

July 20, 2020

Superintendents:

Pardon the late email, but it has been an especially hectic day. In light of the great news from the Capitol today, I did not want to wait until tomorrow to send an update.

In the Roadmap to Reopening Schools, we focused on wellness, learning, and facilities and operations. Supporting our collective efforts, our State School Board and Governor Kay Ivey have made it abundantly clear that they prioritize the health and wellness of our students, faculty, and staff; and that they want our school leaders to enjoy access to all the resources that can be provided as they prepare what is sure to be the most challenging school year that we have ever faced.

To that end, today, Governor Ivey awarded \$170 million of the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to Alabama schools -- \$70 million for health and wellness and \$100 million for remote learning devices. We are most appreciative to the Governor for her placing such a high priority on our K-12 students. These grants will help implement the recommendations in the Roadmap and help promote both wellness and high-quality learning throughout the state. The health and well-being of our students, teachers, and staff is a vital part of being able to deliver high-quality instruction to our students and, as I mentioned above, this has been a key priority of the State Board of Education.

Education Health and Wellness Grant

The Education Health and Wellness Grant allows us to implement recommendations in the Roadmap as well as the Enhanced Screening and Wellness Addendum submitted to Governor Ivey last week. Specifically, local school systems may use these funds to:

- Fund salaries or wages for health care professionals or aides to provide COVID-19 response or care,
- to contract for specimen collection and testing of COVID-19 through ADPH or another provider,
- temporary facility improvements and supplies for nurses' work areas for COVID-19 response,
- the creation of isolation areas for symptomatic students,
- screening equipment to check body temperature,
- and modification of school transportation vehicles to mitigate or isolate the spread of COVID-19.

Educational Remote Learning Devices Grant

The Educational Remote Learning Devices Grant will be used to enhance high-quality instruction by funding the purchase of electronic devices, software, related training and maintenance services, for the purpose of facilitating remote virtual learning and the overall continuity of learning in Alabama's public school systems as a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes Internet-enabled digital devices for Alabama students, expanding a local school system's remote learning plan, teacher proficiency and professional development, Internet connectivity, and the maintenance of devices.

CRF Grant Distribution

Each local education agency applying for reimbursement under the Education Remote Learning Devices Grant Program, prior to expending funds, must provide the Alabama State Department of Education:

- a remote learning plan compatible with the devices to be purchased,

- information to ensure teachers and instructors are proficient with the operations of the device including technical support,
- a plan developed by each school to ensure each student has access or availability to the internet, and a plan for maintenance of the devices, including software updates, physical repairs, and replacement of lost and damaged devices.

Funds will be awarded to local education agencies based on a weighted formula that accounts for student enrollment, poverty levels, special education students, English learner students, student proficiency levels, and the impact of COVID-19.

All local education agencies will receive a minimum of \$70,000 from the Education Health and Wellness Grant Program in addition to the amount determined by the formula. All local education agencies will receive a minimum of \$100,000 from the Education Remote Learning Devices Grant Program in addition to the amount determined by the formula.

Any contracts or other agreements entered into by ALSDE or local education agencies that utilize the Coronavirus Relief Fund provided under this memorandum of understanding can only be funded with CRF funds until December 15, 2020, at the latest. After December 15, 2020, a different funding source must be utilized for such contracts or other agreements. See Appendix A (attached).

SUPERINTENDENTS AND CSFOs WEBEX

We will be discussing these grants in more detail in a WebEx for superintendents and CSFOs on Wednesday morning at 10:00 AM.

<https://alsde.webex.com/webappng/sites/alsde/meeting/download/29438f95b2e046a8980e1f3f92f3e511?siteurl=alsde&MTID=m97a42381f160b88f46d09aec865192b>

Further information for logging into the WebEx is at the end of this email.

Guidance from ADPH for Contact Tracing, etc.

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) is developing a comprehensive document to assist principals, lead nurses, and other as they navigate the upcoming school year. We have been consulting with ADPH and expect a document to complete with decision tree/flow charts to be made available in the near future. As soon as it is complete, we will make it a second addendum to the Roadmap, and we will work with CLAS to provide any necessary training for school administrators.

Child Nutrition Program Issues

As more local school systems opt for remote-only or blended delivery models, we are receiving more questions about meal service. We will address some of these on the WebEx Wednesday, but our state CNP staff stand ready to assist you with questions. There are some unresolved questions at the Federal level, and we will pass along answers as soon as we receive guidance from USDA.

Statewide School Technology Survey for Parents

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) has partnered with the University of Alabama to conduct a statewide school technology survey. The purpose of this survey is to build a statewide repository detailing Internet connectivity and Internet-enabled digital device availability to inform decision makers as we expand remote learning capabilities and enhance high-quality instruction to students around the state.

Whether a student is attending school in a traditional classroom setting, virtually, or a blended version of traditional and virtual, it is important that we hear from parents across the state as the survey responses will impact our efforts to respond to ongoing changes relating to remote and

blended learning options throughout our state. Please take a few moments to share and complete this [statewide school technology survey](#). The deadline for completing the survey is Friday, July 31, 2020.

LEA Reopening Plans

We are collecting and reviewing Reopening Plans. I hope the recommendations provided in the [Roadmap](#) and webinars have been helpful as you develop your local reopening plans. Our staff is here to assist you with any questions you may have as it relates to reopening plans for the 2020-2021 school year. We realize your plan will be a living document and will continue to change as the scenarios and recommendations surrounding COVID-19 evolve. When you complete your plan, please submit a copy of your plan to Elisabeth Davis at edavis@alsde.edu. We have already received several.

Joint statement from AAP, AFT, NEA, and AASA

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Education Association (NEA) and The School Superintendents Association (AASA), urge a safe return to school this fall and together issued [a joint statement on July 10 on the safe return of students, teachers, and staff to schools.](#)

Mask/Facial Covering Order

In accordance with the public health order which was effective at 5 p.m. on July 16 and expires July 31, "...each person shall wear a mask or other facial covering that covers his or hers nostrils and mouth at all times when within six feet of a person from another household in any of the following places: an indoor space open to the general public, a vehicle operated by a transportation service, or an outdoor public space where 10 or more people are gathered." The facial-covering requirement does not apply to persons who are six years of age or younger or any person with a medical condition or disability that prevents him or her from wearing a facial covering. This order is applicable to all summer activities which utilize public indoor spaces on P-12 campuses, transportation vehicles including buses, and any outdoor public space where 10 or more are gathered. To review the Public Health Order in its entirety and review a list of other possible exceptions, please visit the [ADPH website](#).

As always, thank you for all you do.

Dr. Eric Mackey
State Superintendent