



**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MOLLY M. SPEARMAN**  
*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District Superintendents  
School Principals

**FROM:** Cathy L. Hazelwood  
General Counsel, Division for Legal Affairs

**DATE:** March 19, 2020

**RE:** Enrollment during COVID-19 Pandemic

The purpose of this memorandum is to remind school districts of their obligation to enroll students during this COVID-19 pandemic. The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has received communication from parents and school districts asking how students may be enrolled. Although schools are closed, district operations continue. As such, districts must enroll students during the closure.

In enrolling students, districts should identify the appropriate school and grade band, and work with parents to offer access to the district's distance emergency learning plans. Districts should establish a local process and procedure for enrolling students, keeping the safety, health, and welfare of students, faculty, and their families as priority.

Districts have wide discretion in the process developed and used, including establishing a dedicated telephone number for parents to call, posting signs with instructions on schools, or using remote access such as internet or a dedicated e-mail address. An example of how a Texas school district is accomplishing this may be found [here](#).

Failure to enroll students, particularly those protected by federal law or the underserved, could cause the district to run afoul with its requirements under Title III of the Every Student Succeeds Act, the McKinney-Vento Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Under each of these provisions, school districts and the state have various obligations to find, enroll, and make determinations of

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eligibility for services. As the state educational agency, the SCDE has responsibility to ensure the provision of a number of these requirements as a condition for receiving federal funds.

More importantly, however, enrolling students during this unparalleled event enables us to ensure that we are engaging all students in some meaningful way. If you have any questions, please contact me at [chazelwood@ed.sc.gov](mailto:chazelwood@ed.sc.gov).