



COLORADO
Department of Education
Commissioner of Education

201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1799

March 17, 2020

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Directors,

We hope that the decision around state assessments and accountability eased some of your immediate concerns. I know there are still lots of questions -- we are working to get you guidance as quickly as possible. Specifically, we know many of you are still grappling with decisions on when to close schools and how long to keep them closed. We are working closely with the Governor's Office and CDPHE to develop recommendations based on the amount of community transmission of COVID-19 cases in Colorado.

At this time, we expect the Governor to make an announcement by Friday about the best timing for school closures based on recommendations from the state's top health and epidemiology officials. In the meantime, please know that you can work with your local public health department if you would like to make a decision earlier. You always have the authority to close schools.

While the health and safety of students and communities is our top concern right now, I know you all share my desire to bridge the learning loss for students in one way or another and that you are working through the challenges you face on this.

Meanwhile, my staff and I are working day and night to answer your questions and develop clear guidance -- that is not overly burdensome -- on the long-term policy implications of extended school closures.

Please give us a little time to sort through these questions so that we don't make hasty decisions or provide unclear guidance. Now that most school buildings are closed for some time, we have a little time to work on these details together. I will be reaching out to my Superintendent's Advisory Council and my Rural Council for guidance on these topics and more.

- Educator evaluations
- Instructional time waivers*
- Supporting special education students
- Use of Tabor Reserves
- Graduation implications
- License renewal
- Grant processes and funding
- And other data collection and grant monitoring cycles

**We are working on the details of statewide guidance for waivers on instructional time and days. You do not need to send us waiver requests right now. We are considering a blanket waiver.*

Lastly, I am doing my very best to keep up with all of your questions and feedback. I am committed to keeping the lines of communications open with all districts, but I may not be able to get back to each and every one of you individually. If it's urgent for you to reach me, please reach out. Whenever possible,



however, please work through either your [field services representative](#) or the appropriate member of my [executive team](#). They are feeding all questions and concerns to me through daily briefings.

Thank you for all you are doing during this unprecedented time!

My best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katy Anthes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Katy Anthes, Ph.D.
Commissioner

