FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 29, 2020

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New York Schools Awarded Nearly $20 Million In Critical Federal Funding To Address Covid-19 Crisis

The Board of Regents and New York State Education Department (NYSED) are pleased to announce that the United States Department of Education (USDE) announced that New York has been awarded almost $20 million for the K-12 Rethink Grant. This will provide more than 190,000 teachers and educational leaders across this State with a combined 450,000 hours of professional support to implement effective practices in remote/hybrid teaching and learning which, in turn, will reach an estimated two million students. Thirty-nine states applied for this funding and New York was one of eleven states to be awarded funds under this grant competition.

"Our educators are among the most dedicated and caring in the nation, as evidenced by their herculean efforts during the COVID-19 emergency closure of our school buildings," Board of Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa said. "This funding will assist and support them in continuing to deliver the education our students need and deserve while also making safety a top priority this Fall."

"This grant funding will help millions of educators, students and families across New York State," Interim Commissioner Shannon Tahoe said. "In this unprecedented time, it's critical that we are able to adjust our way of teaching and learning to best fit what our students need. I am grateful to Department staff who worked quickly and effectively to help secure this funding."

The Department applied for the Rethink Education Models grant to support blended and remote learning. The Department's approach to continuity of learning is founded on two major pillars: a partnership with communities, schools, and educational leaders to close the digital divide, and steadfast support for New York's educators. Schools at every level across our State face tremendous challenges as they address the crisis created by COVID-19; we commend our dedicated educators who have stepped up, adapting quickly to ensure continuity of learning so our students don't fall behind.

Today's announcement by USDE follows.

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Contact: Press Office
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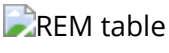
Secretary DeVos Awards More than $180 Million to States Rethinking K-12 Education to Better Meet Students' Needs During Coronavirus Disruption

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced today more than $180 million in new grant funding will be awarded to 11 states rethinking education to better serve students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Rethink K-12 Education Models Grant will support states' efforts to create new, innovative ways for students to continue learning in ways that meet their needs. Awardees include Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, North Carolina, New York, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Texas. The awards range from $6 million to $20 million.

"Ensuring every student can continue to learn during the coronavirus pandemic requires innovation from local education leaders and a laser-like focus on doing what's right for students," said Secretary DeVos. "This grant will help states adapt and overcome challenges to strengthen education both now and for the longer term. If we've learned anything from this pandemic, it's that the antiquated one-size-fits-all approach to education is no longer tenable and education going forward must be more adaptable and student-centered. I want to congratulate today's awardees for making the needed effort to rethink education on behalf of their students."

Congress set aside 1% of the $30.75 billion allotted to the Education Stabilization Fund through the CARES Act for grants to states with the highest coronavirus burden. The Department of Education announced the Rethink K-12 Education Models (REM) grant competition in April 2020, inviting any state educational agency to apply. The program supports new, innovative ways to access education with an emphasis on meeting students' needs during the coronavirus national emergency. Specifically, it called for projects to provide families with:

- Microgrants, so that states can ensure families have access to the technology and services to advance learning remotely (absolute priority 1);
- Statewide virtual learning and course access programs, so that students can access a full range of subjects, even those not taught in their assigned setting (absolute priority 2); or
- New, field-initiated models for providing remote education to ensure that every child is learning and preparing for successful careers and lives (absolute priority 3).


REM table

Key highlights from some of the awardees include:

- Texas will invest in developing new statewide virtual courses as part of its Texas Home Learning program, including the creation of new open resources for English Learners in reading and math, with a goal of reaching over one million English Learner students and providing professional development to more than 300,000 teachers.
- New York will provide over 190,000 teachers and educational leaders with a combined 450,000 hours of professional support to implement effective practices in remote/hybrid teaching and learning, which, in turn, will reach an estimated two million students.
- Louisiana will provide over 75,000 students access to microgrants for remote learning resources, including at least 12,000 who will receive devices or hotspots through the program.
- Rhode Island will enhance its virtual Advanced Course Access program so that middle and high school students have access to a richer, more diverse set of course offerings, and elementary school students can access the program as well.
- South Carolina will provide all students access to a robust virtual education ecosystem, including the use of "datacasting," an innovative concept that can help provide instructional content to students without internet access.

Applications were evaluated by a panel of independent peer reviewers, and the highest-scoring applications received funding. Given the nature of the national emergency, states with the highest coronavirus burden were prioritized.

The Department continues to update www.ed.gov/coronavirus with information for students, parents, educators and local leaders about how to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

For additional resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about COVID-19, please visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

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