



# Illinois State Board of Education

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www.isbe.net

**Darren Reisberg**  
*Chair of the Board*

**Dr. Carmen I. Ayala**  
*State Superintendent of Education*

April 1, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

We continue our transition into Remote Learning Days, and we appreciate your patience as we work together through issues like attendance, student privacy, and social-emotional health.

We recognize the importance of checking student engagement/attendance to help monitor which students may need additional support in accessing instruction. School districts have flexibility in determining the best method for measuring student engagement/attendance locally, such as completion of assignments, log ins, emails, phone calls, and other check ins.

During these unprecedented times, our main concern is the connectedness and care for our students and one another as we maintain continuity of learning. If a child who attended school prior to the suspension of in-person instruction has not been reachable, please attempt to contact a parent/guardian. ISBE encourages districts to account for every student who is enrolled.

We have updated our comprehensive FAQ with this information on attendance, as well as information on remote learning, Remote Learning Days, transportation, school construction, at [www.isbe.net/Documents/FAQ-4-1-20.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/Documents/FAQ-4-1-20.pdf).

Remote learning also requires us to take precautions to ensure we protect all students' personally identifying information and raises many questions about student privacy. For example: can you allow visitors (such as parents) in your virtual classroom? Can you record virtual classes for students who aren't able to "attend"? Can you conduct a candid parent-teacher conference with a family online while your spouse is nearby and can overhear? These issues and many others are addressed in a recent webinar from the U.S. Department of Education that you can see [here](#).

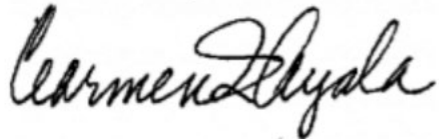
Most importantly, we all need to guard the health of our families, both physically and mentally. You can find a wealth of resources to reassure students coping with scary situations, help adults talk to children about COVID-19, and learn to manage anxiety and stress through ISBE's new [mental health webpage](#).

Don't forget that today is National Census Day! Getting everyone counted in this decennial census is vitally important to determine Illinois' share of certain federal funding streams as well as the number of votes Illinois gets in the Electoral College and in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The census also presents us with the perfect opportunity for remote learning lessons in math, civics, social studies, government, history, literature, and even art! We encourage you to be creative and proactive in helping your students and your community understand and appreciate the importance of the census.

You can get more information about the census in the [debut episode of our ISBE podcast](#). It's 22 minutes long – just the right length for walking your dog. I hope you enjoy, and I look forward to sharing more through this new avenue of celebrating and supporting your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmen I. Ayala". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "C".

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala  
State Superintendent of Education  
Illinois State Board of Education