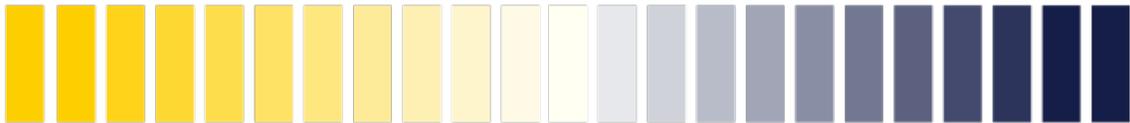


COVID-19 Impact and Policy Overview Report

September 2020



On May 13, 2020, the Legislative Council adopted Resolution 20-02 requiring the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) to submit a report concerning the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on state agency operations and services. Additionally, the resolution requires this report to include information about future emergency plans and information relating to any recommended legislative changes suggested in light of the suspension of statutes and rules during the state of emergency or to help ensure that state agencies are prepared to address future emergencies.

Note: This impact and policy overview report pertains to IDOE operations and services and does not include impacts to local educational agencies.

Information Technology and Assessment Impact and Review

- 1) any operations or services that were reduced or suspended during COVID-19 whether as a result of Executive Order or internal decision;**
 - Assessment - All statewide assessments were impacted in spring 2020.
 - Information Technology operations - No reduction or suspension.

- 2) an overview on preparations to address future emergencies and recovery based on our response to COVID-19;**
 - The State should prioritize the streamlining of data with the Management Performance Hub (MPH) by creating data pipelines for data to flow directly from IDOE to MPH.
 - The State should constantly find ways to update the data collection process from schools. This would involve having school-based systems connected to state systems.
 - The State should anticipate new data collections for example, student internet access, device access, and student addresses. These data points are necessary to address issues such as the distribution of public benefits (P-EBT cards) and also for addressing issues of digital equity such as home internet access and access to devices.
 - The State should consider the impact of local decision making during a state-wide impact. School boundaries, enrolled students, and employees cross-counties making a piecemeal approach nonsensical and difficult to manage. A strong streamlined approach is critical for the future. Understanding the uniqueness of each area and the impact of COVID-19, 92 different approaches is too much and not efficient or safe. In addition, county health departments must

be better prepared for such issues. This would be a good use of time and resources.

- The Governor should take the lead and hold consistent meetings with key state leaders. The current approach is very splintered. Accuracy, efficiency, and operation effectiveness suffer if the current approach continues.
- Although such situations are fluid and difficult, timing and delivery of state level guidance changes matter. This is definitely an area that must be addressed.
- Legislative and Executive branch consistency and appearance of “one team” would also help ease the frustrations and unknowns in the K-12 field. Promises made during a pandemic are confusing and not trusted. A better approach to streamlining solutions would certainly help.

3) recommendations, if any, for legislation to ensure IDOE is prepared to address future emergencies; and

- Additional statutory authorization to require and enforce data submission deadlines, specifically those not tied to funding. IDOE continues to advocate for greater authority to require data submissions for example, Course Completion. This data submission is not tied to any funding and, as a result, is not submitted or left incomplete by school corporations.
- Expect all schools to have EdFi capable data systems (aka student information systems).
- Expect that all school-based technology systems which touch data required by the state are capable of communicating directly with state systems through the EdFi data standard. This would need to become a standard part of all procurements.
- Expect that attendance data be shared daily with the state beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

4) recommendations, if any, for legislation to permanently repeal or modify any regulations or laws that were partially or fully suspended due to COVID-19.

- Increase the frequency of data flow from schools while decreasing the number of certifications required. In other words, streamline the data certification process for schools by aligning certification dates when possible.

Academic Impact and Review

- 1) **any operations or services that were reduced or suspended during COVID-19 whether as a result of Executive Order or internal decision;**
 - No reduction or suspension. Although in different formats, all services remained intact as IDOE served even more people.
- 2) **an overview on preparations to address future emergencies and recovery based on our response to COVID-19;**
 - Remain committed to supporting and funding digital learning.
 - Provide schools with funding to train teachers in digital learning.
 - Increase Webex capacity and ability to have more accounts. At present, IDOE has a limited number of accounts which have a limited attendance capacity. IDOE's largest account has a capacity for 500 attendees. Many Webex sessions fill up, and as a result attendees are turned away.
- 3) **recommendations, if any, for legislation to ensure IDOE is prepared to address future emergencies; and**
 - Maintain staffing to provide vital services to the field.
- 4) **recommendations, if any, for legislation to permanently repeal or modify any regulations or laws that were partially or fully suspended due to COVID-19.**
 - Enact legislation that allows standardized testing to be suspended if a pandemic exists at the time testing is to take place.
 - Support 100 percent funding for virtual education when situations like a pandemic make in-person instruction unfeasible.

Finance Impact and Review

- 1) **any operations or services that were reduced or suspended during COVID-19 whether as a result of Executive Order or internal decision;**
 - As a result of Governor Holcomb's Executive Order, IDOE extended the time frame to submit summer school estimates from April 1 to June 1.
 - As a result of Governor Holcomb's Executive Order, IDOE extended the time frame under IC 20-43 to collect a September 2020 ADM estimate from March 24 to May 1.
 - On-site reviews and on-site technical assistance for the Child Nutrition Program were suspended. In addition, in person trainings for the Child Nutrition Programs were suspended.

- 2) **an overview on preparations to address future emergencies and recovery based on our response to COVID-19;**
 - Preservice bus driver training will be offered virtually.
- 3) **recommendations, if any, for legislation to ensure IDOE is prepared to address future emergencies; and**
 - Recommendation for a one year waiver on the Excessive Education Fund Transfer List requirements for school corporations. (see IC 20-40-2-6).
 - Recommendation for a one-year waiver on random choice school visits. Instead, IDOE would conduct a telephone call or virtual visit depending on the nonpublic school's technology capabilities. (see IC 20-51-4-3).
- 4) **recommendations, if any, for legislation to permanently repeal or modify any regulations or laws that were partially or fully suspended due to COVID.**
 - Nothing to report.