



Guidance to School Districts Affected by Hurricane Dorian September 5, 2019

On August 29, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order 19-190, declaring a state of emergency as a result of the severe threat posed by Hurricane Dorian. While Florida was largely unscathed, our neighboring states and the Caribbean experienced significant impacts, and Florida school districts have already begun receiving displaced students. On September 5, Commissioner Corcoran signed a supplemental order waiving school-entry documentation requirements that may impede enrollment, including immunizations, health examinations, age verification and transcripts.

The department has compiled the following guidance based on frequently asked questions by school districts related to Hurricane Dorian. School district personnel should direct questions to the contacts for each section listed below. The department continues to post the most up-to-date information online at www.fldoe.org/hurricaneinfo.

I. Waivers

On September 5, Commissioner Corcoran signed a supplemental order, temporarily waiving the following statutes and rules to allow school districts to enroll students displaced by Hurricane Dorian without the necessary and customary documentation:

- Rules 6A-1.0985 and 6A-1.09941, Florida Administrative Code, to the extent necessary to allow Florida public school districts to admit such students where such records are unavailable to the parent or guardian of the student.
- Section 1003.21, Florida Statutes, to the extent it requires proof of age for attendance eligibility where such records are unavailable to the parent or guardian of the student.
- Section 1003.22, Florida Statutes, requiring presentation of a certification of a school-entry health examination where such records are unavailable to the parent or guardian of the student. Such statute shall be waived for initial enrollment of students.

II. Homeless Student Identification

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1. How are schools to determine if a displaced student is also homeless?

A “displaced” student is one who cannot return to their school because the school is destroyed or so damaged that students are re-assigned to another school or location to continue their education until their school is re-opened. These children may or may not have also lost their homes due the storm. For all displaced children and youth, apply federal McKinney-Vento Act (MVA) criteria as you would for any student that may be experiencing homelessness. Ask all parents/guardians who are enrolling students to complete the district’s Student Housing Questionnaire (it may have another name in some districts). Consult with the district’s designated Homeless Liaison for assistance. For contact information, go to <https://web01.fldoe.org/FederalProgramDirectory/Default>, scroll down to select Title X Homeless



Contacts, select a district, and click Submit.

2. How are displaced enrollees to be coded in the data system?

For MVA-eligible hurricane-displaced students, complete the following data elements:

- Data Element #129525, Homeless Student, PK-12: as indicated
- Data Element #130275, Homeless Unaccompanied Youth: as indicated
- Data Element #129150, Homeless Cause: select H – Hurricane
- Data Element #131545, Disaster Affected Student: select X – Yes, this student moved to this district this school year due to a hurricane and a school closing or Y – Yes, this student moved to this district this school year due to a hurricane, but not due to a school closing.

For hurricane-displaced students who are NOT MVA-eligible, complete the following data element:

- Data Element #131545, Disaster Affected Student: select X – Yes, this student moved to this district this school year due to a hurricane and a school closing or Y – Yes, this student moved to this district this school year due to a hurricane, but not due to a school closing.

For all hurricane-displaced students who are coming from another state or territory, complete the following data element:

- Data Element 163166, Prior School/Location: State/Territory or Commonwealth: enter the standard two-character code for the state, territory or commonwealth (Appendices H & Q).

For all hurricane-displaced students who are coming from another country:

- Data Element 163106, Prior School/Location: Country: enter the standard two-character code for the country (Appendix G: Country Codes).

III. Age Verification

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3. What documentation is acceptable for verification of age?

As per the supplemental order, proof of age documentation shall be waived for initial enrollment.

IV. Immunization Verification

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4. What immunization and school-entry health examination documentation will be required for enrollment?

As per the supplemental order, proof of age documentation shall be waived for initial enrollment. School districts are encouraged to work with their local health departments in developing procedures to expedite immunization and health examination requirements.

Florida Law, Rule & Guidelines:

- **Section 1003.22, Florida Statutes (F.S.), School-entry health examinations; Immunization against communicable diseases; exemptions; duties of Department of Health.** Subsections (1) and (5) provide for a temporary exemption for 30 school days for children and youth who are experiencing homelessness at http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1003/Sections/1003.22.html.
- **Rule 64D-3.046, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), Immunization Requirements: Public and Nonpublic Schools, Grades Preschool, Kindergarten Through 12, and Adult Education Classes.** Subsection (4) allows for an authorized school official to issue a temporary exemption for students who are homeless; see <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?id=64D-3.046>.
- **Immunization Guidelines: Florida Schools, Childcare Facilities and Family Daycare Homes** - Pages 10 and 11 further address temporary exemptions for students who are homeless at http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/immunization/children-and-adolescents/_documents/school-guide.pdf.

National Guidance Documents:

- **Interim Immunization Recommendations for Individuals Displaced by a Disaster** - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides recommendations at <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/vaccrecdisplaced.html> when immunization records are not available.
- **Homeless Children and Youths Guidance** - The U.S. Department of Education revised *Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory Guidance* in 2017. School immunization guidance is addressed on pages 1, 21, 24 and 26.

V. Educational Placement

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5. How are schools to determine the educational placement of students when information is not available?

In the absence of educational records, the receiving district may place a student in an age-appropriate grade placement and monitor progress. Additionally, the district should provide instructional assessments to validate placement, skill development and English language proficiency. The district

should provide interventions as appropriate based on assessment data.

6. What is the process to verify successful completion of middle grades courses and high school credits for secondary-level students?

If a student's records are not available, the receiving district may determine grade-level placement based upon the district's student progression plan.

[Rule 6A-1.09941, F.A.C.](#), State Uniform Transfer of Students in Middle Grades and High School, establishes uniform procedures relating to the acceptance of transfer work and credit for students entering Florida's public schools.

(1) The procedures relating to the acceptance of transfer work and courses for students in middle grades 6, 7, and 8 from out-of-state or out-of-country shall be as follows:

(a) Grades earned and offered for acceptance shall be based on official transcripts and shall be accepted at face value subject to validation if required by the receiving school's accreditation. If validation of the official transcript is deemed necessary, or if the student does not possess an official transcript or is a home education student, successful completion of courses shall be validated through performance during the first grading period as outlined in paragraph (1)(b), of this rule.

(b) Validation of courses shall be based on performance in classes at the receiving school. A student transferring into a school shall be placed at the appropriate sequential course level and should be passing each required course at the end of the first grading period. Students who do not meet this requirement shall have courses validated using the Alternative Validation Procedure, as outlined in paragraph (1)(c), of this rule.

(c) Alternative Validation Procedure. If validation based on performance as described above is not satisfactory, then any one of the following alternatives identified in the district student progression plan shall be used for validation purposes as determined by the teacher, principal and parent:

1. Portfolio evaluation by the superintendent or designee,
2. Demonstrated performance in courses taken at other public or private accredited schools,
3. Demonstrated proficiencies on nationally normed standardized subject area assessments,
4. Demonstrated proficiencies on a statewide, standardized assessment, or
5. Written review of the criteria utilized for a given subject provided by the former school.

(2) The procedures relating to the acceptance of transfer work and credits for students in high school from out of state or out of country shall be as follows:

(a) Credits and grades earned and offered for acceptance shall be based on official transcripts and shall be accepted at face value subject to validation if required by the receiving school's accreditation. If validation of the official transcript is deemed necessary, or if the student does not possess an official transcript or is a home education student, credits shall be validated through performance during the first grading period as outlined in paragraph (2)(b), of this rule. Assessment requirements for transfer students under s. 1003.4282, F.S., must be satisfied.

(b) Validation of credits shall be based on performance in classes at the receiving school. A student transferring into a school shall be placed at the appropriate sequential course level and should have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 at the end of the first grading period.

Students who do not meet this requirement shall have credits validated using the Alternative Validation Procedure, as outlined in paragraph (2)(c), of this rule.

(c) Alternative Validation Procedure. If validation based on performance as described above is not satisfactory, then any one of the following alternatives shall be used for validation purposes as determined by the teacher, principal and parent:

1. Portfolio evaluation by the superintendent or designee,
2. Written recommendation by a Florida certified teacher selected by the parent and approved by the principal,
3. Satisfactory performance in courses taken through dual enrollment or at other public or private accredited schools,
4. Satisfactory performance on nationally normed standardized subject area assessments,
5. Satisfactory performance on a statewide, standardized assessment, or
6. Written review of the criteria utilized for a given subject provided by the former school.

Students must be provided at least 90 days from date of transfer to prepare for assessments outlined in subparagraphs (1)(c)3., and 4. and (2)(c)4. and 5., of this rule if required.

In addition, [s. 1003.433, F.S.](#), Learning opportunities for out-of-state and out-of-country transfer students and students needing additional instruction to meet high school requirement, specifies the following:

(1) Students who enter a Florida public school at the 11th or 12th grade from out of state or out of country shall not be required to spend additional time in a Florida public school in order to meet the high school course requirements if the student has met all requirements of the school district, state, or country from which he or she is transferring. Such students who are not proficient in English should receive immediate and intensive instruction in English language acquisition. However, to receive a standard high school diploma, a transfer student must earn a 2.0 GPA and meet the requirements under [s. 1008.22, F.S.](#)

(2) Students who earn the required 24 credits for the standard high school diploma except for passage of any must-pass assessment under [s. 1003.4282, F.S.](#), or [s. 1008.22, F.S.](#), or an alternate assessment by the end of grade 12 must be provided the following learning opportunities:

(a) Participation in an accelerated high school equivalency diploma preparation program during the summer.

(b) Upon receipt of a certificate of completion, be allowed to take the College Placement Test and be admitted to developmental education or credit courses at a Florida College System institution, as appropriate.

(c) Participation in an adult general education program as provided in [s. 1004.93, F.S.](#), for such time as the student requires to master English, reading, mathematics or any other subject required for high school graduation. A student attending an adult general education program shall have the opportunity to take any must-pass assessment under [s. 1003.4282, F.S.](#), or [s. 1008.22, F.S.](#), an unlimited number of times in order to receive a standard high school diploma.

(3) Students who have been enrolled in an ESOL program for less than two school years and have met all requirements for the standard high school diploma except for passage of any must-pass assessment under [s. 1003.4282, F.S.](#), or [s. 1008.22, F.S.](#), or alternate assessment may receive immersion English language instruction during the summer following their senior year. Students receiving such instruction are eligible to take the required assessment or alternate assessment and receive a standard high school diploma upon passage of the required assessment or alternate



assessment. This subsection shall be implemented to the extent funding is provided in the General Appropriations Act.

VI. Exceptional Student Education

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7. What procedures should be followed for students who have disabilities?

To the extent possible, follow existing procedures regarding transfer students according to [Rule 6A-6.0334, F.A.C.](#) If records are not available, accept and document the parent/guardian's statement that the student is a student with a disability. Based upon the information available, determine the most appropriate placement and program, obtain parental consent for services, develop an individual educational plan (IEP), and provide services as soon as possible. Monitor the student's progress, proceed with consent for initial evaluations and eligibility procedures, and provide the parent with procedural safeguards.

VII. Student and Teacher Support

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8. What types of supports need to be made available to students, families and staff impacted by the storm and who may be experiencing behavioral/emotional trauma as a result?

Children experience the impact and aftermath of traumatic events differently than adults. Your student services staff (counselors, school psychologists, social workers, nurses) can be a valuable resource to teachers in responding to students impacted by hurricanes and other natural disasters. Refer impacted students, families and staff to appropriate supports and counseling as needed. Here are some helpful hurricane response resources:

Help Kids Cope flyer

https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/flyer/help_kids_cope_flyer_0.pdf

School Personnel Disaster Resources – National Child Traumatic Stress Network

https://www.nctsn.org/audiences/school-personnel?search=&resource_type=All&trauma_type=4&language=All&audience=33&other=All

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) natural disaster resources

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/natural-disaster-resources/natural-disasters-brief-facts-and-tips>



Hurricane and Tropical Storm Resources – SAMHSA

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/disaster-types/hurricanes>

“[After the Storm: A Guide to Help Children Cope with the Psychological Effects of a Hurricane](http://www.hcps.org/f/aboutus/afterthestorm.pdf)” is a workbook designed by the University of Miami to assist adults and children to cope with the psychological trauma caused by a hurricane. See <http://www.hcps.org/f/aboutus/afterthestorm.pdf>.

Psychological First Aid for Schools (PFA-S) – National Child Traumatic Stress Network

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/psychological-first-aid-schools-pfa-s-field-operations-guide>

Psychological First Aid app

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/pfa-mobile>

Additional resources are posted on the Student Support Services Project website

<http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/emergency/hurricane.html>.

VIII. Statewide Assessment Schedule

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9. Will the statewide assessment schedule be altered?

When we know the full effect of this year’s hurricane season, we will address any needed changes to the statewide assessment schedule.

IX. Financial Matters

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10. Are waivers available for missed instructional hours?

Given that it is still the height of hurricane season, the department is refraining from making any decisions related to missed instructional hours until hurricane season concludes in November. As a reminder, districts do not need the state’s approval to use available calendar days to remain in compliance with the minimum instructional hours required by law.

As authorized in section 1011.60(2), Florida Statutes, schools must operate for 180 actual teaching days or the equivalent on an hourly basis to participate in the Florida Education Finance Program. Rule 6A-1.045111, Florida Administrative Code, specifies the hourly equivalent as not less than 720 net instructional hours for kindergarten through grade 3 and not less than 900 hours for grades 4 through 12. Provided that this statutory requirement is met, school boards have the authority to adopt an alternative calendar without authorization or approval by FDOE. This will not affect the district’s funding



through the Florida Education Finance Program, nor will it affect the survey count of full-time equivalent students.

Florida law gives the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education the authority to alter the instructional hours requirement when the loss of instructional hours is caused by a bona fide emergency and when it is not feasible to make up the lost days or hours. A request must be submitted to FDOE using the attached form. Please see the most relevant portion of Section 1011.60(2), F.S.:

The State Board of Education may prescribe procedures for altering, and, upon written application, may alter, this requirement during a national, state, or local emergency as it may apply to an individual school or schools in any district or districts if, in the opinion of the board, it is not feasible to make up lost days or hours, and the apportionment may, at the discretion of the Commissioner of Education and if the board determines that the reduction of school days or hours is caused by the existence of a bona fide emergency, be reduced for such district or districts in proportion to the decrease in the length of term in any such school or schools.

Rule 6A-1.09533, Florida Administrative Code, provides that the Commissioner will consider requests from district school boards to reduce the length of the school term only if:

no teacher planning days, excluding a maximum of three (3) planning days at the end of the school year, remain in the official school year calendar as approved by the district school board, and no school holidays, other than authorized national or state holidays, remain in the official school year calendar as approved by the district school board.

If the school board concludes that it is not feasible to make up lost hours, districts may complete the "Application for a Reduction in the Required Instructional Hours" form. The department will deem a completed application to be a request for the consideration of the Commissioner and the State Board of Education to reduce the required instructional hours, as well as a request for a waiver of Rule 6A-1.09533, Florida Administrative Code, under section 120.542, F.S., to the extent that such a waiver is needed. The deadline for the submission of applications is December 2, 2019.

11. Will the deadlines for the Truth in Millage (TRIM) process be extended?

The Department of Revenue has notified the Department of Education that it is communicating directly with the taxing authorities to address TRIM deadlines. Districts should contact the Department of Revenue at trim@floridarevenue.com with specific questions related to the TRIM requirements.

12. Will the District Summary Budget submission deadline, which is three days after the school board approval and September 11 deadline for the Annual Financial Report (AFR), be extended?

We recognize that this deadline is quickly approaching. If you anticipate that your district is unable to meet this deadline due to Hurricane Dorian, please submit a request for a waiver to the Commissioner and copy Suzanne Pridgeon.



13. How can school districts assist the Bahamas relief effort?

Several districts have asked how they can support relief efforts in the Bahamas. We encourage you to work through your local public education foundation.

14. Has the deadline for submitting Workforce Development Information System (WDIS) data been extended?

Yes, the deadline has been extended to Monday, September 9, by close of business. If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from meeting this deadline, please contact Andre Smith at Andre.Smith@fldoe.org.

