

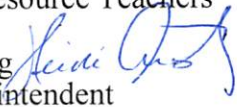


**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

March 30, 2020

**TO:** Complex Area Superintendents, Principals (All), District Educational Specialists, Public Charter School Executive Director, Public Charter School Directors, English Learner (EL) Resource Teachers

**FROM:** Heidi Armstrong   
Assistant Superintendent

**SUBJECT: Programming and Timelines for English Learners During School Closures**

This is a time for community goodwill where all parties involved must operate from good faith to work together for the benefit of all students, including English Learners (ELs). Your continued flexibility in the work you do to educate our students is recognized and appreciated. As our community works together to navigate these most challenging and unprecedented times, please be reminded to take care of yourself and your family.

On Tuesday, March 24, 2020, the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) announced that school facilities will remain closed to students through April 30, 2020. This decision is based on the latest guidance and information from health officials and elected leaders. Pending any changes due to COVID-19, traditional in-school instruction is on hold until schools reopen to students.

During the facilities' closure, the HIDOE schools will provide enrichment activities for all students through both distance learning and paper packets. As schools prepare for continuity of learning, considerations should be made to accommodate different levels of English language proficiency, whether this is through distance learning or paper packets.

Some areas for school staff to consider include:

- Equal access to enrichment activities and continued English language enrichment activities;
- Reasonable means of appropriate support;
- Provision of support for staff who deliver EL enrichment activities; and
- Provision of English language enrichments which can be delivered through a variety of methods, including distance learning, virtual instruction, or differentiated work packets.

Schools and complex areas will need to consider a variety of approaches to communicating with families who speak languages other than English at home. Multiple modes of communicating can include phone calls, text messages, emails, and social media postings in multiple languages. Community organizations and religious institutions can also be partners to share information with families in different languages.

Considerations for successful parent(s)/legal guardian(s) communication or meetings include:

- Ongoing open communication with parent(s)/legal guardian(s) that supports access to communication needs, including use of family's first or most used language. [Google Translate](#) is best for words and phrases, [TalkingPoints](#) is a messaging app for teachers that translates written text to the home language;
- Provision of necessary documents via email or standard mail when needed:
  - Advanced planning time to give all team members, including the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) an opportunity to prepare for a family call; and
  - Mutual agreement between staff and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) on meeting time and mode.

When students physically return to campus after school closure, staff should respond to EL students with empathy to maintain positive relationships. Recognize that it may take some time to readjust to the routine of a regular school day. It will be important to monitor students for loss or regression of language skills and their overall well-being.

Strategies that may assist with eventual campus transition include:

- A positive and supportive classroom environment;
- A structured and predictable schedule;
- Regular student check-ins and self-reflection; and
- Invite community leaders from the minority group as resource speakers and share how they dealt with the unprecedented event.

EL Program Resources:

- [EL Guidance Manual](#)
- HIDOE's [Continuity of Education](#)
- [EL COVID-19 Translations and Resources](#)
- [EL Distance Learning Guide](#)
- [Notification of Enforcement Discretion for Telehealth Remote Communications During the COVID-19 Nationwide Public Health Emergency](#)
- [Colorín Colorado](#)

The information in this memo is based on information that is currently available to the HIDOE and is subject to change as new information is provided.

For more information about EL, contact Andreas Wiegand, Educational Specialist, Student Support Section, at (808) 305-9787 or email at [andreas.wiegand@k12.hi.us](mailto:andreas.wiegand@k12.hi.us).

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c: Superintendent  
Deputy Superintendent  
Assistant Superintendents  
State Public Charter School Commission