



Center for Assessment, Research,
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Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act:

Highlights for K-12 and Higher Education Universities

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March 26, 2020—The U.S. Senate has come to an agreement on a variety of stimulus measures to support the country during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, as presented by the Senate, still requires a vote from the U.S. House of Representatives, which is slated to occur Friday, 3.27.2020. The ACT will then be presented to President Trump for signature. Below are a few of the highlights for the bill as proposed by the Senate on 3.25.2020. As the act is not yet fully negotiated, additional updates should be confirmed.

The Act includes \$2 trillion in stimulus aid; \$30.75 billion of which is earmarked for use by the U.S. Department of Education through an Education Stabilization Fund. *Title II- Education Provisions* details the specific supports for schools and universities. Most of the Act's provisions could be categorized as a) giving Dept. of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos specific authority to waive regulations, b) specific and temporary suspension of a variety of higher education financial aid programs, and c) provisions of direct aid to schools and universities through states. States, school districts, and higher education institutions will have access to these funds until Sept. 30, 2021. [A text of the presented bill is available here.](#)

Specific K-12 Support

- Sec. Betsy DeVos has been given the authority under this Act to [waive any regulation](#) under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.
- \$13.5 billion for K-12 schools based upon Title I formula funding.
- Each state's Governor will receive a portion of a special fund in the amount of \$3 billion to support schools and universities. Funds will be distributed to the states based upon the

number of students in schools and universities in the state. Specific language in the bill does not detail how, when, or for what projects the funds can be used.

- Update, 3.26.2020: According to [Education Week](#) the Education Stabilization Fund could be used to provide K-12 students internet connectivity and internet connected devices while a separate \$25 million in the bill could support distance learning. To access the Education Stabilization Fund, states would first have to agree to provide funding to education in fiscal years 2021 and 2022 that is at least the same as the average of their education budgets over the three prior fiscal years. However, DeVos could waive that requirement for states. However, as of March 26, those provisions were still being debated in the House.

Specific Higher Education Support

- Affords the Sec. of Education the ability to [waive cost share requirements](#) for Title IV: Student Assistance Programs in the Higher Education Act of 1965.
- Allows institutions to transfer up to [100 percent of the unexpended allotment](#) under section 442 of the HEA of 1965 to the allotment in section 413D.
- Allows institutions to reallocate any amount of the institution's subpart 3 of part A of Title IV of the HEA of 1965 to support [emergency financial aid grants](#).
- Allows a student affected by a qualifying emergency to receive funds in an amount that is not more than the [maximum Federal Pell Grant](#).
- [Sustains Work Study programs](#) and payments to students
- Allows institutions to adjust subsidized loan usage limits for any student who was unable to remain enrolled in school as a result of a qualifying emergency. (Sec. 4506)
- Afford Sec. DeVos the [ability to waive institutional requirements](#) under section 484B of the HEA act of 1965
- Allows Sec. DeVos to [cancel any student loan borrowers obligation](#) to repay the portion of a loan made under part D of title IV of the HEA during the period of a qualifying emergency.
- Supports students' ability to seek an [approved leave of absence](#) with stipulations.
- Offers the ability for [continuing education to be offered via distance learning](#) online to foreign institutions, with stipulations.
- Establishes [specific waivers](#) for the ESEA, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, and the Higher Education Act of 1965, but does not allow for waiver of civil rights laws.
- Requires the Secretary of Education to report to Congress when [waivers are made](#).
- Establishes [capital financing options and loan payment deferrals](#) for Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- Suspend all [payments due for loans](#) made under part D of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 for 3 months, and suspends the accrual of interest, offers extensions, and establishes flexible payment terms.
- Section 4514 [establishes detailed flexibility standards](#) for the Corporation for National and Community Service such as more flexible means of accruing service credit hours.

- Augments the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to allow for rapid response activities as [designated by the local board and state governor](#)

Other Provisions that May be of Importance to Educators or Community Leaders

- \$15.5 billion for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program;
- \$8.8 billion for Child Nutrition Programs to help ensure students receive meals when school is not in session;
- \$3.5 billion for Child Care and Development Block Grants, which provide child-care subsidies to low-income families and can be used to augment state and local systems;
- \$750 million for Head Start early-education programs;
- \$100 million in Project SERV grants to help clean and disinfect schools, and provide support for mental health services and distance learning;
- \$69 million for schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education; and
- \$5 million for health departments to provide guidance on cleaning and disinfecting schools and day-care facilities.
- Research agencies (NIH, DOD, DOE, NRC, EPA, NASA) will receive over a billion in support to fund new studies related to COVID-19 prevalence, vaccines, facilities disinfecting, and research support or mission sustaining funds.

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