Pandemic’s Impact on the Teacher Workforce: Recruitment & Preparation – Tuesday, June 9
- The Pandemic’s Impact on the Teacher Workforce: Supports for Classroom Teachers – Friday, June 12
- Guidance for Schools Reopening in the Fall – Tuesday, June 16
- Pandemic Impact on Early Learning – Friday, June 19
- State Revenue Forecasts and Tracking Federal and State Ed Spending – Tuesday, June 23
- Evidence-Based Policymaking – Friday, June 26

See [NCSL’s Education COVID-19 page](#) for the recording and materials from previous meetings.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES