

CREATING
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR STUDENTS TO
KEEP WYOMING
STRONG

MEMORANDUM NO. 2020-069

TO: School District Superintendents
FROM: Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction
DATE: May 5, 2020
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Guidance Updates



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COVID-19 GUIDANCE AND UPDATES

Professional Teaching Standards Board Update(PTSB)

At its April 20, 2020 board meeting the PTSB adopted emergency rules concerning a COVID-19 exception authorization, Professional, Industry and Career permits (PIC), Out-of-Field Endorsements, Exception Authorization Transferability, and the removal of Speech Language Pathologist Licensing. The emergency rules were approved by the governor on April 30, 2020 and are now in effect. Details of each rule change can be found in the PTSB [memo](#).

Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER)

The Governor's office requested and received proposals from PreK, K-12, Community Colleges, UW, and numerous other educational entities outlining the most significant needs resulting from the disruptions and obstacles that have occurred as a result of Covid-19. The Governor's Education Task Force is reviewing the applications and making recommendations to the Governor regarding the spending of the 4.7 million allocated to the Governor's office.

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER)

The WDE plans to submit Wyoming's application to U.S. Department of Education (USED) this week. District will receive an application this week as well. The allowable usages for the funds are broad. Pages 6 and 7 of the [state application](#) describes the uses of funds.

(1) *Formula Funding*-An application for this funding will be submitted to the WDE and will run through our grants management system (GMS). The application will contain assurances for required federal compliance (sections 442 and 427 of the *General Education Provisions*

Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232e and § 1228a). In addition, federal guidance suggests that WDE ask for information related to the following:

(A) How you will determine your most important educational needs as a result of COVID-19.

(B) Your proposed timeline for providing services and assistance to students and staff in both public and non-public schools. This would include information on improved technology and broadband access as well as your utilization of assistive technology, materials, and instruction for specific student groups including SPED, ELs, CTE, and other at-risk students.

(C) The extent to which you intend to use ESSER funds to promote remote learning. This would include information on your prioritization of and professional development plans for moving into a more permanent blended learning model.

(D) How you intend to assess and address student learning gaps resulting from the disruption in educational services. This would include your ideas on summer in-person instruction opportunities and fall reopening plans. Curricular materials, assessments, and attendance and student engagement practices necessary for blended learning could also provide insight into this question.

(2) *State set aside (9.5%)*—Once the formula funding is disbursed, the WDE will work on statewide activities and expenditures appropriate for the set aside funding. Federal guidance indicates that this money is appropriately used for technological capacity and access (including hardware and software, connectivity, and instructional expertise – to support remote learning). **Another suggested use is furthering remote learning by developing new informational and academic resources and expanding awareness of, and access to, best practices and innovations in remote learning for students, families, and educators.** The WDE will also explore other potential uses such as PPE and other health products, developing new and enhanced health and safety protocols, credit recovery and remediation, early literacy and math intervention, improving SEL infrastructure, and expansion of LMS capacity.

WAEA Exception

Per [Memo 2020-068](#) the **form** for school districts to apply to have its schools exempt from requirements of the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act for the 2019-20 school year is now available. Forms must be submitted by May 7, 2020 in order for the State Board of Education to grant exceptions during its May 22, 2020 meeting.

Management Council Update

A date has not been officially set for a special session, although May 15, 2020 is being considered. There are now three bills which will be considered during this first special session:

- [20LSO-700 v.6](#): Emergency expenses of government-COVID-19
Amended to delete Sections 1 and 2 (which are now 20LSO-702). Section 4 increases cash reserves for school districts to 25 percent for fiscal year 2020-21.

- [20LSO-701 v.7: Emergency government action-Covid-19](#)
Adds COVID-19 into workers compensation statutes for January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.
- [20LSO-702 v.3: Emergency appropriation-COVID-19 funds](#)
Appropriated CARES Act (and any future similar federal acts) funds. Amended to include impact to educational entities in legislative findings. Prioritizes spending of emergency funds for COVID-19 emergency response, relief aid, economic development projects, and replacement of lost revenue for public entities (if allowable).

Moving forward:

In the coming months WDE will provide more guidance regarding on-campus instruction for the next school year. In the meantime the WDE will continue to provide guidance and answer questions regarding operating under the current state health orders.
