

Readout of Vice President Pence and Secretary DeVos' Conference Call with Education Stakeholders

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WASHINGTON – Today, Vice President of the United States Mike Pence and U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos held a conference call with leaders of several national K-12 education organizations to answer their questions and to provide an update on what the Department of Education has done so far to support students, parents, and educators during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The Vice President and Secretary began the call with opening remarks and provided an update on the following topics:

- President Trump's [announcement](#) that the Department is expediting the standardized testing waiver application process to accommodate states that are unable to facilitate federally required standardized testing during this academic year. As of today, 45 states have applied for a waiver and have been granted initial approval.
- The Department's [additional guidance](#) regarding distance learning for students with disabilities. This new resource explains that as a school district takes necessary steps to address the health, safety, and well-being of all its students and staff, educators can use distance learning opportunities to serve all students.
- The administration's [actions to support student loan borrowers](#) by setting student loan interest rates to 0% and allowing borrowers to opt-in to administrative forbearance for 60 days without penalty or accruing interest.
- Secretary DeVos has [stopped](#) all requests to the U.S. Treasury to withhold money from defaulted borrowers' federal income tax refunds, Social Security payments, and other federal payments. The Department will also refund approximately \$1.8 billion in offsets that have already occurred to more than 830,000 borrowers.
- Secretary DeVos encouraged participants on the call to think creatively about ways to ensure all students can continue learning during this time, and thanked everyone for their work on behalf students, teachers, and parents.

Following their remarks, Secretary DeVos answered questions from participants about a wide range of topics including distance education, education for students with disabilities, internet accessibility, and funding flexibility to meet the needs of students and teachers.

Participants

Mike Pence, Vice President of the United States

Betsy DeVos, U.S. Secretary of Education

Mark Bane, president, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America

Thomas Burnford, president and CEO, National Catholic Education Association

Michael Casserly, executive director, Council of the Great City Schools

Daniel Domenech, executive director, American Association of School Administrators

Earl Franks, executive director National Association of Elementary School Principals

Tom Gentzel, executive director and CEO, National School Boards Association
David Lewis, executive director, Association of School Business Officials International
Mike Magee, CEO, Chiefs for Change
Carissa Miller, executive director, Council of Chief State School Officers
Donna Orem, president, National Association of Independent Schools
Stephen Parker, National Governors Association
Nina Rees, president and CEO, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
Dr. Larry Taylor, Association of Christian Schools International
Dave Wick, president, National Association of Elementary School Principals
Rabbi David Zwiebel, executive vice president, Agudath Israel of America

This call is part of the Department's [ongoing communications](#) with K-12 stakeholders regarding the Administration's education-related Coronavirus actions.

For more information on all the efforts the Department is taking to address the COVID-19 national emergency, visit ed.gov/coronavirus.

For more information about COVID-19, please visit the following websites:
<https://www.coronavirus.gov>, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> and
<https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus>.