

CREATING  
OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR STUDENTS TO  
KEEP WYOMING  
STRONG



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## MEMORANDUM NO. 2020-073

**TO:** School District Superintendents  
**FROM:** Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**DATE:** May 12, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Guidance Updates

## COVID-19 GUIDANCE AND UPDATES

### Dr. Gilmartin: Student Well Being

As a pediatrician in Evanston and a general pediatrician representative on the American Academy of Pediatrics, Council on Child Abuse and Neglect executive committee, Dr. Gilmartin discussed reasons to remain alert to the possibility that children are being maltreated at higher rates and with greater severity during the COVID-19 era. A slide deck of the presentation can be found [here](#).

### Use of Existing Federal Funds

- Districts should be looking at using existing grant funds to address COVID-19 issues as much as possible. Remember, if the activity is allowable under any IDEA, ESSA or Perkins requirements, it continues to be allowable now.
- The fiscal and programmatic waiver the state received recently, allows for expanded uses of Title IV funds in regards to technology.
- Keep in mind that with the extension of the period of availability for the FY2018 funds, districts will have FY 2018, FY2019 and FY2020 grant cycles all open for use. At the end of FY 2018 extended deadline, the 2021 grants will open.

### Special Legislative Session Update

Governor Mark Gordon issued a [proclamation](#) last week calling for the Legislature to convene a special session on Friday, May 15, 2020. The session will be conducted electronically from Cheyenne for the purposes of:

- Appropriating the federal funds available from the United States government to assist states, political subdivisions, and impacted

businesses and individuals in addressing issues raised by the COVID-19 emergency and issues caused by steps taken to abate the emergency.

- Amending and creating programs to be administered by the state for the purpose of helping businesses and residents impacted by the COVID-19 emergency.
- Providing assistance to certain Wyoming businesses and residents negatively affected by the COVID-19 emergency.
- Providing state budgetary flexibility, retention and transfer of funds to prepare state and local governments for the public health emergency and resulting economic devastation.

Three mirrors bills have been filed and posted on [LSO's website](#) for this special session:

- HB/SF1001 Emergency appropriation-COVID-19 funds
- HB/SF1002 Emergency government action-Covid-19
- HB/SF1003 Emergency budgeting-COVID-19

Management Council met again on Friday, May 8 to discuss [draft rules for the special session](#) and additional interim topics related to COVID-19. Several topics were added to the Joint Education Interim Committee, including:

- Fund community WIFI for tele-education/telemedicine.
- Establish telehealth programs in schools.
- School funding model adjustments to account for inequities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Funding for breakfast and lunch distributions by schools [including consideration of funding through summer months].

### **Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER)**

The Governor's Office has collected all of the recommendations from different entities for request for funding and will make a presentation to the COVID-19 Education Task Force this week on how to fund those requests - perhaps by funding a percentage of each request. Focus may be toward transitions this school year from Pre-K to K -12 and then high school to post secondary. There are also other education providing entities, both private and public, around the state that may request funding.

### **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER)**

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) application for this funding is ready and is currently in the New/Adjusted Funding Request (NAFR) process. This process seeks permission from the Budget Office and the Governor's Office to take in funds not in the state's original budget. During the process there were discussions about the maintenance of effort (MOE) required as a condition of accepting CARES Act funding. The MOE is a commitment from the state to fund education for the next two years at an equal or greater value than the average of expenditures of the past three years. The budget office does due diligence to examine any strings attached to funding. We expect the request to be approved shortly and the WDE will submit the application to the USED as soon as possible.