

CREATING  
OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR STUDENTS TO  
KEEP WYOMING  
STRONG

## MEMORANDUM NO. 2020-096

**TO:** School District Superintendents  
**FROM:** Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**DATE:** June 16, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Guidance Updates



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## COVID-19 GUIDANCE UPDATES

### CARES ESSER Application Process and GEER Funding Update

An [application guidance](#) document on the CARES Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding is now available, including answers to questions provided by local educational agencies (LEAs). A video of the presentation, from the recently concluded STAR conference, can be found [here](#). The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) will announce when applications will be accepted.

Regarding the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER), Governor Mark Gordon approved \$765,000 for K-12 education. Funds will be distributed in a similar fashion to ESSER funding, and will flow through the agency to the LEAs. More information will be forthcoming from the WDE in the next few weeks.

About \$1.25 billion in CARES funding has been received by the state. The following amounts have been submitted to the Governor's office by the WDE: Devices \$29,158,137; WiFi (hotspots and infrastructure) \$13,078,431; and Summer Nutrition, \$1,683,327. The funds will be used to help mitigate the gap in these areas of need; a request also was submitted specifically for personal protective equipment.

### Update on Smart Start Working Group

This [presentation](#) reviewed the processes put in place for sub-groups to continue defining key considerations and recommendations related to the reopening of schools for the 2020-21 school year. The work product will include a draft Smart Start template for school districts and other educational institutions and be delivered to the COVID-19 Education Task Force by July 1.

The WDE is planning to release guidance on transportation best practices next week. Screening best practices for the reopening of schools will be determined by the local school district and county health officer.

### **Equitable Services Private Schools**

Regarding the equitable services for private schools, the WDE plans to maintain standard practices consistent with the intent of Congress, and will not be adopting the non-regulatory guidance at this time.

### **IDEA Waiver**

The WDE applied to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) and received a provisional waiver extending the period of availability for Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2018 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B grant funds. With this approval, the FFY 2018 IDEA Part B grant funds will be available for obligation through September 30, 2021 and must be expended by December 15, 2021. As of June 10, 29 districts still have FFY 18 IDEA Part B 611 funds to use, totaling \$2,259,745. As of June 10, 21 districts still have FFY 18 IDEA Part B 619 funds to use, totaling \$39,078.

### **Moving forward**

As for the Monday meetings with superintendents, the WDE will transition to a schedule of every two weeks; the next COVID-19 Update with the WDE is set for 8:30-9:30 a.m. MDT on June 29. The WDE will continue to answer questions regarding operating under the current state health orders. WDE staff remain available by email or telephone to discuss any aspect of a district's adapted learning plan at any time.