



## K-12 Educational Recovery Priorities

The extension of school closures and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has been causing significant concern for students and families across the state. Senate Republicans have worked extremely hard to ensure that K-12 education is the paramount duty of the state as both a policy and funding priority. Currently, 51 percent of the approximately \$54 billion operating budget is invested in K-12 education. As such, it is reasonable for taxpayers, policymakers, and parents to expect a return on that investment. Rather than refer to the Governor's actions as extending school closures, the better approach is to consider the actions to be a requirement for temporary remote instruction. As K-12 institutions better transition to distance learning, the state must acknowledge the potential challenges facing students and families in our state and establish recovery priorities.

### Senate Republicans encourage the following priorities:

- **School districts should focus on delivering instruction**  
The number one priority of every school district should be the delivery of educational content. Districts should consider partnerships with local utilities and service providers to establish internet serviceability to deliver online instruction, in addition to any paper content. All students should receive a commensurate amount of high-quality instructional time remotely as they would from in-building instruction.
- **Resume traditional instruction in classrooms as soon as reasonable**  
As soon as reasonable and safe to do so, public and private school boards should be allowed to decide whether their schools can resume instructional activities under the traditional, in-classroom model. The state should assist districts by developing model policies and procedures for COVID-19 testing, sterilizing, and response, placing emphasis on the highest risk populations. This approach will better ensure consistent, equitable, and robust instruction. Internet-based remote instruction could supplement in-building instruction as a viable model for future years.
- **Consider impacts on marginalized students and adjust the school calendar as needed**  
To better meet academic needs for this school year, students should be permitted to regain instruction lost into July. Districts could also consider beginning future school years on August 1<sup>st</sup> to assist students in regaining their overall growth and long-term academic progress. Focus should be given to under-supported students who are marginalized and have lost greater opportunities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Consider impacts to school funding and cost of local bargaining agreements**  
Delivering instruction is a staff-intensive business. As such, staff costs can approach 80 percent or more of a school district budget. Given the economic uncertainty associated with COVID-19 and the future funding from the state, it would seem prudent for school districts to freeze additional spending, including commitments on bargaining agreements not yet extended.
- **Support graduating seniors as they transition to their colleges or careers**  
Given the interrupted instruction graduating seniors have received, higher education institutions, state employment agencies, and military branches should provide additional support and guidance to these young adults transitioning to their colleges or careers. Additional support could include tuition assistance for summer coursework, waivers for standardized test deadlines, and additional academic advising or career planning.