

Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D., Commissioner

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NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

March 18, 2020

To: Nebraska Public School Superintendents, Non-Public School Administrators, & ESU Administrators

CC: State Board of Education, Commissioner's Cabinet and NDE Leadership

From: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Commissioner of Education

I couldn't sleep last night, wondering how to answer all of the questions I've received and trying to figure out how to address the complexities of the moment. Please do not let a single thing hold you back from the instincts of doing the right thing. Take this time to energize your staff members and empower them as you should be empowered to make a difference now.

I know we have complex questions about how to manage special education needs. We are working on the guidance and will release it very soon. I do not want anything to slow your progress on serving students. I have asked school attorneys to gather their questions and get them to me by 3:00 PM today (March 18) so I can address this at the national level. I will do so. I have direct connections to the highest levels at the USDOE. Governor Ricketts will also take our questions to Vice President Pence. We are very well connected and I need you to trust that I have you all covered. Please do not get stuck in the weedy details. Get students out of buildings and empower teachers to do enrichment and education. We have to build the infrastructure to serve each student and this is no time to be caught in bureaucracy. Doing your best is the best defense. Again, I got your back on this.

Matt