



Extended School “Soft Closure” Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Below are responses to the most frequently asked questions we have received regarding the soft closure and remote learning.

Last Updated 03/28/2020

1. What does a soft closure (or school dismissal) mean for schools?

Soft closure means: in-school instruction is suspended, but educational services continue remotely; meals where needed are provided; students have access to educators and other staff to support remote learning; and the number of adults in school buildings is limited to abide by state directives. Local or State Health Departments may also completely close a building for the purposes of sanitizing if active COVID-19 cases have been found to be present in the building.

2. During the soft closure, should staff still be in the building?

All schools should be maximizing telework and limiting the number of individuals in the building to the greatest extent possible, in order to abide by the Governor’s directive and the [Centers for Disease Control's Guidance](#) which states that gatherings of ten or more people should be canceled or held virtually. Educators should address concerns about individual school remote instruction plans with their school leader or superintendent.

3. If there is community spread of the virus, do you recommend a complete building closure?

Deciding to close a school building due to health concerns is a decision that should be made at the direction of state or local health departments in consultation with school officials.

4. How will these days when students aren't in school be made up? Will seniors be able to graduate in June?

Remote instruction is a different way to deliver the same high-quality education to our students, and will count toward graduation. Classroom grades remain within the purview of teachers. Existing [administrative rule](#) gives districts and charter schools much leeway in determining course credits toward graduation. Of



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course, parents and educators in Utah want to know what this unprecedented situation means for high school seniors. Teachers, students, and families are working together to find ways to complete required course work remotely to graduate on time.

The Utah State Board of Education will be working with districts and charter schools to gather and disseminate best practices in the awarding of course credit.

5. Will part-time and classified school staff be paid?

We are asking that school districts and charter schools make every effort to keep staff gainfully employed. We encourage school districts and charter schools to be adaptable and find work for individual employees to support the soft closure. Document your decisions and how you are engaging staff. We recommend using this time to maximize professional learning opportunities for your staff. If all options to keep staff employed have been exhausted, individuals may seek services through the Utah Department of Workforce Services.

6. How are special education students going to receive the services and supports outlined on their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)?

We are working with school districts and charter schools to ensure that a good faith effort is made to implement students' IEPs. For the duration of the Governor's "Stay Safe, Stay Home" directive (effective until April 13), only online or virtual learning, instructional telephone calls and other curriculum-based instructional activities should occur. For those students who cannot access their services through these methods, IEP teams will convene after the soft closure to determine if compensatory services are required to ensure each student receives a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

7. How are families who do not have access to the internet going to access remote instruction?

Remote instruction does not necessarily mean online, and many schools are using analog methods. Each local education agency is creating a continuity of education plan detailing methods for providing remote instruction and to support students regardless of access to technology.

8. How can I support my child in meeting grade level content?



Working directly with your student's teacher is a great first step. There are additional resources at [Utah Education Network's Learn @ Home](#). This site provides parents, educators and students resources to help navigate remote learning, including help with setting up a virtual conference tool account and learning more about Instructure/Canvas platforms. State subject matter standards outlining what students should know and be able to do at each grade level can be found at: <https://www.uen.org/core/>.

9. **How can I support students' and staffs' mental health and social emotional needs?**

Some school districts and charter schools are offering remote counseling opportunities for students. There are also many resources available for parents and educators to support self-care and to guide conversations with children regarding COVID-19, including [USBE's Project AWARE guidance](#) and the [National Association of School Psychologists](#).