

CREATING
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR STUDENTS TO
KEEP WYOMING
STRONG



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MEMORANDUM NO. 2020-042

TO: School District Superintendents
FROM: Dicky Shanor, Chief of Staff
DATE: March 20, 2020
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Guidance Updates

COVID-19 GUIDANCE UPDATES

1. What does the 185/175 day hold harmless period mean in practical terms?

School districts are being funded with state funds through April 3 as if they were open.

2. What are the rules of the game during state school closures through April 3rd?

- *Staff Pay* - It is a local decision on whether or not to require staff to work during this period. Local boards have the option to grant additional paid time off to staff that is not required to work. This applies to federally funded employees as well. Local policies and practices must be consistent for state and federally funded employees.
- *185/175 Days* - In order to hold districts harmless, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) will calculate attendance as if all enrolled students were present for school calendar days through April 3. The temporary school closure form must be submitted within two weeks of the last day of your closure period. If you have already submitted your closure form we will hold it for now and will provide further guidance as necessary.
- *Transportation* - The WDE will promulgate emergency rules to broaden reimbursable expenditures during emergency situations beginning March 16.

- *IDEA* - For information on Special Education please continue to refer to the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services document [Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During the Corona Virus](#) and the U.S. Department of Education (USED) document [Fact Sheet for Protecting Students' Civil Rights During COVID-19 Response](#)
- *Virtual Education/E-Learning* - The WDE is exploring its ability to temporarily suspend or substantially reduce Chapter 41 requirements through emergency rules to maximize district ability to provide virtual education to its own students. Remote education currently provides a flexible option for E-Learning between districts.
- *Teacher and Leader Evaluations* - Evaluations are not due until July 1, therefore the WDE recommends adhering to this date for the time being.

3. What are the plans for after April 5? TBD

4. Status of assessment and accountability

Today, USED approved Superintendent Balow's request for a waiver from certain assessment, accountability and report card provisions. As a result, Wyoming students will not take the statewide assessment, WY-TOPP, this spring and no formal accountability determinations will be made for the 2019-20 school year. The WDE is taking [public comment](#) on this waiver through April 20, 2020.

5. ACT

The WDE will continue to work to offer ACT testing opportunities for students. Schools will not be required to test all grade 11 students this spring, but are encouraged to still offer ACT testing options if possible. The state testing dates in March have been canceled. At this time, the WDE recommends changing ACT assessment dates using the third option, April 21 and administering the online version. The WDE is currently working with ACT to investigate the following:

- A voucher process to give students, schools, and districts an opportunity to leverage national testing dates should they not be able to use the state testing dates. The tests given on national testing dates will provide college-reportable scores for students.
- A new opportunity in May for state testing. ACT is looking into this option now but stated if it could be done it would have to be online testing.
- The possibility of testing in the fall.