

Joe Guillen

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Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 8:20 AM
To: Guillen, Joe
Cc: Hand, Timothy, PED; Stewart, Ryan, PED
Subject: NMSBA Q&A

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Good morning,

Please see the PED's responses below to the questions asked during the NMSBA Convening. We thank you for your partnership and look forward to the ongoing dialogue.

Best,
Katie

- 1. Could we please ask the Secretary to address this comment by Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the CDC on Wednesday? “[W]e now have substantial data that shows that schools’ face-to-face learning can be conducted in K-12, and particularly in the elementary and middle schools, in a safe and responsible way.” He continued, “We’re not seeing intra-school transmission.”**

PED works closely with the Department of Health to monitor research studies and emerging data on the impact of COVID-19 in schools, and to tailor our protocols accordingly. One of the primary factors limiting our ability to expand in-person learning at the moment is the severe strain COVID is putting on our healthcare resources in the state. This current surge makes any addition of potential transmission risk very difficult. However, we remain cautiously optimistic that the mitigation efforts we are taking as a state to beat this current surge will put us in better position to begin expanding in-person learning eligibility in the new year. It will all depend on our success to get case rates down to a level where our hospitals are not overwhelmed and our students and staff are significantly less likely to carry the virus with them into the school building.
- 2. Can you publish a best practices lessons learned for all school Boards to learn from your site visits?**

Yes! The Curriculum and Instruction division director is working on this now and we will share a summary through the PED website.
- 3. Will high stakes spring testing be cancelled for the 20-21 school year? If not, what is the PED plan for administration given that students are not receiving in person teaching or allowed on campuses?**

We are still unsure about whether large scale assessments will be cancelled or proceed. We are currently looking at the range of assessments that could be used and how they might take place. We are also waiting for further information from the USED about potential waivers. We hope to have information for districts and schools early in the next semester.
- 4. What is the plan for PED to assist the School Districts in addressing the issue of insufficient parental involvement and support of their children?**

PED is leading a state collaboration among Human Services Department (HSD), the Early Childhood Education & Care Department (ECECD), and the Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD) to support families whose children are disengaged from school at this time. In addition, we have published a [virtual engagement guidance](#) document for educators, as well as family guidance (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)) for supporting students at home.

5. Will PED hold districts' budgets harmless for loss of student enrollment? Second Hold Harmless Question: Transportation money when no students being transported

Our intent is to work with the legislature to prevent districts from being negatively impacted by fluctuations in enrollment due to COVID, though there is no current final decision about how we do that. As for transportation, we have indications from legislative staff that they will support our intentions to use historical data to determine FY22 transportation funding. Both of these solutions will require legislative action.

6. Will the additional funds for additional learning time completely cover the cost to the district? Last time it would have cost some districts more than was provided.

The Extended Learning Time Program (ELTP) is an optional program that districts can participate in to add 10 additional school days. Each student who participates in the ELTP generates about an additional \$500.

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PLEASE NOTE: Due to the community spread potential of COVID-19 and in light of the orders by the Governor, NMPED and partners are exercising precautions by working remotely and cancelling or postponing all in-person events. At this time, state office buildings are not open to the public. However, please know that we are still available via email, phone, and virtual meetings. Please understand that these steps are being taken out of an abundance of caution and are designed to limit any negative impacts of community spreading of the virus.

