

# HIGHER ED & EDTECH DURING COVID

Timeline of events in America from March to August.

## MARCH

### March 2, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*US Cases hit 100*

### March 6, 2020 - Education Update

*First U.S. Colleges Close Classrooms as Virus Spreads. More Could Follow.*

The University of Washington is moving to online classes for its 50,000 students. With colleges nationwide about to empty for spring break, students fear they might not be coming back.

Source: [The New York Times](#)

### March 11, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*WHO declares COVID-19 officially as a pandemic*

### March 25, 2020 - Education Update

*Colleges Get Billions in Coronavirus Relief, but Say Deal Falls Short of Needs.*

Congress's emergency coronavirus bill would provide colleges and universities with about \$14 billion to weather shutdowns and move to distance learning. That is unlikely to be enough.

Source: [The New York Times](#)

### March 27, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*Trump signs \$2 trillion stimulus package*

### March 31, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*Confirmed US cases hit 186,101*

### March 31, 2020 - Education Update

*FBI issues warning about 'hijacking' of online classes by intruders after schools report serious disruptions*

The FBI has issued a warning to the public about the "hijacking" of online classrooms and teleconferences after it received reports of disturbances by people shouting racist and threatening language and displaying hate messages..

Source: [Washington Post](#)

## Month Analysis

During March, the number of COVID-19 cases in America went from **30 to 186,101** — shifting the rhetoric from a minor concern into a full blown pandemic. In response, universities across the country were indecisive about the next steps to support their students' needs. By March 26, **1,102 colleges and universities** had closed their campuses, choosing to move classes online for the remaining academic year. Due to the lack of proper infrastructure, many universities outsourced to 3rd party communication platforms such as Zoom. Zoom saw a **3700% increase** in daily downloads and the **stock spiked more than 100%** in March from January 2020.

Institutions floundered in student housing, providing little to no alternative options during the pandemic. This forced students to go home, solidifying the decision of remote learning. This unstable shift to online classrooms caused top education outlets like [Inside Higher Ed](#) to predict permanent closures — **providing the Edtech space with major opportunities to grow as traditional education has become a liability.**

# APRIL

## April 10, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*Global deaths hit 10,000*

## April 14, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*Trump pulls US funding to WHO*

## April 21, 2020 - Education Update

*College students were promised aid in coronavirus stimulus. It hasn't arrived.*

When the federal government announced it would distribute nearly \$6.3 billion to colleges to give to students in need, the aid was met with fanfare. The Education Department said April 9th the coronavirus money was on its way. For nearly every student, the money still hasn't arrived.

Source: [USA Today](#).

## April 30, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*US cases is 1,040,488*

## April 2, 2020 - Education Update

*DeVos Weighs Waivers for Special Education. Parents Are Worried.*

The \$2 trillion coronavirus law could give the education secretary the power to waive special education rules as school districts struggle to teach all their students online.

Source: [The New York Times](#)

## April 21, 2020 - Education Update

*Secretary DeVos Delivers \$6 Billion in Additional Grant Funding to Support Continued Education at America's Colleges, Universities.*

After quickly making available more than \$6 billion for colleges and universities to provide direct emergency cash grants to students, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced today an additional \$6.2 billion is now available to higher education institutions to ensure learning continues. The funding is available through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed into law by President Donald J. Trump less than one month ago.

Source: [US Dept. of Education](#)

## Month Analysis

In April, cracks in the system emerged as universities, companies, and the government tried to piece together permanent online solutions for the remainder of the academic year. At this point, **16% of incoming freshmen** had withdrawn their commitment to their universities, increasing the threat of permanent closures due to loss of income. When President Trump signed the **\$2 trillion stabilization bill** in response to the pandemic, **\$14 billion** was dedicated to higher ed and included relief for college students and graduates with outstanding federal student debt. This bill was designed to mitigate the losses, however it was met with a negative response after it was discovered that the bill gave special privileges to Secretary Betsy DeVos. Additionally, a large portion of students never saw their checks due to eligibility restrictions and poor communication between parties. Through all of this, remote learning's inability to deliver the same quality of instruction lead parents to seek out private tutoring services, further exacerbating the issue of financial inequality. **Throughout April, many parties understand that something needs to be done, however the decision makers haven't come to a helpful solution.**

# MAY

## May 9 2020 - COVID-19 Update

US has total of 1,342,329 cases, 79,906 deaths, and 232,821 recoveries

## May 12, 2020 - Education Update

*Impact Of COVID-19 On the Future Of Edtech*

Education technology, or edtech, has been around for at least the last 15-20 years in a meaningful way. It has evolved during this period. We can divide this journey in three broad phases.

Source: [Entrepreneur](#)

## May 11, 2020 - Education Update

*Dept. Of Education Discloses It Is Illegally Seizing Wages Of 54,000 Borrowers*

The CARES Act was supposed to suspend all wage garnishments for borrowers in default on their government-held federal student loans. But for many student loan borrowers, that suspension has not happened — and it was supposed to be effective as of March 13, 2020, nearly eight weeks ago.

Source: [Forbes](#)

## May 15, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*Official global coronavirus death toll passes 300,000. More than 4.4 million cases worldwide.*

## May 19, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*Trump says that he is taking hydroxychloroquine*

## May 22, 2020 - Education Update

*The Graduating Class of 2020 Gets Its Commencement — Online*

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced college seniors to finish their final semester online, it dramatically altered one of the most significant events of their lives: their college graduation ceremonies. But many universities refuse to let stay-at-home restrictions and social distancing guidelines stop them from throwing their students a celebration — even if it's only online.

Source: [EdTech Magazine](#)

## May 29, 2020 - Education Update

*School district leaders from around the U.S. rethink education, emphasize online learning*

As education leaders mull how to bring students back to schools safely, they are also wrestling with how to better educate children who were falling behind before the pandemic.

Source: [EdSource](#)

## May 27, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*US reported 100,000 COVID-19 deaths with 29,000 recorded in New York state.*

## Month Analysis

During May, key decision makers began to rethink education and emphasize online learning. Meanwhile, tensions between the Department of Education (DOE) and college students continued to grow. After the first few weeks of online education, many students expressed anger over paying full tuition as the engagement and experience wasn't comparable to in-person courses. The DOE exasperated students further by disclosing that [54,000 borrowers of student loans](#) continued to have their wages garnished despite the CARES Act. Industry expert **Kashyap Dalal, Chief Business Officer & Co-founder of Simplilearn**, wrote that "the adoption of learning online through the use of technology will accelerate like never before." This was demonstrated when education leaders began planning for fall, advocating for student engagement solutions and improvements in remote learning systems. Later in the month, colleges [opted for online commencement](#) celebrations, extending the uses of educational tech. As the current academic term wrapped up and educators began to think about student's long-term success, education leaders at the [New Teacher Center Superintendents' roundtable](#) concluded that access to computers and the internet was paramount. Looking to the upcoming year, district leaders decide to revisit school budgets and look at what can be reduced so the funds can be directed to online resource development.

# JUNE

## June 10, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*Number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 hits 2 million in the US*

## June 30, 2020 - Education Update

*Secretary DeVos Challenges Educators to Rethink Education Options for Rural High School Students Amid Coronavirus Pandemic*

The Rural Tech Project, with a total cash prize pool of \$600,000, invites high schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) to develop competency-based distance learning programs that enable students to master skills at their own pace with the goal of preparing them for the well-paying, in-demand jobs of today and tomorrow.

Source: [US Dept of Education](#)

## June 7, 2020 - Education Update

*How the pandemic fast-tracked the multibillion-dollar education technology industry*

The coronavirus pandemic has been a real learning curve, not least for educators. But with many schools now reopening, questions are being asked about what the future of education might look like. CNBC Make It's Karen Gilchrist speaks to entrepreneurs in India, Hong Kong and the U.S. to learn more about the multibillion-dollar business opportunity.

Source: [CNBC Make It](#)

## June 25, 2020 - Education Update

*California schools must provide daily live interaction, access to technology this fall*

California schools will need to offer daily live interaction and regular communication with parents, among other requirements, in order to receive state funding for the upcoming school year.

Source: [EdSource](#)

## June 26, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*First briefing from White House Coronavirus Task Force after 2 months to address rising number of cases in Florida and Texas.*

## Month Analysis

In June, industry experts analyzed how edtech will reshape the education space after the exponential growth seen in previous months. Business owners and young entrepreneurs hope to capitalize on students [reevaluation](#) of the financial and practical viability of a 4 year university. Due to the rapid expansion, the edtech market is expected to **triple by 2025 to be worth \$350 billion**. It wasn't just students that began to change their expectations for school, but teachers as well. **Fifty-eight percent of teachers** who responded to an EdWeek Research Center survey said their opinion of edtech has grown more positive as a result of the increased usage of technology.

However, even with reassessment of the industry, accessibility remains a concern. To combat this, the DOE launched a [\\$600,000 competition](#) to advance student-centered technology education in rural and low income areas. In other states, decision makers continued to look forward to the fall, searching for edtech solutions for the "new normal." To achieve this, [California schools](#) are mandated to offer daily live interaction and regular communication with parents to receive state funding for the upcoming school year.

# JULY

## July 7, 2020 - Education Update

*States Sue Education Department Over Allocation Of Pandemic Funds To Schools*  
Several Democratic-led states and the District of Columbia have joined in a lawsuit against Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, accusing the Trump administration of trying to unlawfully divert pandemic relief funds from public schools to private schools.

Source: [NPR](#)

## July 10, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*The United States reports 63,247 new coronavirus cases, world's highest single-day increase to date*

## July 7, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*President Donald Trump formally notifies Congress and the United Nations of U.S. withdrawal from WHO*

## July 15, 2020 - Education Update

*Trump's crusade to reopen schools and universities in the fall is already backfiring on him*

The Trump administration's aggressive push to reopen schools in the fall is already backfiring on President Trump, polls show. In recent weeks, Trump has called for K-12 public schools to resume in-person learning as soon as possible, disagreed with the CDC's guidance, and tried to pin the blame on his Democratic opponents.

Source: [Business Insider](#)

## July 21, 2020 - Education Update

*Parents Don't Have To Wait On Washington For More Education Options, As South Carolina's Governor Proved This Week*  
Families across the U.S. are scrambling to find alternate education options as government-run school systems around the U.S. look to reopen for the fall semester on a remote or partially-remote basis.

Recognizing significant need, lawmakers and parents in many states are working to advance reforms that will expand school choice.

Source: [Forbes](#)

## July 27, 2020 - COVID-19 Update

*Phase III clinical trials for a COVID-19 vaccine, developed by Moderna, begin in the United States*

## Month Analysis

July allowed time to evaluate the successes and failures of remote learning and how to address these concerns in the upcoming school year. This evaluation happened during a lull in coverage about the coronavirus — shifting the conversation to the upcoming US election. While the shift to remote learning has been difficult, many disagree with President Trump's push to re-open schools in fall. Teachers became afraid for their safety and that of their students as school reopening plans have now become ingrained into politics. According to [USA Today](#), nationwide, **1 in 5 teachers said they were unlikely to return to school** if their buildings opened this fall. Also in response to President Trump's plans on reopening schools, **64% of parents** believe schools should be among the last in-person venues to reopen and **50% of voters** oppose a full reopening of colleges and universities. Parents are left in an uncomfortable position of needing a better remote learning solution, but lack the resources to invest in [homeschooling.pods](#).

# AUGUST

## **August 7, 2020 - Education Update**

*N.Y. Schools Can Reopen, Cuomo Says, in Contrast With Much of U.S.*

Schools across New York can reopen for in-person instruction this fall, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said Friday, solidifying New York's status as one of the few states in America that has a virus transmission rate low enough to bring children back into classrooms — not only in its rural communities but also in the country's biggest city.

Source: [The New York Times](#)

## **August 10, 2020 - COVID-19 Update**

*Moderna and the Trump administration negotiate a deal to supply the United States with 100 million doses of its experimental COVID-19 vaccine*

## **August 9, 2020 - COVID-19 Update**

*US surpassed 5 million COVID-19 cases*

## **August 11, 2020 - Education Update**

*Georgia School District Quarantines Over 850 Students, Teachers After Reopening for Six Days*

The Cherokee County School District in north Georgia has directed 826 students and 42 teachers to quarantine as a result of exposure to COVID-19 after being back to school for only six days.

Source: [Newsweek](#)

## Month Analysis

Even with teachers being vocal about the push to reopen school, August saw many politicians encouraging school districts to hold in person classes for fall. A major driver behind this push was to mitigate the [educational gap](#) created by household income, with wealthier families able to host learning pods and pay for additional online education resources. For this reason, there has been a massive push within the education system to prioritize students' access to computers and the internet, as edtech is becoming increasingly integral to the future of education.

## Looking Ahead

The remainder of August and the beginning of September will be a crucial time as we start to see the ramifications of the decisions made by key leaders. If an increase in cases leads to school closures once more, the availability and development of edtech will be vital to students long term success. The pandemic has highlighted weak points in the traditional education model. Now, there is a call to action for institutions to be more agile and student centered, with the edtech industry at the forefront of permanent change.