



COLORADO
Department of Education
Commissioner of Education

201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1799

July 14, 2020

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Directors,

I hope you are all doing okay during this very challenging and unprecedented time. The anxiety is certainly increasing again as we get closer to the start of school. I'm thinking of you and supporting you as you navigate these challenging jobs.

I wanted to update you on a few important things we're working on as fast as we can.

- We have been supporting CDPHE in the development of more detailed guidance for Local Public Health agencies and school districts as you work on your plans for reopening. As you know, the Governor wants to rely more on local decision-making based on local context and the presence of COVID-19 in specific communities. This new guidance is meant to provide local public health agencies guideposts for those local decisions. We are finalizing this guidance as I write this, and we are planning to make it available later this week or very early next week.
- We are also working some updates to guidance on the allowable usage of CRF and ESSER funds. As we responded to district questions about specific scenarios for use of these funds, questions arose related to the interplay of various federal regulations and US Treasury guidance, including the provisions related to backfill of lost revenue and substantially different job duties. We will have those updates for you later this week. In the meantime, it will be helpful for you to know that we have confirmed that the CRF funds can be used for salaries associated with increasing instructional hours this fall, as compared to the spring.
- Lastly, our application is available for the COVID-19 Policy Implications Stakeholder Group. In the 2020 legislative session, the Colorado General Assembly included in the School Finance Act ([HB20-1418](#)) the creation of a stakeholder group to address issues presented by the COVID-19 crisis. The purpose of the group is to review the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting disruption of the 2019-2020 school year, including student transition to remote learning and the cancellation of the state assessments, accountability, accreditation, and educator evaluation systems. The COVID-19 Policy Implications Stakeholder Group will discuss how the cancellation of state assessments will impact accountability, accreditation, and educator evaluations during the 2020-21 school year and whether future modifications are needed for these areas in response to the pandemic.

As specified in the law, the COVID-19 Policy Implications Stakeholder Group will be formed under my direction. We will begin work around the time that the 2020-2021 school year begins. By early January 2021, the findings and recommendations from the working group will be completed.

The COVID-19 Policy Implications Stakeholder Group will include a broad group of stakeholders



from all different parts of the state. The group will include representatives with diverse viewpoints about assessments, accountability, and educator effectiveness by including individuals impacted by these systems, individuals with expertise in these systems and individuals engaged in advocacy around these systems.

The COVID-19 Policy Implications Stakeholder Group will convene virtually in late August or early September and will meet regularly (bi-weekly or monthly) through December 2020 to complete its work. The final meeting schedule will be developed once the group convenes in order to respond to the needs of its members.

If you are interested in applying, or know someone who would be good for this, please submit the application. Applications must be completed by anyone interested in serving using the application link below. Please direct your nominees to complete the application no later than Tuesday, July 28th. The application link may be found [here](#), and the application will also be accessible on the [COVID-19 Policy Implications Stakeholder Group webpage](#). Applicants will be asked to provide a current resume.

I will announce the names of the members mid-August.

And most importantly, I hope you are all finding time to take a break every now and then. The pace of work is relentless, so it's important to prioritize some self care. I know it's easier said than done!

Take care of yourselves!

Katy



Katy Anthes, Ph.D.
Commissioner

