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Across the country, elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools have closed as part of the effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 (the coronavirus). Each week, IDRA will issue an update on the impact of COVID-19-related policies on schools, students and families.

More resources and trainings for teachers, school administrators, families and communities are on our Learning Goes On website.

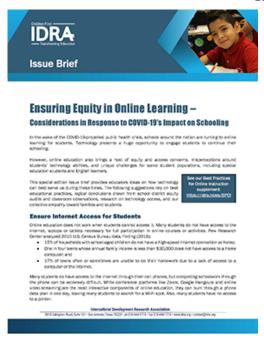
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Equity Resources for Online Learning



Ensuring Equity in
Online Learning Considerations in Response to
COVID-19's Impact on Schooling



Best Practices for Online Instruction in the Wake of COVID-19

SEE PDF

SEE PDF

COVID-19 Policy Update

Testing for Students in Texas & Equity Implications

Texas Governor Greg Abbott waived the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) requirements for the 2019-20 school year and instructed the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to request a waiver for federal testing requirements from the U.S. Department of Education. TEA, State Board of Education, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board are posting guidance on these changes on a daily basis. Here is the most important information about testing, as of March 20, 2020.

How have testing requirements changed?

All STAAR assessments have been cancelled, including:

- · Grades 3-8: Reading and Mathematics
- Grades 4 and 7: Writing
- · Grades 5 and 8: Science
- · Grade 8: Social Studies
- · End-of-Course exams
- STAAR Alternate 2 assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities

Each district will determine whether fifth and eighth graders should advance to the next grade. TEA has instructed districts to consider teacher recommendations, course grades and

other academic information to make this determination.

End-of-course (EOC) assessments for high school students are waived. Graduating seniors who still have EOCs to complete will be assessed by their school's Individual Graduation Committee (IGC). These committees evaluate whether students have mastered a particular subject. Learn more about IGCs and how they work from IDRA's IGC issue brief and infographic.

How will schools monitor students' progress while they are learning from home?

STAAR Interim Assessments are online testing instruments that will be available to school districts at no cost until May 29,



2020. However, these assessments do not cover all subjects for all grades. Teachers and school districts that continue to serve students will likely have to determine how to track student progress and ensure that learning continues while schools are closed. Schools must expand their knowledge and use of assessment methods that do not rely on one measure to determine student achievement.

How will assessment changes impact English learners?

As part of its waiver request to the U.S. Department of Education, TEA asked for a waiver from federal progress assessment requirements for English learners. Districts still have the option to administer the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) to students until May 29.

TEA has not yet released specific guidance and resources about how schools can meet the instructional and assessment needs of English learners while schools are closed. The agency has announced that it is developing recommendations for alternative methods to determine language proficiency.

Many school districts are releasing learning resources online and in hard copy form to all students. These materials may be difficult for many families to access, including the families of English learners who may not have reliable, affordable internet services for even a brief period of time. Additionally, in-person listening and speaking are critical components of effective language programs. Without these communication options, many at-home learning methods developed for English learners will be insufficient.

What are the changes to Advanced Placement (AP) courses and college admissions tests?

The AP program is developing online testing, which will be available to students in May. Before then, free, online resources and review sessions will be made available.

The March and May SAT tests have been cancelled (a decision made by the College Board). All registered students will receive a refund.

The April 4 ACT has been postponed to June 13.

The Texas Education Agency will extend college preparation assessment reimbursements to cover tests administered during the summer.

What is the impact of these changes on equitable access to education for all students?

Significant educational equity issues existed before COVID-19. Generations of students of color, poor students, English learners and students with disabilities have not had access to the resources, instructional materials, high-quality teachers and facilities they need. These inequities will persist and perhaps worsen during the current public health and economic crisis. We must remain watchful and involved in our schools and communities to ensure all students have access to learning opportunities and life's necessities.

Education agencies and school districts across the country can do the following...

- Ensure sustained and equitable access to coursework, instruction, activities and assessments in a variety of modes and formats.
- Provide instructional supports and resource repositories for teachers so that all districts can continue to serve students.
- Continue to engage families with updated messaging on health and safety practices,
 Census 2020 outreach, and supplemental educational materials.
- Ensure that waivers do not negatively impact the civil rights of students.
- Limit waivers and adaptations only to those that are necessary to ensure the health and safety of school communities.
- Provide clear guidance to teachers on the most effective ways to support students with specific educational needs, including English learners.

Links for more information

The School Meal Finder provides information about where students can access meals

TEA's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Support and Guidance

TEA Notice to School Administrators about Student Assessments

TEA <u>Assessment Guidance</u> (updated March 19, 2020)

The <u>College Board's SAT Coronavirus Updates</u>, including access to free, online practice tests and resources and information about AP testing

The <u>ACT April 2020 National Exam COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions</u>

Free Webinar Series

IDRA Launches Free Webinar Series on Equitable Practices for Online Learning

IDRA is actively developing webinars and digital workshops for

educators to continue student learning during this unprecedented event.

The first episode, **Equitable Practices for Teaching Online**,
aired today and will soon be
available on-demand.

Sign up now for the next episode: **Tools & Tips to Alleviate the Homework Gap** on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 @ 2:00 pm (cst)

REGISTER NOW



Webinar Schedule

Equitable Practices for Teaching Online Friday, March 20, 2020 @ 2:00 pm (cst)

Tools & Tips to Alleviate the Homework Gap Tuesday, March 24, 2020 @ 2:00 pm (cst)

More coming soon! Register at https://idra.news/WebinarSeries



Equity Connection

IDRA's Online Community of Practice

Join IDRA's free online community of practice

IDRA's **Equity Connection** is a place for educators, researchers, parents and community. We've added a forum focused on the COVID-19-propelled public health crisis and its affect on schooling.

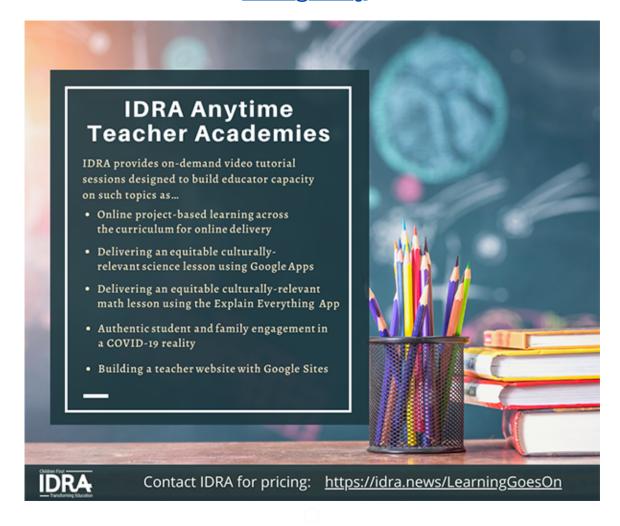


Online Technical Assistance A cademies for School Districts

Get help implementing equitable and effective online education!

As schools shut down and head for uncertain times, IDRA is offering multi-day online academies to assist districts in providing equitable and excellent education in online settings. The academies will be held using a web conference platform easily available to your teachers and will consist of one planning day with district and campus leaders and four

professional development and technical assistance days with instructional coaches and teachers. The cost ranges from \$10,000 to \$50,000 depending on district size and needs. Contact IDRA for more information: **contact@idra.org**.





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March 21, 2020

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The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent private non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring educational opportunity for every child. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.

IDRA works hand-in-hand with hundreds of thousands of educators and families each year in communities and classrooms around the country. All our work rests on an

unwavering commitment to creating self-renewing schools that value and promote the success of students of all backgrounds.