Important Update Regarding COVID-19

Date: August 3rd, 2020
Time: 4:00 pm CST
Agenda

❖ Welcome from the Commissioner
❖ Initial Comments from the Governor
❖ Process & Partners for Safely Returning to Schools
❖ Comments and Thoughts from the LHDs
❖ ESU Updates
❖ NDE Highlights
Return to School Plan-Guiding Principles

• **Transparent.** We will share what we know and what we don’t know. We will be clear about what we can control and what is outside of our control.

• **Equitable.** We will center decisions on what is best for all students, families, and educators, especially those most impacted by educational inequities and COVID-19.

• **Listen.** We will bring together diverse stakeholders and experts to a) understand the realities on the ground and b) surface creative solutions.

• **Safety first.** We will leverage science, data, and public health leadership to inform the choices we make.

• **Decisive.** Given the size and scope of the challenge, we must move deliberately and make tough choices. We will make mistakes, and we will adapt quickly as variables on the ground change.
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Leveled Guidance

**Foundational Ideals:**
- Safe
- Transparent
- Equitable
- Decisive

**Minimal Spread**
- Enhanced screening
- At home screening procedures
- Planning for responding to positive cases

**Minimal to Moderate**
- Face coverings when feasible*
- Physical distancing
- Limited gatherings and reduced size
- Planning for responding to positive cases

**Moderate**
- Considerations of alternative scheduling to reduce number of students in building
- Pivot to hybrid model of instruction

**Significant**
- Schools return to remote learning environment
- Extracurricular activities and athletics discontinue

**Color Codes:**
- Green: Minimal Spread
- Yellow: Minimal to Moderate
- Orange: Moderate
- Red: Significant
Roles and Responsibilities for Safely Reopening Schools

• Local Health Department (LHD)
• Local School District / School Authority for Non-Public
• Department of Health and Human Services
• Department of Education
• UNMC and other consulting partners
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Local Health Departments Roles

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Working with Schools

Below are shared core principles that local health departments (LHDs) in Nebraska consider when making recommendations and advising our local schools about how to safely reopen and stay open during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- LHDs statewide are monitoring and evaluating public health data related to COVID-19 in our local jurisdictions daily.
- LHDs want Nebraska schools to open and stay open. We recognize the unique nature of schools and the education system’s role in the economic and mental wellbeing of children and adults.
- LHDs work closely with our local schools and ESUs to develop reasonable plans for social distancing and masking in school facilities to reduce the spread of COVID-19. These plans need to be locally-responsive and aim to create school environments that will minimize the impact on the school community and the student learning experience when students or staff test positive for COVID-19. Key recommendations that these plans will include when community spread is occurring include:
  - All staff and students wear cloth face coverings over their nose and mouth whenever possible.
  - General physical distancing of 6 feet between individuals whenever possible.
  - Frequent hand washing and/or hand sanitizing.
- When a positive COVID-19 case is confirmed in a school, that individual will be excluded and allowed to return based upon current guidance from CDC at the time. LHDs will work with schools to consider the following questions when determining how that case will impact others in their classroom and/or school building:
  - What is the level of community spread outside the school building?
  - Was the individual with COVID-19 wearing a mask most of the time?
  - Were other students and staff who were within 6 feet of the individual with COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes masked?
  - Was the individual with COVID-19 part of a cohort within the building or did they interact with a large number of students and staff throughout their day?
  - To what extent is the school community implementing other non-pharmaceutical interventions (hand washing, hand sanitizers, etc.)?

* The answers to these questions will determine 1) the number of close contacts, 2) if the close contacts who are not symptomatic may stay in the classroom, and 3) the number of other students and staff who will need to be quarantined.
Local Health Departments (LHDs) consider the latest scientific evidence when approaching any public health issue—including case investigations related to COVID-19.

LHDs continue to monitor the fast-emerging science about how COVID-19 is spread and contained. We also consider applicable plans and guidance of valued experts in our state and nationally. Finally, all of our case investigations take the specifics of every situation into account.

In a K-12 school setting, when everyone has been appropriately wearing a mask or face covering over their nose and mouth and practicing physical distancing, it is less likely that a whole class will need to quarantine and be excluded from in-person school activities.
Local Health Departments Approach to COVID-19 Cases in Schools

- Risk Level Discussions
- Understanding guidance on opening

Joined by
Michele Bever: South Heartland DHD
Myra Stoney: Southwest Nebraska PHD
Jeremy Eschliman: Two Rivers PH
Kim Showalter: Public Health Solution
Kim Engle: Panhandle PHD
Teresa Anderson: Central District HD
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ESU Update

• Update regarding PPE

Joined by Mr. Craig Peterson
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NDE Highlights

Coming Soon:
• CTE Compendium
• Fine Arts Compendium
Student Attendance and Human Capital Considerations-NDE regulations

Joined by Brian Halstead

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NDE Highlights

- NE P-EBT Project Update
  Joined by Sharon Davis
  Sharon.l.davis@Nebraska.gov

- Total number of students who received benefits: 81,480
- Unmatched FRL students: 1,628

- Requests to verify FRL eligibility
Wrap-UP

• As always, visit the www.education.ne.gov/publichealth page for additional information.

• Staff at the NDE are working to address key FAQs and other topics as we know them.

• Please continue to submit your questions to https://www.education.ne.gov/publichealth/contact/
Thank you!