

CREATING  
OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR STUDENTS TO  
KEEP WYOMING  
STRONG



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## MEMORANDUM NO. 2020-142

**TO:** School District Superintendents  
**FROM:** Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
**DATE:** September 1, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Guidance Updates

### COVID-19 GUIDANCE UPDATES

#### Testing Options for School Districts

The Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) will update its [guidance document](#) for educational institutions this week. This information is for OPTIONAL SURVEILLANCE testing for school and district staff. There are two options provided through the WDH for school districts, both utilizing saliva testing. Option #1 is currently available and is through Curative. This option requires a single point of contact at the school district to oversee incoming supply and distribution, as well as shipping back to the labs. All necessary tools, technical assistance, and training will be provided. School districts will not incur cost for shipping, materials or support. Districts wishing to move ahead with this option should provide information for a primary point of contact to Feliciano Turner at [feliciana.turner@wyo.gov](mailto:feliciana.turner@wyo.gov) to begin the process. Option #2 is through a contract with Vault for testing services that require less direct oversight by the school district. Completion of the contract may take up to six weeks. Updates will be provided as they become available. School districts may begin with Option #1, with the intention to move to Option #2 when the Vault contract is finalized.

#### White House Rapid Result Tests

Last week, President Donald Trump announced the impending availability of millions of COVID-19 "rapid result" tests. In a call with state superintendents, U.S. Department of Education (USED) Deputy Secretary Mick Zais and U.S. Air Force Brigadier General David J. Sanford, who currently serves as Deputy Director for the White House COVID-19

Response Supply Chain Task Force, provided critical information about how K-12 students will be prioritized in the testing initiative. The tests will be made available to students and staff at public and private K-12 schools, with priority going to states with both high COVID rates and large numbers of students receiving in-person or hybrid instruction. A staged distribution of about 150 million rapid response tests could begin as early as next week and continue into early 2021. Final determination of when and how many tests will be reaching Wyoming is forthcoming and will be shared as it is provided. School districts should begin to consider how they will use these tests knowing that they will be arriving in Wyoming over time, not all at once. They should also begin planning for parental permission. Rapid response has been defined as 15-30 minutes. There is no intention at this time for tests to be required for either students or staff.

### **Notifications on Closures and Tests**

In cases where a school temporarily closes for at least one-half of a school day due to weather, fire, construction problems, widespread illness, fuel shortages, or other extenuating circumstances, the temporary school closure form is required. If the health department mandates the closure due to COVID-19, districts should be prepared to upload the health order to the [Temporary School Closure Form](#). In those cases, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction may use her authority under W.S. 21-13-307(a)(ii)(B) to hold schools harmless from any daily proportional reductions of block grant funding based on utilization of the Smart Start Plan. For other closures, schools have multiple options for making up school days, including the use of previously planned in-service days.

The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) does not need to be notified of positive cases in a school. The WDH has created a [guidance document](#), as well as an [infographic](#), for school districts regarding what to expect if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 within an educational institution.

### **CARES Funding - Personal Protective Equipment Orders with Amazon**

The first round of orders has been completed including all items that were immediately available. Disinfecting wipes are in short supply and may be several weeks before arriving. A shared document is being created to help school districts in the communication and tracking of these shipments, in collaboration with the WDE. A follow up survey will be released in the coming weeks to determine additional needs that can be identified now that the school year is in progress. Those requests will be fulfilled to the extent that funding is available.

### **Moving forward**

A recording of this meeting is available upon request. The next COVID-19 Update with the WDE is set for 8:30-9:30 a.m. MDT on September 14. 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.