

Guided by the principle that all children deserve the opportunity to live a full life, the Flamboyán Foundation works to ensure that every child in the United States and in Puerto Rico receives an excellent education. In Washington D.C., Flamboyán accelerates student learning while helping educators and the school system transform their relationships with students' families. In Puerto Rico, Flamboyán focuses on promoting students to read at their level when they finish third grade, while building a prosperous nonprofit and philanthropic sector.



## THE CHALLENGES FOR ALL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

	Immediate response	Recovery: Summer and next school year
Student Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Student feeding while schools are closed</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create policies and practices to prevent the spread of the virus in schools</li></ul>
Ensuring continuous learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access to distance education</li><li>• Access to special education services</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Evaluate and provide interventions to address students' academic lags</b></li><li>• <b>Contingency plans for continuous interruptions</b></li></ul>
Teacher professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training and resources to provide distance learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Training on interventions to address academic lags</b></li></ul>
Student and teacher mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide remote services for vulnerable students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support to address student and teacher trauma and other mental health needs</li></ul>

## LITERACY IN GRADES K-3 (2011-2015)

### Key Findings

- 85% of K-3 students live below the poverty level.
- 25% of K-3 students are chronically absent (10% of teaching time).
- 22% of first grade students earn D or F grades in the Spanish class. 12% are retained.
- 40% of third grade students do not reach proficiency levels on standardized Spanish tests.
- Students living below the poverty level and those who are chronically absent show much lower achievement levels than their counterparts.



# INTERRUPTIONS DURING THE LAST YEARS

## 2017-18

### Hurricane Maria

The reopening of schools began on October 23. By December 4, it was estimated that 97% of the schools offered classes.

According to the Youth Development Institute these were the averages of days that students did not attend school as a result of the passage of Hurricane Maria:

- Children up to 5 years: 92 days
- Children and young people between 5-17 years: 78 days

## 2018-19

### Schools closings

According to the Center for Puerto Rican Studies 265 public schools closed

- 66% (175) of the closed schools were elementary schools.
- Decrease in operating schools: From 1,515 in 2006 to 855 in 2018.
- In the rural area, 65% were closed, while in the urban area, 35%.

## 2019-20

### Earthquakes

Due to the earthquake on January 7, classes did not resume until the evaluation of the schools was completed.

- School began in stages from January 28 to March 6.
- In February, 55 schools in the most affected municipalities were reorganized into tents, wagons, and public and private buildings.

### COVID-19

Since March 15 the schools ceased their work according to the government's total closure order as a preventive measure.

Various distance education options were offered through the DE page. Academic work They will cease on May 8.

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## IMPACTO EN EL APRENDIZAJE DE LA LECTURA

- We know that students experience learning loss during the summer:
  - Students have been documented to lose 1-3 months of academic progress during the summer months, especially in reading and math
  - Low-income students are the most affected in reading, widening the gaps between them and their higher-income counterparts.
- Although we do not have data available in Puerto Rico, other jurisdictions have made projections of the alarming loss of learning that interruption to face-to-face classes can mean:
  - Washington DC projects a loss of up to 16% in reading scores on standardized tests if you cannot return to schools this semester

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## PRIORITIES FOR K-3 EDUCATION

- Provide continuity of **educational opportunities** throughout the next academic year (i.e. summer, extended hours, tutoring, academic year extension), including by alternative means to the Internet (TV, radio, etc.)
- Conduct **reading assessments** when schools reopen to identify the individual needs of all students
- Prioritize core **curriculum** areas and fundamental reading skills
- Provide comprehensive **professional development** for teachers so that they can offer distance learning, manage the social-emotional needs of their students, and focus instruction on fundamental reading skills and the individualized needs of students
- Ensure the **health of students and their families**, especially including food security

- One of the most pressing social needs during the pandemic is to **ensure that students have access to food** while schools are closed.
- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, signed on March 18, **provides significant flexibilities** so that school districts can prepare and distribute meals to students during the pandemic, funded by federal funds.
- Different jurisdictions have taken advantage of these flexibilities and have generally followed **one of the following options to provide food**:
  1. "Grab and go"
  2. Delivery
  3. Public-private partnerships
  4. Pandemic EBT:
    - Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, state agencies may decide to distribute funds instead of food to families who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Funds go directly to EBT cards, including those used for nutritional assistance (SNAP, PAN). Six states have received approval for this program. In Michigan, families will receive at least \$ 180 per month, per student, for each month that the school is closed.

## SCHOOL FEEDING

- Given the high level of concentration in Puerto Rico, **public schools offer breakfast and lunch** to all K-12 students every day (almost 300,000).
- **School canteens have been closed** since the curfew began. PRDE has decided not to prepare meals, in part because of health concerns for canteen workers. To date, PRDE has addressed nutritional needs through three food donations to nonprofit organizations:

Donation date	Pounds of food	Rations	Number of days equivalent
March 30	110,000	889,000	1.5 days
April 3-7	264,000	3,224,000	5.5 days
Next	179,000	1,432,000	2.5 days

### Current Limitations :

- Donations hold nonprofits, not the government, accountable for ensuring that food reaches students.
- Donations to date cover less than 10 days of food, and schools have been closed since March 16.
- Food is being distributed to all members of the community.
- Lack of communication with families on how to receive food.
- Examples of organizations that are not equipped or prepared for food distribution, and examples of organizations that received expired food.



# SCHOOL FEEDING



Chair  
Jose R. Canino III

Members  
Andrew G. Biggs  
Carlos M. Garcia  
Arthur J. Gonzalez  
Jose R. Gonzalez  
Jose J. Martinez  
Diana A. Nolasco

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL  
March 30, 2020  
Honorable Eligio Hernández  
Secretary  
Department of Education  
Dear Secretary Hernández:  
On March 18, 2020, the Families requested to access meals (other assistance). As part of this effort,

Noticias - Gobierno y política

## Federación de Alcaldes pide a la gobernadora que abra comedores escolares

PORTADA

## Congresistas cuestionan cierre de comedores escolares en la Isla

El secretario de Educación mantiene que los comedores permanecerán cerrados

NOTICIAS

## Jennifer González le pide a Wanda Vázquez mayor agilidad en la apertura de los comedores escolares

La comisionada le cuestiona también a la gobernadora la decisión de limitar los vuelos a la Isla

Alerta contra el coronavirus  
Te ofrecemos contenido útil para que puedas entender de la enfermedad.



Noticias - Puerto Rico

## Abogados exigen apertura de comedores escolares



Por Primera Hora  
20 de abril de 2020 - 4:55pm

Noticias - Gobierno y política

## Organizaciones se unen a pedido de reapertura de comedores escolares

El grupo llamado Task Force Social del Pueblo reclamó se trabaje con la crisis humanitaria



De acuerdo con varios miembros del grupo, la crisis alimentaria es un síntoma de un problema que existe mucho antes del COVID-19, y los niños son particularmente vulnerables.

Por Primera Hora  
Actualizado: 27 de abril de 2020 - 12:30pm

Elected officials and organizations have called for PRDE to reopen the lunchrooms to distribute food to students, including the People's Social Task Force, made up of a group of 100+ nonprofits.

Voceros y más que El Vocero.  
la Verdad.  
decir el Vocero.

- Recommendations to ensure food reaches students:
  - **Immediately:** Follow-up and accountability to ensure that the food donated so far reaches the students.
  - **Soon:** Explore and search for an alternative that provides access to food for all students. There are many local organizations that are ready to help with the preparation and distribution of meals, including measures to protect the health and safety of all.
  - **In the longer term:** look for the opportunity for Puerto Rico to participate in Pandemic-EBT, including for future emergencies and interruptions to the school year. This option could provide the greatest flexibility for direct food assistance to families.