

ACT NOW! NEWSLETTER

ACT Now Blog

ACT Now Guest Blog Post: Collecting & Tracking Virtual Engagement Data

In collaboration with ACT Now, Vinay Mullick, Managing Director of UpMetrics, has written a short blog post on how nonprofits and afterschool programs may collect and track engagement data remotely during the public health crisis. To read the blog post, click [here](#). Additionally, UpMetrics is providing support to help nonprofits track key data points, visualize data, and share program impact with key stakeholders. The UpMetrics impact analytics platform is free to all nonprofits through 2020. Nonprofits can sign up [here](#).

COVID-19

State Policy Updates

Illinois State Board of Education: Part I of Recommendations for Transitioning to In-Person Instruction

On **May 15, 2020**, State Superintendent of Education Dr. Camen I. Ayala, of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), released Part I of its recommendations for transitioning to in-person instruction, which focuses on **Considerations for Closing the 2019-20 School Year & Summer 2020.**

ISBE underscored that while Phase 4 of Governor Pritzker's Restore Illinois Plan allows for the resumption of face-to face instruction, this is not the same as a return to pre-pandemic operations.

- Extensive social distancing measures, enhanced sanitation measures, and other accommodations will be necessary to ensure the safety of students, staff, and their families.
- Public health experts have communicated to ISBE and to the Governor's Office that they believe coronavirus transmissions may subside in the summer months, but spike again in the fall/winter.
- ISBE also pointed out that districts may be in Phase 4 by August and could choose to start school then, instead of after Labor Day, to maximize instruction time.

During the closing of the school year, ISBE strongly encourages schools to work with community partners to ensure the needs of students and families are met. During the summer, ISBE recommends maintaining virtual contact with student to check on their well-being and to conduct summer school remotely. Further schools should distribute technology to prepare for a return to remote learning if necessary, and ensure teachers have adequate professional development in mental health needs. ISBE further recommends that districts create a plan for summer meals.

Chicago Public Schools: Vendor Information for Remote Learning

On **May 6, 2020**, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) sent afterschool programs and vendors information regarding remote learning. Each vendor was also sent details on which *tier* they belong to for this process. Most remote learning partners fall into **Tier 1 status, which allows for programming with multiple students via Google Hangouts given CPS**

principal permission and participation from CPS staff. Further information on the Tier scale can be found [here](#).

Illinois State Board of Education: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund Application

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is submitting its application for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund portion of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Illinois schools are set to receive close to \$570 million. Ninety percent of those funds will flow through ISBE and be awarded directly to school districts based on each district's proportion of Illinois Title I, Part A funds. ISBE will release this application in eGMS. While districts may use the funds for any expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic, ISBE encourages districts to use these funds to close the digital divide and to provide direct supports for students. **Examples of allowable expenditures include:**

- mental health services and supports
- summer and extended learning opportunities
- technology, meals, and activities to address the needs of students of color, low-income students, homeless students, or youth in care who have been affected by COVID-19

The remaining CARES Act funds will be directed by ISBE to provide additional funding in the following six categories:

- \$33.3 million for laptops and tablets
- \$7.1 million for internet connectivity
- \$6.5 million for virtual coaching
- \$6.5 million for professional development
- \$2.8 million for state administration
- \$685,000 for entities that are not eligible for the direct funds due to ineligibility for Title I.

[For more Policy Updates not related to COVID-19, please continue reading below to the next section](#)

Events and Webinars

ACT Now: Afterschool During COVID-19 Webinar Series

In response to afterschool providers' feedback and requests for more in-depth resources on programming during the COVID-19 public health crisis, ACT Now developed a robust webinar series. Participants received

resources created by ACT Now to help programs transition their programming online and collect data on their activities going forward. To access the corresponding recordings and resources of the Afterschool During COVID-19 Webinar series, click [here](#).

ACT Now: 21st CCLC Virtual Town Halls

Join ACT Now *next week* for an engaging conversation with 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs in regard to responding to the COVID-19 health crisis on **May 26, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.** We will cover the latest policy updates, grant updates, resources, and highlight programs' diverse responses to the pandemic. Please [fill out our survey](#) beforehand and [register](#) for the Town Hall!

Click [here](#) to access ACT Now's 21ST Century Town Hall page and find our archived Town Halls and resources relating to the virtual series.

Additional Resources

Resources for Providers

Illinois State Board of Education: Recorded Webinar to Help Providers Engage Remote Learners

On **May 15, 2020**, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) collaborated with the Director of Illinois Virtual School, Kip Pygman, to host a webinar on how to facilitate online discussions with remote learners in grades 6 through 12. To watch the recording of the webinar, click [here](#).

YMCA Metro Chicago: Y on the Go Initiative

The YMCA Metro Chicago has released its Y on the Go initiative that engages youth, providers, and families in STEM activities and exercise via Facebook and the organization's website. Click [here](#) to access the program.

Resources for Remote Learning

Science Olympiad: Free STEM Activities

Science Olympiad is highlighting their free STEM activities through YouTube videos. To watch the first video on the Gummi Bear Long Jump, click [here](#). To review the second video on how to construct a Straw Tower, click [here](#).

SparkShop: STEM at Home Guide

SparkShop has developed an engaging STEM activity guide for youth to do while at home. The organization focuses on educating 4th and 5th grade students on STEM competencies, but the guide is great for all ages. Click [here](#) to review the downloadable e-book. Activities are available in English and Spanish!

Homewood Science Center: PopUp Science At Home

The Homewood Science Center has created the PopUp Science At Home program to encourage students to participate in STEM programming during the COVID-19 crisis. PopUp Science at Home includes low cost kits (approximately \$1) and downloadable activities from their website. Click [here](#) to access them.

Project Exploration: STEM@home Program

Project Exploration has launched the STEM@home Program STEM activities for youth to do at home with minimal resources. The organizations has printed out these guides and made packages with materials to send to students via mail. To learn more about the program, watch their video teaser [here](#). To subscribe to the organization, click [here](#). **Please do not forget to register for the STEM@home program.*

Policy Updates

State Policy Updates

ACT Now: Demand State Funding for Afterschool Action Alert

The Illinois General Assembly will be meeting this week to start talking about the budget for the next fiscal year. Given the economic impact of COVID-19, the OST field is expecting budget cuts. **Please encourage your legislators to FULLY FUND AFTERSCHOOL!**

Click [here](#) to send an automatic message to your state legislators and Governor Pritzker!

Then, click [here](#) to look up the phone numbers for your state representative and senator and call their Springfield office.

Illinois State Board of Education: Nita M. Loew 21st Century Community Learning Centers NOFO/RFP Now Live

The **Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)** is requesting proposals for the 21st CCLC program, **due the agency by July 13, 2020**. These are competitive grants with funding beginning in Fiscal Year 2021. To review the full notice, click [here](#).

To support providers in the application process, a technical assistance session will be held on **May 28, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.** Registration information can be found [here](#). **Note: Attendance is not required.*

YMCA: Help The Y Feed Kids Through the Crisis

The YMCA is asking its network partners to join them in advocating for federal support to close the nutrition gap created by COVID-19 and the subsequent absence of traditional school meals.

To ensure access to meals while maintaining social distancing, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued many temporary flexibilities that make it safer to distribute meals to families, such as allowing food to be taken home instead of consumed onsite, allowing parents or guardians to pick up meals, allowing menu flexibility, allowing meals to be served in areas that don't meet the traditional area eligibility threshold, and allowing multiple days' worth of meals to be distributed at one time. **These USDA flexibilities are scheduled to end on June 30, 2020 – but we know the need will continue beyond this date.** Click [here](#) to alert your legislators of the need to make meals more available during the summer for youth nationwide!

For a list of previously listed policy updates, click [here](#).

Trainings, Events and Webinars

For an archive of our previously listed Trainings, Events and Webinars, click [here](#).

Opportunities for Providers

For an archive of our previously listed Opportunities for Providers, click [here](#).

Youth Opportunities

For an archive of our previously listed Youth Opportunities, click [here](#).

Funding Opportunities

For an archive of our previously listed Funding Opportunities, [click here](#).

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Call for Resources

Do you have valuable resources, stories, or best practices to share with the afterschool field? Please click [here](#) to share your resources with ACT Now and we will disseminate them (via our newsletter and website) to other providers across the state! If you have any questions, please contact **Emma Spencer (ACT Now - Youth Development Associate)** at Spencere@actnowillinois.org

NOTE: We are now sorting our trainings and resources by the Core Areas in the Illinois Statewide Afterschool Quality Standards to promote better understanding and implementation of the Standards. Dark blue headings denote a Core Area. To learn more about the Quality Standards, click [here](#).

Note to ACT Now Members

ACT Now would like to acknowledge the challenges many of our youth, families, colleagues, and communities are facing with the outbreak of COVID-19. We would also like to thank all our partners for their hard work in responding to the pandemic as we navigate unprecedented situations.

We will continue to support you all by sharing resources and materials relating to COVID-19 from reputable federal and state agencies, through our newsletter and E-alerts, as well as our [webpage, specifically designated for COVID-19 resources](#), and our social media platforms.

We are available for questions and concerns remotely. Please contact our **Network Lead, Susan Stanton:** at stantons@actnowillinois.org or our **Youth Development Associate, Emma Spencer:** at spencere@actnowillinois.org.

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