



The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) Counseling Department located in the Office of Student Support is making a dedicated effort to keep Counselors and Administrators updated during this everchanging time due to the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to encourage school counselors to be vigilant in guarding the safety and security of yourselves and your families, to stay informed of communications provided by the OSDE and other reputable sources, and to be prepared as we resume instruction after the [Cessation of School Operations](#) ends. This document of academic counseling resources is designed to guide schools as they help students transition successfully—forward progress is the ultimate goal. For the most current OSDE updates on Special Education, Funding, Assessments & Accountability, Child Nutrition, Distance Learning and other operations, please visit the [OSDE website](#) designated to Coronavirus/COVID-19 communications.

➤ MANDATORY CLOSURE OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS FOR THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

On March 16, the State Board of Education ordered all accredited public schools to cease operations, effective March 17 until April 6, 2020. See official letter [here](#)

What was included in “operations” that must be ceased?

All instructional services, grading and extracurricular activities, staff development, trainings and conferences must cease. However, essential clerical and administrative activities such as business management (i.e., encumbrance clerk, human resources, fiscal services, governance), nutrition services and maintenance may continue as needed. During this time, staff other than those outlined above as essential staff, should not be compelled to go to work. If counselors **choose** to communicate with students and parents via school portal or social messaging means (such as Remind), they must do so voluntarily.

NEW: What action did OSDE State Board take at its special meeting on March 25, 2020?

On March 25, the State Board of Education amended its first order to direct all accredited public schools to suspend all in-person and extracurricular activities and close buildings for the remainder of the school year. While school buildings will remain closed for the remainder of the year for general student and personnel attendance, exceptions include: staff providing nutrition services, facilitating or supporting required delivery of distance learning materials and essential core services. Essential core services include governance, human resources, billing, maintenance and continuity of building functions, staff to maintain building access control and security measures, and student enrollment. In order to receive the flexibility granted by the State Board, districts must complete a set of assurances, including that they will implement a distance learning plan for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year ending on or after May 8, 2020. Districts must begin their distance learning plans no later than April 6.

Where can I find more information?

The recommendation is to stay abreast of updates from the [Oklahoma State Department of Education](#), [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), [Oklahoma State Department of Health](#) and your local leadership.



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What can counselors do now?

Follow your current academic counseling resources for updates on decisions and operational changes related to COVID-19. [Below](#) are some links to commonly accessed resources you can keep up with during the cessation and beyond. Visit each organization's site for its most recent updates. Work with your site and district leadership to develop and implement continuous and distance learning plans. Be resourceful in adapting these plans to best meet the counseling needs of your students.

UPDATED: WHAT ABOUT GRADUATION FOR SY2020

What do we do about graduation and other activities such as prom?

For the graduating class of 2019-2020, each district is to have adopted a plan that establishes the assessment or assessments those students are required to take in order to graduate. Except for purposes of state funding and school accountability previously mentioned, any requirements for attendance in order to receive course grades or credit, *graduation or participation in an activity are solely determined at the local school district level.* We understand that participation in activities honoring our students' culminating high school experiences have significant meaning to students and families; however, the safety and wellbeing of all individuals is of utmost importance. **Any activities held must adhere to the most recent guidelines established by local, state and/or federal mandates regarding access to buildings and social distancing precautions.** Please refer to the [FAQ](#) provided by the State Department of Education for additional guidance on graduation, prom, and other extracurricular activities. Updates to these FAQs will be made as necessary based on current, relevant and available data.

NEW: Do seniors still have to meet all graduation requirements in order to receive a high school diploma?

The State Board has waived the mandatory reduction of state aid of a school district not meeting the requirements for the calendar year (180 days or 1,080 hours) due to the coronavirus pandemic making maintenance of the calendar year term impossible. All students are still required to complete at least 23 credits of required and elective coursework. Many boards of education have local policies that require more than 23 credits and/or identify specific courses that are not a part of the state's list of required courses. In these cases, a local board of education can take action to amend a local graduation policy. Any change must still be in agreement with Oklahoma graduation requirements. End of semester final grades should be calculated, reported and transcribed in the school's student information system.

What about students on an IEP?

As long as students meet what is outlined in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP), students will be allowed to graduate. For more information regarding graduation and distance learning for students with disabilities, please visit the IDEA FAQ located on the OSDE [Special Education Services](#) webpage.

What about Alternative Education students?

Alternative education students have long since been afforded flexible scheduling, individualized instruction and an individualized plan that leads to graduation. As long as students remain on track



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and meet what is outlined in their current education plan, seniors will be allowed to graduate and underclassmen may matriculate to the next grade level.

What about seniors who have not met the Personal Financial Literacy (PFL) requirement?

There are online Personal Financial Literacy resources available for students who have yet to meet this requirement. For PFL resources, visit the [OSDE PFL](#) webpage. Consider whether requirements have already been met through courses offered at your school; for transfer students, verify if the requirement has been met at the previous school. Completion of the PFL requirement is to be posted to the student's [transcript](#).

NEW: Is the graduation requirement for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) waived?

Oklahoma law requires that all students enrolled in a public school are to receive CPR instruction at least once prior to graduation. This statutory requirement currently provides an exemption for students enrolled in a virtual charter school. Given the closure of school buildings for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year, and provision of instructional services through distance learning, the OSDE interprets the intent of the statute, and the existing exemption for students enrolled in a virtual program, to be equally applicable to graduating seniors finishing the school year via distance learning. As such, the OSDE believes this exemption can be extended to students in the graduating class of 2020 who have not already completed the requirement. See 70 O.S. § 1210.199. Districts should indicate whether graduating seniors have completed the CPR requirement or been exempted from it on the student transcript.

Since we aren't returning to school, is 7th grade HIV/Aids education still required?

HIV/Aids education is required to be taught a minimum of once during the period from grade five through grade six, a minimum of once from grade seven through nine, and a minimum of once during grades ten through twelve. See [70 O.S. § 11-103.3](#). Therefore, this requirement can be fulfilled next school year and will not require schools to provide HIV/Aids education for the 2019-2020 school year if not yet offered.

NEW: WHAT ABOUT FINAL GRADING PRACTICES FOR SY2020

How will students earn final grades?

Educators are expected to continue providing learning opportunities for students through the end of the school year and, thereby, afford students the opportunity to earn grades. Acknowledging that the extenuating circumstances caused by the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic may inhibit access to appropriate remediation resources and access to new distance learning instructional methods, student grades are not to be negatively impacted. Considering these potential equity issues, students should be allowed to increase their grades during this time and educators should continue to assess whether students are mastering standards. Due to the long-term negative implications on grade point averages (GPAs), Oklahoma's Promise, NCAA eligibility, and other scholarship opportunities, it is strongly encouraged that traditional A-F letter grades continue to be issued in lieu of Pass/Fail (P/F) grading.



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Can schools freeze grades as they were prior to cessation of operations?

Although awarding of grades and credits is a local education agency decision, districts are advised to consider the impact of globally freezing all students' grades. Freezing of grades may be one way a school intends to avoid having a currently passing student's grade to fall; however, this method does not allow students who might have "kicked into gear" during the fourth quarter to improve performance and earn a better grade. Since educators are expected to continue providing learning opportunities to engage students through the end of the school year with as much continued rigor as possible, students should be afforded the opportunity to increase performance and receive feedback about their progress—grading is one way of providing feedback.

How will students in Career Tech (CTE) programs earn final credits?

The Oklahoma Department of Career & Technology Education (ODCTE) is working to develop plans that will assist students in meeting high school graduation requirements. Currently enrolled students in CTE programs will receive correspondence from the technology center or K-12 instructor outlining the next steps for completing coursework. Students may earn credits to complete graduation requirements; however, certain industry certifications may require work past the 2019-2020 school year. A list of programs and CTE resources for educators can be found on the ODCTE [website](#).

How will students in Concurrent/Dual Enrollment programs complete courses and how will credits be issued?

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education has taken actions to mitigate negative impact on traditional college students and high school students enrolled in concurrent/dual enrollment programs. Prior to the State Board of Education vote on March 25, many colleges had already posted contingency plans in the event face-to-face instruction did not resume for the 2019-2020 school year. Those plans by institution can be found [here](#) or by accessing the OSRHE webpage dedicated to [COVID-19 Campus Resources](#). Depending on the institution, students may be able to continue instruction virtually. Additionally, some institutions may choose to issue credits as traditional A-F letter grades **AND/OR** offer students the option of receiving a Pass/No Pass (P/NP) or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) grade in currently enrolled courses. If offered, students should consider the impact P/NP and S/U grades could have on high school GPA, Oklahoma's Promise, and NCAA eligibility as those grades are GPA neutral and may be counted as the lowest passing letter grade on the traditional grading scale.

What do we do about ICAP (Individual Career Academic Planning)?

ICAP is only required this year of the Class of 2023 (current freshmen) and the only requirements that are to be done annually are the career/interest inventory, written post-secondary goal, and course reflection. These items can be completed and monitored via the students' online tool selected by your district—[OKCareerGuide](#) or [OKCollegeStart](#). All students should have already met this requirement prior to the fourth quarter. In the event a student is missing this requirement for the 2019-2020 school year, staff can make resources available for these students once the cessation of operations has ended. Many ICAP resources are already available in a digital learning format and are located on the [OKEdge ICAP resource page](#).



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➤ **NEW:** CONSIDERATIONS FOR COURSES TAUGHT ONLINE

As many districts seek resources to implement distance learning plans, consideration must be made for awarding of credit for coursework completed online. In order to receive the flexibility granted by the State Board, districts must complete a set of assurances, including that they will implement a distance learning plan for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year ending on or after May 8, 2020. Districts must begin their distance learning plans no later than April 6.

Can credit be obtained for courses taught online?

Internet-based courses offered by a technology center school that are taught by a certified teacher and provide for the teaching and learning of the appropriate skills and knowledge in the subject matter standards may, upon approval of the State Board of Education and the independent district board of education, **be counted for academic credit and toward meeting the graduation requirements of this section.**

Courses offered by a supplemental education organization accredited by a national accrediting body, taught by a certified teacher and provide for the teaching and learning of the appropriate skills and knowledge in the subject matter standards may, upon approval of the State Board of Education and the school district board of education, **be counted for academic credit and toward meeting the graduation requirements of this section.**

Can students “test out” or show competency for credits?

NEW: Graduation requirements may be earned via units or set of competencies; therefore, students may be afforded the opportunity to show competency for credit or course placement. Refer to your district’s policy on competency-based/proficiency-based testing.

Refer to the [graduation checklist](#) appropriate to the graduating cohort or to state statute [70 O.S. § 11-103.6](#) (OSCN 2020) for detailed graduation requirements.

➤ WHAT ABOUT ASSESSMENTS?

What about assessments required for graduation? (Updated March 25, 2020)

UPDATED: The U.S. Department of Education has granted a waiver to Oklahoma to forego federally required state tests in grades 3-8 and high school for the 2019-20 school year. Requested by Superintendent Hofmeister, the waiver includes the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics test each year in grades 3-8, science in grades 5 and 8, and the College Career Readiness Assessment (e.g., ACT/SAT) for ELA, mathematics and science in grade 11. As a result, the aforementioned tests will not be administered, materials will not be shipped to schools and training for test proctors for this year is unnecessary. Districts that were preparing, through staff development or otherwise, for the administration of the statewide assessments should cease such activities. Additionally, the Oklahoma School Report Cards – which are calculated with data from federally required assessments and other indicators – will be suspended for the 2019-20 school year.

NEW: The OSDE took an emergency rule to the State Board of Education on March 25, 2020, to allow the agency to provide a medical exemption for state assessments for all students. As a result, students scheduled to take the U.S. History assessment this year will be granted a medical exemption



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due to the coronavirus pandemic. For other assessment updates, please refer to the most recent [OSDE FAQ](#) and the OSDE [Office of Assessments webpage](#).

What about 8th grade reading test for driver's license/permit? (Updated March 25, 2020)

NEW: How will eighth-graders meet the requirements of the Driven to Read program? Oklahoma law requires students to successfully complete the reading portion of the eighth-grade English language arts (ELA) assessment in order to apply for a driver's license or permit. See 70 O.S. § 1210.515.

However, the test will not be administered this year as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Accordingly, the State Board of Education, at its March 25 meeting, adopted an emergency rule to allow the state to provide a medical exemption for this requirement. All eighth-graders in the 2019-20 school year will receive this exemption. After communicating with the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety (DPS), it is the OSDE's understanding that this exemption will satisfy the requirements. Students wishing to take the driver exam should also be aware that DPS has instituted the following restrictions:

- All driving skills tests have been canceled;
- Only 10 customers are allowed in an office at one time; and
- Every customer must have an appointment.

What about college entrance and other advanced exams? (Updated March 25, 2020)

UPDATED: For general college and career readiness information not related to statewide CCRA, visit the website of each assessment organization for changes in testing dates and registration information. Work with seniors to understand their options and assist them with following newly released deadlines and alternative ways to test according to the testing entity. As with all testing matters, consult with your district assessment staff and test coordinators for information specific to your district and/or site.

- **ACT**--April 4 test rescheduled to June 13. Visit the ACT Newsroom & Blog for updates.
- **SAT**--March and May test dates cancelled. Visit CollegeBoard's [website](#) for more information.
- **AP**-- As of March 20, the AP Program is developing free remote learning resources and a new at-home testing option. Traditional face-to-face exams will not be administered. Visit the AP Central website for more information and the full exam schedule.
- **IB**--International Baccalaureate plans to cancel examinations scheduled April 30 to May 22. Depending on what students registered for, the student will be awarded a Diploma or Course Certificate which reflects their standard of work. Full details will be sent to schools on March 27, 2020. Please visit the [IB website](#) for the most current information.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD COUNSELORS MONITOR?

Career Tech

UPDATED: K-12 public school students may not attend classes during the Cessation of School Operations. For more information on Career Tech's response, visit their [website](#) dedicated to the coronavirus pandemic. The completion of a program is up to the local career tech. Grades received from local career tech centers should be honored and posted to transcripts as received. Any certification or other credential received from the Career Tech should also be posted to transcripts.



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Although students will receive credits to meet graduation requirements, **students may have to continue instruction beyond completion of course credit in order to meet certification requirements.**

Concurrent Enrollment

As of the [March 17, 2020 FAQ](#) provided by the OSDE, students who are engaged in concurrent enrollment may be able to continue courses according to the status and information provided by the higher education institution in which they are enrolled. Decisions regarding operations of collegiate institutions are made by the [Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education \(OSRHE\)](#). Students should stay in touch with their professors and the institution's student portal for additional information.

Please refer to section [above](#) on earning credits for career tech and concurrent/dual enrollment students.

Financial Aid

Spring is the time for counselors to assist students with making final college and workforce decisions as well as finalizing scholarship applications, the FAFSA, athletic eligibility, and OK Promise requirements. Stay abreast of opportunities that may be afforded students with extended deadlines, waived requirements and other accommodations made by our educational partners.

- [FAFSA](#)—Check the website link for more information.
- [OCCE](#)—Oklahoma City Community Foundation Scholarship luncheons scheduled March 31 thru April 3 have been cancelled. Email j.schwager@occf.org if you have Reviewer questions or contact scholarships@occf.org for more general information.
- [NCAA](#)—Prospective student-athletes should always stay in touch with the collegiate coach/recruiter. Uploading of final transcripts will need to be monitored by school counselors. Stay informed as to how your district plans to graduate seniors.
- [Oklahoma's Promise \(OKP\)](#)— For the **Spring 2020 semester**, courses that apply to the Oklahoma's Promise high school core curriculum requirements that are assigned a grade of "pass" (or its equivalent) will **not be included** in the GPA calculation for the core curriculum. This waives the calculation rule of assigning the lowest letter grade of D. While the course grade will not be included in the calculation of the core curriculum GPA, the course will count toward the required units for the core curriculum as appropriate. Per the [Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education](#), as of March 18 the OKP staff have been placed on telework status until further notice. If you want to update OKP verifications for seniors, now is a good time. Make a note to check with the OKP office when you return to work for any information on finalizing senior verifications.
- **General Scholarships**—Awarding of scholarships is up to the sponsors or scholarship programs. Due to social distancing guidelines, recognition programs and ceremonies should have been canceled, including those scheduled to be held on your campus or other location. If you scheduled awards and recognition programs for your students, these events can no longer be held in a face-to-face gathering and any guest presenters must be notified of the cancellation or alternate virtual recognition program. Assist students with contacting potential scholarship donors for updated information or modified deadlines.



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Online Instruction

If students are currently using online platforms to complete coursework, students may still be able to continue utilizing them. Students cannot come to the school to use computer labs. If you have designated a teacher to monitor this instruction, they are not allowed to instruct while the Cessation of Operations is in place but may resume after April 6. If parents ask what they can do to keep their students engaged, organizations such as [Khan Academy](#), [ACT Academy](#), [Outschool](#) have free resources available. On March 13, [Zoom](#) published that it has temporarily lifted the 40-minute time limit on free Basic accounts to K-12 schools affected by the coronavirus. Accessing these resources are at the parent's discretion and are to be followed through by the parent and student, not school staff. Be mindful that many local libraries may be closed and will not be available as a resource per any existing social distancing mandates.

For more online learning resources, check the [SDE website](#) for the latest on Distance Learning.

NEW: What do I do if I need to speak to my student or a parent directly?

Always adhere to your district policy regarding communicating with students and families. If you are not issued a work cell phone, you may consider such tools as Google Voice, Google Meets, Zoom or Talking Points. If you must use your personal device to make calls, you may also try using *67 to indicate to the recipient you are calling from a "private" or "anonymous" number. Use the identified means established by your district first; if you choose additional communication tools, always discuss options with your building administrator.

➤ WHAT ABOUT SCHEDULING AND ENROLLMENT?

NEW: May a school district enroll new students during a school closure?

New students who move into a school district and request to enroll during a cessation of operations must be allowed to enroll, although they are not required to be offered education services until operations resume. See 70 O.S. §§ 1-113 and 1-114. While new students who wish to enroll should continue to be enrolled on an individual basis during a school closure, public enrollment events (such as those for initial kindergarten enrollments) cannot be held during the cessation of operations. Re-enrollment meetings and events for existing district students should also be postponed until regular operations resume. As part of planning for the return to regular operations following school closure, school districts and charter schools should consult with their local health authorities to address health concerns regarding school attendance for students who have traveled to areas heavily impacted by coronavirus or who are otherwise at high risk for exposure.

UPDATED: Pre-Enrollment and Scheduling for SY2021

Scheduling and enrolling students for SY2021 may continue once the cessation of operations ends. If your local Student Information System (SIS) has the capability to allow students to select courses online, please use that resource. If you are unsure of SIS capabilities, reach out to your district IT staff and/or your SIS vendor to assess your access to online enrollment availability. In the event students do not have the ability to select courses within the SIS, districts must develop alternate means to do so. Ways this can be achieved are by mailing enrollment information, emailing of course selections, or use of surveys (such as SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, or other survey tools). In the event the mandate to school buildings is amended and access to school buildings is granted prior to



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the close of the school year, scheduled pre-enrollment visits that are in line with social distancing guidelines established by the CDC and local governing bodies may be possible. In any event, always follow CDC guidelines for social distancing and handling of materials sent to or received from individuals.

NEW: How do undergraduate or concurrent students enroll for SY2021?

Specifically related to concurrent participation, colleges may follow different processes for enrollment of students under the current circumstances. For students wanting to enroll for 2020-21, either as concurrent or undergraduate students, please check with the institution for approved exceptions and flexibilities allotted the institution by OSRHE to complete enrollment. For summer and fall concurrent admission and enrollment, institutions may use emails from parents and counselors/principals in lieu of original signatures on permission forms. For summer and fall concurrent enrollment, institutions may use alternative methods for admission and course placement in lieu of a currently prescribed curricular and performance standards if the student does not have and/or cannot access standard assessments and/or records. It is recommended that Counselors and Principals send communication (i.e. mail, Remind, SIS messenger) that if students want to enroll in concurrent courses, they should contact you for enrollment information and then work together to complete enrollment requirements.

NEW: How do we get technology, transcripts, diplomas and other personal items to/from students? How do we collect them at the end of the year?

In addition to the guidance above and while always adhering to CDC guidelines, schools should also consult with their local city or county health departments to implement policies and procedures for pickup and delivery, cleaning and sanitizing items prior to pickup, and health screening protocol for individuals entering a school building. As districts form a plan for pick up, the following precautions are advisable:

- Allow entry to the building on an appointment-only basis;
- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces frequently;
- Take the temperature of anyone planning to enter the building to ensure that no one with fever is given access;
- Wear disposable gloves when handling items if possible;
- Deliver items (laptops, tablets, critical personal items, etc.) to families curbside or outside the building; and
- Do not make physical contact with anyone outside of your immediate household.

NEW: Is it safe to deliver paper packets/materials to students?

Based on information from the World Health Organization, yes. The likelihood of an infected person contaminating goods is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, traveled and exposed to different conditions and temperature is also low.

However, much is still unknown about this coronavirus. It is advisable to handle packages and items that will be sent to students and families while wearing disposable gloves and to wash hands thoroughly after receiving and handling a package either through the mail or from another person.

Only those staff designated as facilitating or supporting delivery of distance learning will be allowed to prepare materials for paper packets, and they must do so within the same safety and access guidelines outlined in the questions above.



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➤ HOW CAN WE HELP STUDENTS AND FAMILIES COPE?

UPDATED: The State Department of Education Counseling and Crisis Response teams have developed a resource guide for counselors to help students and families. This guide was shared via the [Counselor Newsletter](#). Additional resources are available from the [NASP](#) (National Association of School Psychologists), [NASW](#) (National Association of Social Workers), [ASCA](#) (American School Counselor Association), and the [CDC](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Please visit the OSDE Counseling [website](#) and the SDE Prevention Services [website](#) for additional resources. You are encouraged to **monitor your own emotional health** and seek resources as necessary.

➤ ASCA POSITION ON VIRTUAL SCHOOL COUNSELING?

The OSDE Office of Student Support shares the American School Counselor Association's position on virtual school counseling: *School counselors working in a virtual setting provide a school counseling program through the use of technology and distance (virtual/online/e-learning) counseling with the same standards and adherence to ethics as school counselors working in traditional school settings. School counselors work collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure equity, access and success of all students whether virtual school counseling is offered synchronously or asynchronously.*

➤ FEDERAL GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT PRIVACY?

[How does the health or safety emergency exception to FERPA's consent requirement permit an educational agency or institution to disclose Personally Identifiable Information \(PII\) from the education records of affected students?](#)

Although educational agencies and institutions can often address threats to the health or safety of students or other individuals in a manner that does not identify a particular student, FERPA permits educational agencies and institutions to disclose, without prior written consent, PII from student education records to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency, if knowledge of that information is necessary to protect the health or safety of a student or other individuals. See 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(I); 34 C.F.R. §§ 99.31(a)(10) and 99.36.

For more detailed information on student privacy, refer to the most recent [Coronavirus/COVID-19 FAQ For Oklahoma Public Schools](#) by the OSDE.

Remember to bookmark the [OSDE webpage](#) dedicated to COVID-19 and check it often for most recent statewide information!

Questions?

For academic counseling questions, contact [Petra Woodard](#), Executive Director of Academic Counseling.

For crisis response and social-emotional resources, contact [Beth Whittle](#), Executive Director of Counseling.