

# State Success in Educating Students with Disabilities During COVID -19

## Highlighting Collaboration in Kentucky and Nebraska



# Today's Speakers:

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- Gretta Hylton, Associate Commissioner, Office of Special Education and Early Learning, Kentucky Department of Education
- Lucy Heskins, Attorney, Kentucky Protection and Advocacy
- Matt Blomstedt, Commissioner of Education, Nebraska Department of Education
- Michael Elsken, Attorney, Disability Rights Nebraska
- Ron Hager, Managing Attorney, National Disability Rights Network

# Education During COVID-19

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- ❑ All 50 states have mandated school closures into April or beyond
- ❑ 124,000 schools are affected
- ❑ 55.1 million students are affected
- ❑ 7.1 million public school students are students with disabilities

# Kentucky's Non-Traditional Instruction

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## CHALLENGES:

- Time to fully prepare
- Uncertainty
- Equity (e.g., internet access, assistive technology)
- Progress monitoring
- Sustainability
- Fatigue

# Kentucky's Non-Traditional Instruction

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## STRATEGIES:

- ❑ Regular communication with districts, families and partners
- ❑ Reassurance that we are all in this together
- ❑ Continued guidance and resources
- ❑ Strong collaboration internally and externally
- ❑ Additional supports for students (e.g., hot spots, delivery of instructional materials)
- ❑ Weekly spotlight on innovative practices occurring within special education and preschool

# Kentucky's Non-Traditional Instruction

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## Special Education Service Regions

- ❑ Federal IDEA-B Section 611 State Set-Aside Funds are used by OSEEL to establish the nine (9) **Regional Special Education Cooperatives** that are designed to fulfill the mission of the OSEEL.

## Kentucky Early Childhood Resource Center

- ❑ Federal IDEA-B Section 619 State Set-Aside Funds are used by OSEEL to establish the five (5) **Early Childhood Regional Training Centers** that are designed to provide support for preschool students (ages 3-5) with disabilities.

# Kentucky Protection and Advocacy

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## **STRATEGIES: Academic and Non-Academic Supports:**

- Kentucky Department of Education Resources
- Educational Cooperatives
- Family Resource and Youth Service Centers (FRYSCs)

# Kentucky Protection and Advocacy

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## **COLLABORATION: Parent Supports:**

- P&A & Agency Collaboration
- KY-SPIN (Parent Information Training Center)
- Private Advocates



# Kentucky Protection and Advocacy

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## CHALLENGES:

- Student Progress
- Student Regression
- Compensatory Education

# Nebraska's Continuity of Learning

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## CHALLENGES:

- ❑ Sudden uncertainty about closure decisions, approach, & response
- ❑ Federal and State Guidance inconsistency - timeliness
- ❑ School Responses varied based on Legal Advice
  - Closure/Spring Breaks
- ❑ Equity/Inequity

# Nebraska's Continuity of Learning

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## STRATEGIES:

- ❑ Expectation to provide services from NDE and Equity Lens
- ❑ Continuity of Learning Plans – Remote and Digital / Recognize barriers
- ❑ Ongoing Guidance to Communicate with Parents and Students
- ❑ Recognition that each challenge is unique and that communication remains key
- ❑ Consistent equity values in the crisis

# Nebraska's Continuity of Learning

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## LOOK TO THE FUTURE:

- Complete year
- Summer Learning
- Fall
- Compensatory Educational Opportunities

# Disability Rights Nebraska

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## CHALLENGES:

- ❑ Totally new circumstance for all stakeholders
- ❑ Parents may feel alone/unsure
- ❑ Post COVID -19 planning (compensatory and prospective)

# Disability Rights Nebraska

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## STRATEGIES:

- Work with parents to help understand options
- Work with parents to help with school communication
- Work with parents to navigate concerns with school (if needed)

# Disability Rights Nebraska

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## COLLABORATION:

- Parent Training Institute (PTI)
- Assistive Technology Partnership
- Disability Specific Organizations (e.g. Autism Center)
- Parent Resource Groups

# Questions?

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# Kentucky Resources

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- ❑ [OSEEL's Non-Regulatory Guidance Regarding the Implementation NTI for Students with IEPs During Novel Coronavirus Pandemic](#)
- ❑ [KDE's Letter to Parents and Families](#)
- ❑ [Tools for Remotely Teaching Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities](#)
- ❑ [COVID-19 Resources for Special Education and Early Learning](#)
- ❑ [Frequently Asked Questions Related to COVID-19](#)

# Nebraska Resources

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- ❑ Nebraska Dedicated Resource Site : <https://www.education.ne.gov/publichealth/resources/>
- ❑ Special Education Q&A: <https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/QA-Nebraska-Office-of-Special-Education.docx>
- ❑ Continuity of Learning Guidance Doc: [https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Statement-on-Continuity-of-Learning\\_3.27.2020.pdf](https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Statement-on-Continuity-of-Learning_3.27.2020.pdf)
- ❑ Teaching and Learning Considerations: [https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Considerations-for-Teaching-and-Learning\\_4.16.2020.pdf](https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Considerations-for-Teaching-and-Learning_4.16.2020.pdf)