**Questions and Answers About K-12 Schools**

**Why did they close schools for the rest of the academic year?**

Alabama State Superintendent Eric Mackey told superintendents on a phone conference Friday that public health and safety are paramount, and it was better to go ahead and close schools for the remainder of the year and move forward with alternate methods of doing school rather than continue to re-evaluate the situation every few weeks. Mackey reasoned that all of the good that has been done over the last two and a half weeks, with schools closed, could be undone in a matter of a few days if students returned to schools. Alabama was the [fourth of seven states that have now decided to close schools](https://edweek.carto.com/builder/ab05d8cb-c702-4317-8836-637b2b262be5/embed) for the rest of the school year.

**What do school officials hope to get done in these next two months?**

Education officials are worried about students experiencing what is commonly called the “summer slide.” School is open for business on April 6 (again, except for those districts on spring break), and Mackey said schools should focus on core material, what is essential to learn before moving to the next grade. Some enrichment to keep kids learning could be available.

**When does school start?**

School resumes April 6 except for the four school districts who are taking spring break that week. All school will take place somewhere other than inside school buildings.

**When does summer start?**

The school year will end not later than June 5. Most districts had initially planned to end their school year on May 22.

**How am I supposed to teach my child? I'm not a teacher.**

State education officials know there is no way to replace that one-on-one instruction that students get directly from certified teachers, but in these extraordinary circumstances, students still need to continue learning. School officials are working now to figure out how they will continue to teach students. School personnel should be available to help parents as well as students.

**Our family doesn't have access to the internet. How can we do online school?**

School officials are working now to determine the best way for students to receive instruction. In some cases, that may mean students do online school or distance learning. Where the internet isn't available to families, schools may have to print out instructional packets and deliver them to students.

**I don't have enough computer devices for all of my children to do schoolwork all day. What am I supposed to do?**

Talk with school officials about whether they have any extra computers or devices they can loan you during this time. School officials should be willing to work with families who have limited access to devices for their children.

**Can my child meet face-to-face with her teacher for help?**

No. All in-person instruction is specifically prohibited.

**My child receives special education and his Individualized Education Program is due for annual re-evaluation. Are schools still required to re-evaluate IEPs?** School officials are still required by federal law to re-evaluate student IEPs annually. School officials must make good faith efforts to hold IEP meetings, and can hold those meetings virtually or by telephone, if everyone agrees to do so. [This official guidance from the state department of education](https://www.alsde.edu/COVID19%20Updates/SES-COVID-19_QA_March.27.2020.pdf) provides more answers.

**How is my child going to receive the special education services he needs?**

They're still trying to figure this one out. Again, talk with your local school officials. What we're hearing is that schools need to make "good faith efforts" to stick to students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Section 504 plans. [This official guidance from the state department of education](https://www.alsde.edu/COVID19%20Updates/SES-COVID-19_QA_March.27.2020.pdf) provides more answers.

**What about school meals? Can I still pick up meals for my children?**

School meal pickup continues through April 3 as originally planned, except in those districts that are on spring break beginning March 30. Plans after April 3 have not yet been released, but [schools do have federal permission to continue providing meals to students](https://www.alsde.edu/COVID19%20Updates/USDA%20-%20State%20Memo%20-%20Parent-Guardian%20Pickup%20Waiver%20COVID-19%20Response%20-%205.pdf) when schools are closed.

As of March 27, federal education officials have given schools permission to give families meals without having their children with them. However, if the child is not with the family member picking up meals, schools can require some other form of identification to ensure meals are provided only to children 18 and under.

**What about my high school senior? He's going to miss out on graduation ceremonies.**

Education officials have said how sorry they are that seniors are going to miss a lot of the end of school activities that mark graduation from high school, but the health concerns require closing schools. Mackey recommended that school officials find other ways of holding graduation ceremonies if gatherings are still not permitted by the time schools finish the academic year on June 5. Schools could also wait until later in the summer to hold graduation ceremonies.

**Are schools going to grade assignments?**

How school officials choose to handle grades is up to them. State guidance gives schools permission to go with “pass/fail” grades for kindergarten through eighth-grade students. Courses required for graduation should have some way to judge whether the student learned the content.

**What about sports and other springtime extracurricular activities?**

All extracurricular activities and school-related sports, including tryouts for teams for next year, are canceled through the end of the school year. No exceptions.