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State of Louisiana

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Dear Education Community,

The spread of COVID-19, the novel coronavirus, has created a temporary new normal in our great state of Louisiana and the nation. The life that we were accustomed to has been completely changed and the education of our students has been drastically altered for the near future. I want to thank each of you for making the health, safety, and protection of students your number one goal.

Closing schools in an effort to flatten the curve and stop the spread of COVID-19 has created the need to suspend certain laws. This week, Senator Cleo Fields, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, Representative Ray Garofalo, Chair of the House Education Committee, Sandy Holloway, President of BESE, and Beth Scioneaux, Interim Superintendent requested executive action to ensure that the necessary laws were suspended.

As a result, I will be issuing a proclamation in the coming days to address these issues, and I want to ensure you are aware of what will be included.

Please note that some of the suspensions in the proclamation will be effective only if the United States Department of Education (US DOE) grants a waiver of the relevant provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The proclamation will require the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to apply for the federal waiver and will require BESE to adopt emergency rules as necessary to effect the suspension of the statutes described in the Executive Order. Below is a summary of the proclamation grouped by the type of action taken.

Testing Administration

La. R.S. 17:24.4, La. R.S. 17:4023, La. R.S. 47:6301(B)(2)(ii), and BESE Bulletin 741 will be suspended for the entirety of the 2019-2020 school year. These provisions mandate the annual administration of the Louisiana Education Assessment Program (LEAP) and End of Course examinations for public school students and students at nonpublic schools participating in the Louisiana Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence program. These suspensions will be effective only upon receipt of a federal waiver from the relevant provisions of ESSA.

School and District Accountability

La. R.S. 17:10.1 and La. R.S. 17:391.2 et seq. will be suspended for the entirety of the 2019-2020 school year. These statutes provide for public school accountability and assessment, including the School and District Accountability System. These suspensions will be effective only upon receipt of a federal waiver from the relevant provisions of ESSA.

Teacher Evaluation and Credentialing

La. R.S. 17:3881 et seq., La. R.S. 17:3901 et seq., and La. R.S. 17:3997(D) will be suspended for the entirety of the 2019-2020 school year. These provisions relate to the use of value-added data in teacher evaluation and as criteria for receipt of teaching credentials. These suspensions will be effective only upon receipt of a federal waiver from the relevant provisions of ESSA.

Student Attendance

La. R.S. 17:221 and La. R.S. 17:232 will be suspended for the entirety of the 2019-2020 school year. These provisions establish compulsory attendance for all students and require schools to check attendance daily.

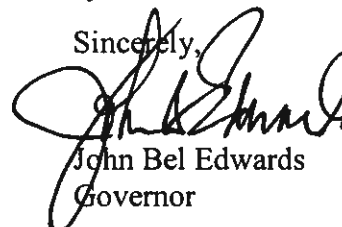
Teacher Work Days

La. R.S. 17:154.3 will be suspended for the entirety of the 2019-2020 school year. This section of statute requires teachers to work a minimum number of days per school year.

Charter School Application and Enrollment

La. R.S. 17:3991(C)(1) will be suspended for the entirety of the 2019-2020 school year. This section of statute requires charter schools to adhere to certain student application and enrollment procedures.

I want to acknowledge and thank each and every one of you for your efforts to help promote distance learning. I would encourage you to continue to use resources like Louisiana Public Broadcasting's educational programming, because the education of our students is extremely important. I also want to thank you for coming together during this challenging time to support our students, families, teachers, and school staff. We all play an important role in changing our behavior to contain COVID-19 and protect the health of everyone in our communities.

Sincerely,

John Bel Edwards
Governor