



## SEF Statement on Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

*Issued March 23, 2020*

Government officials are taking swift public health actions to slow the rapidly spreading coronavirus pandemic. As of March 23, 2020, statewide school closures impact [20 million students](#) who live within the seventeen states covered by the Southern Education Foundation, and [a majority](#) of these students live in poverty.

While the coronavirus pandemic affects all students, unsurprisingly, students from under-served communities feel this impact even greater. Throughout our history, the Southern Education Foundation has been on the frontlines training and supporting teachers and leaders in the South. We have doubled down on our strategy of developing and sharing research-based, practitioner-informed policies, and connecting these solutions to an engaged civic and legislative community who can advance equitable education policies and practices.

In this spirit of elevating what's working, we've been encouraged by the innovative ways schools and districts across the southern states are meeting the needs of our most vulnerable students. For example:

- [St. Helena Parish School District](#) in Louisiana is using bus fleets to deliver meals and assignments and has installed new Wi-Fi access points so parents can park at schools to get on the internet.
- Rowan-Salisbury School System, North Carolina has a [dedicated helpdesk](#) for parents and students who need technology assistance.
- The NAACP and Comcast have [joined forces](#) to provide families in Caddo Parish Public Schools, Louisiana with two months of free internet to access virtual learning activities.
- Families in Charlottesville City Schools, Virginia [can check out laptops](#) for students.
- In Hamilton County Schools, Tennessee, office supply company Staples is [printing and distributing the district's continued learning packets](#) at no cost to families.

School and district leaders have told us that they want to hear more examples like these. Our team is daily [monitoring COVID-19's impact on education](#) in the southern states, and we are committed to highlighting promising practices that can be useful during these times.

Please continue to check our website and social media channels for updates as we brave these challenges together. It is our sincere hope and belief that we will arrive on the other side of this crisis even stronger.

In community,

Raymond C. Pierce and the SEF Team