



## **Important Update Regarding COVID-19**

**Date: April 6, 2020**

**Time: 4:00 pm CST**

# Agenda

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- ❖ **Welcome from the Commissioner**
- ❖ Initial Comments from the Governor
- ❖ Comments from Dr. Gary Anthone
- ❖ Panelists Discussions with the Commissioner

# Commissioner's Welcome

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## Zoom Protocols Reminder

- We'll use Zoom as a webinar format
- There will be no chat feature
- Only “panelists” are able to speak

**Meeting is every Monday at 4:00 pm**

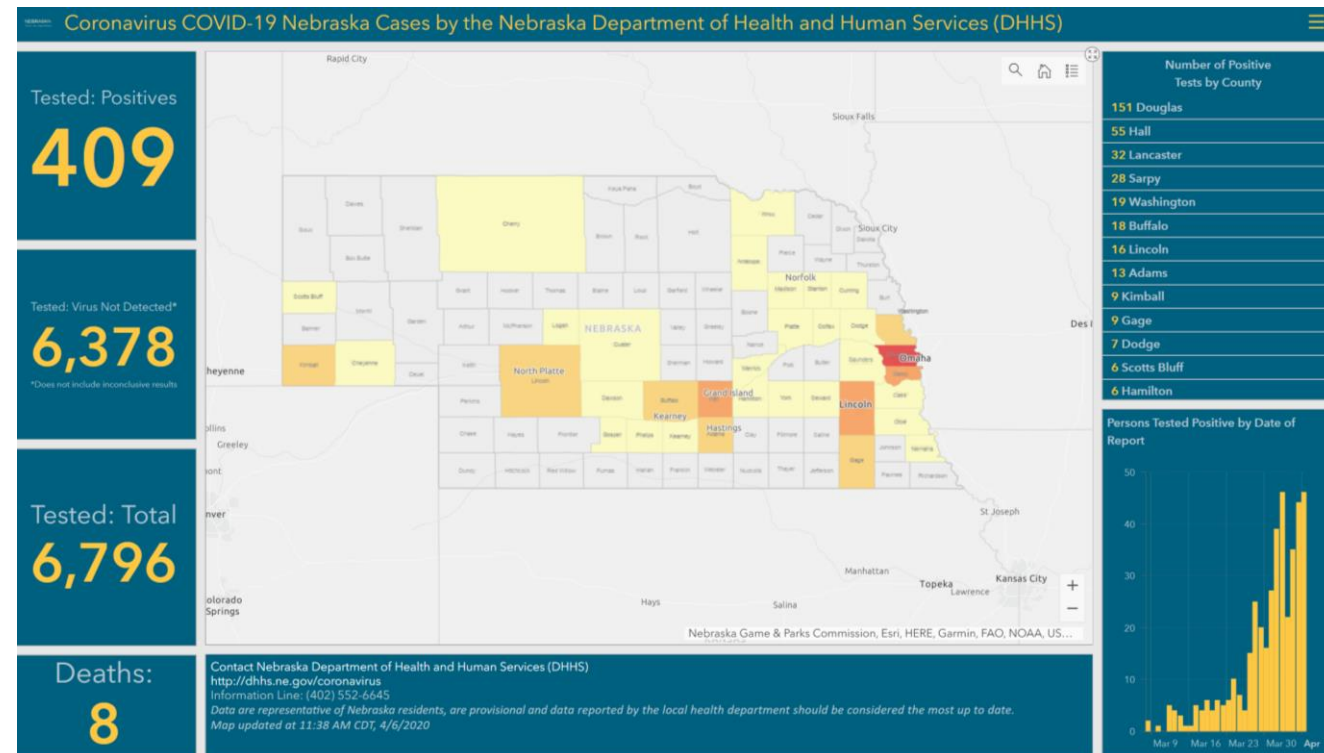
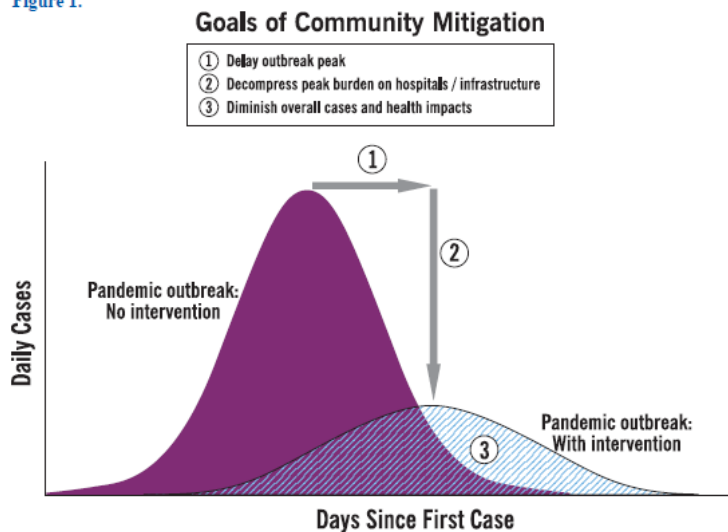


I will teach you in a room.  
I will teach you now on Zoom.  
I will teach you in your house.  
I will teach you with a mouse.  
I will teach you here and there.  
I will teach you because I care.  
So just do your very best.  
And do not worry about the rest.

# Agenda

- ❖ Welcome from the Commissioner
- ❖ Initial Comments from the Governor
- ❖ Statewide Overview from Dr. Gary Anthone
  - ❖ Update on Nebraska cases
- ❖ Panelist Discussions

Figure 1.



# Agenda

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- ❖ Welcome by Commissioner
- ❖ Initial Comments by Governor
- ❖ Comments by Dr. Gary Anthone
- ❖ **Panelist Discussions with the Commissioner**

# Topics In This Briefing

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- Discussion with Local Health Officials
  - Current DHM Orders
  - Projections for Summer and Fall
- Questions from the Field (ESU and Commissioner's Advisory Group)
  - ESU/ESUCC Summary of Weekly Questions
  - Commissioner's Advisory Group Themes
- Education-Related Topics
  - State Board Emergency Resolution on COVID-19 (Commissioner)
  - Graduation Requirements (Cory Epler)
  - IDEA Considerations (Amy Rhone)
  - Food Security (Sharon Davis)
- Recovery Response Efforts
  - Nebraska Impact's COVID-19 Relief Fund (Governor and First Lady)
  - Regional Response Alignment Efforts

# State and Local Public Health Officials

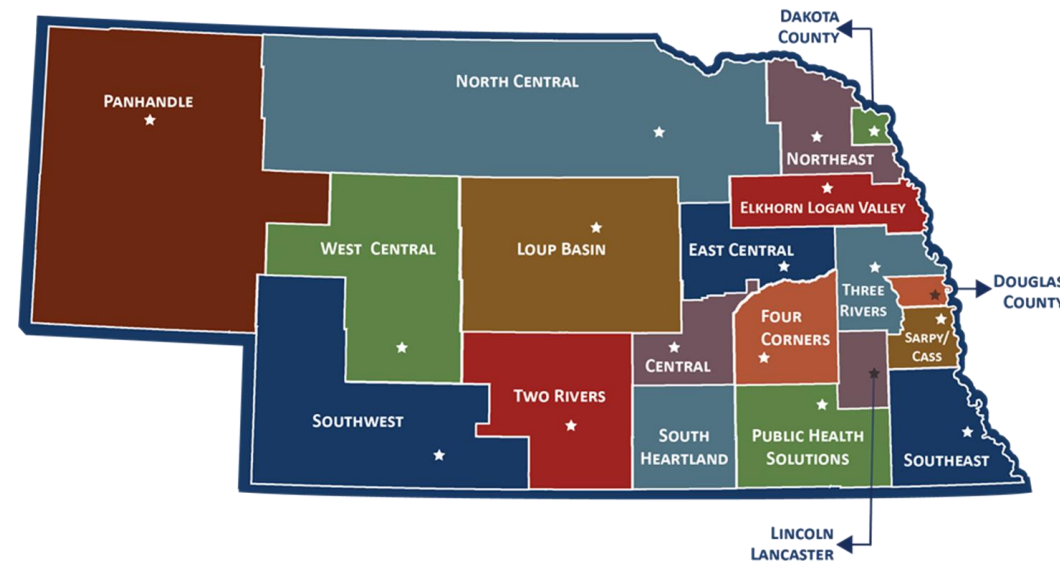
- Directed Health Measures (DHM)
  - Statewide and Local
- Cases and Concerns for Schools and Communities
- What Should Schools Know?
- What Can Schools do to Help?

Joined by the following panelists today:

Gary Anthone, Chief Medical Officer

Terra Uhing, Three Rivers

Kim Engle, Panhandle



# Using ESU/Regional Conversations to Organize Questions from the Field

Discussion with the Commissioner and Educational Service Unit leaders

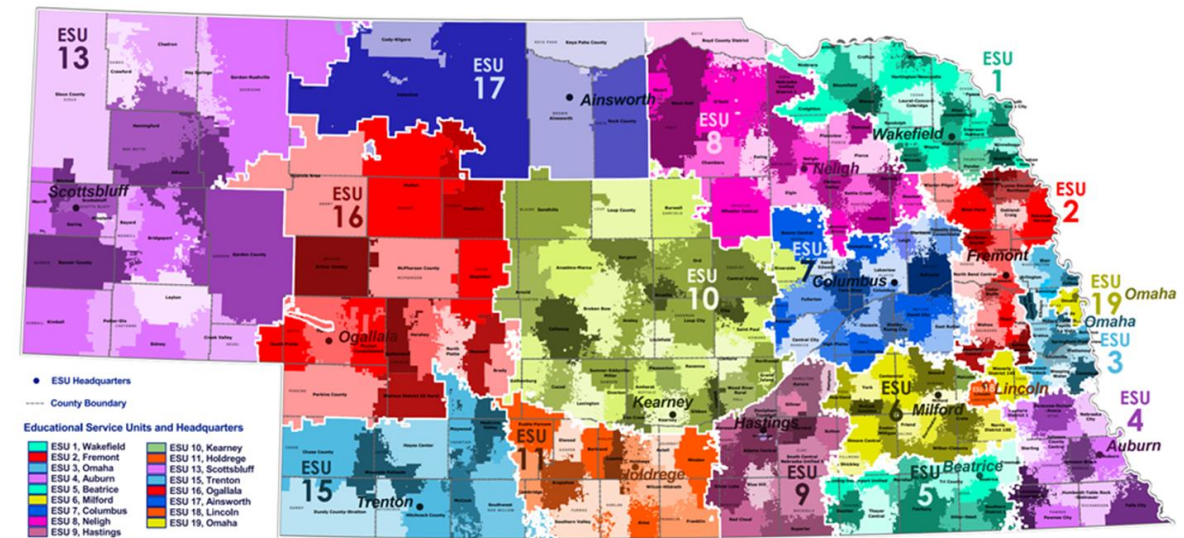
1. Statewide DHM Clarifications
2. Certificated Evaluations
3. End of Year Reporting:
  - Attendance
  - Hours
  - Other

Joined by:

Larianne Polk, ESU 7  
Andrew Dick, ESU 13  
Dan Schnoes, ESU 3



## 2017-18 Nebraska Public School Districts and Nebraska Educational Service Units





# Commissioner's Advisory Group Themes

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- Impacts on Food Programs/Employee Safety
  - Are school food workers essential?
- Summer School — (Joined by Jami Jo Thompson, Norfolk PS)
- Fall Impacts?
- Federal CARES Act Provisions
  - Bus and Food Contracts
- Broadband/Infrastructure Access
- Finance Impacts
  - Federal, State, and Local Revenues
- Graduation Guidance

# Non-Public School Concerns

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- Several are Similar to Public
  - Rule/Regulation Flexibility
  - Student/Teacher Impacts
- Special Education is a Shared Area of Concern
- Weekly calls will be scheduled with Non-Public school leaders to discuss issues specific to these needs.

# Rule 18 – Interim Program Schools

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- Challenges with residential treatment
- Contracted Services
- Special Education
- Health/Safety
- Alternatives for educational opportunities vary
- Data and shared student responsibilities (Especially in transition between settings)
- Weekly calls are established

# Education Topics

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- Each week we will try to address some of the questions that have surfaced through the ESU/regional conversations and other forums.
- As always, visit the [www.education.ne.gov/publichealth](http://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.

# State Board Report: COVID-19 Resolution



Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D., Commissioner

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## Resolution on the Nebraska Department of Education's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Effects on Nebraska Schools

**WHEREAS,** The world is experiencing a pandemic of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), affecting at least 181 countries and regions with over 1,000,000 confirmed cases and over 53,000 deaths resulting from this novel virus; the United States has the highest number of confirmed cases of any country, with over 245,000 confirmed cases and nearly 6,000 deaths; in Nebraska, there are over 250 confirmed cases and at least six deaths;

**WHEREAS,** Commissioner Blomstedt is providing statewide leadership and coordination efforts with the Governor, Chief Medical Officer, and other leaders for all Nebraska communities, schools (including alternative schools, exempt schools, interim-program schools, nonpublic schools, public schools, and schools operating under special purpose agreements), educators, administrators, school boards, clients, and citizens, including the recommendations and directives for schools to operate without students in their buildings;

**WHEREAS,** The mission of the Nebraska Department of Education is to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living and through the equity issues faced in this pandemic the Commissioner is requiring schools to provide a continuity of learning plan for all students, while coordinating with state and national leaders to ensure a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for those students receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);

**WHEREAS,** The Commissioner worked expediently and voluntarily to allow for the staff of the Nebraska Department of Education to work remotely or to modify work schedules so as to reduce staff members' risk of exposure to COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS,** The Commissioner serves as the executive officer of the State Board of Education; now, therefore, be it

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To lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living.



**RESOLVED,** That the State Board of Education affirms the actions of the Commissioner to protect the public health of the people of Nebraska, maintain the continuity of education of students, maintain the continuity of services of the Nebraska Department of Education, and support the wellbeing of the staff of the Nebraska Department of Education;

**RESOLVED,** That the State Board of Education further directs the Commissioner, under the authority of the rules and regulations administered by this Board, to facilitate broad flexibility for the operation of schools while asking schools to be cognizant of their students, families, and staff most in need of equitable supports; to support the use of continuity of learning plans as the approach to granting authority for schools to manage the needs of their schools and local communities; and to continue working with the Governor and other state and national leaders to provide broad flexibility under the Governor's emergency powers in the administration of statutes pertaining to the operation of schools during and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

**RESOLVED,** That the State Board of Education encourages creative solutions to the complex problems faced by our state, communities, schools, educators, administrators, school boards, clients, and citizens;

**RESOLVED,** That the State Board of Education grants the Commissioner the authority to submit emergency waivers to the federal government and apply for federal grants whenever Nebraska is eligible to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the people of Nebraska;

**RESOLVED,** That the State Board of Education grants the Commissioner the authority to manage the office environments of the Nebraska Department of Education in the safest manner while maintaining a continuity of operations for essential functions, including flexibility of staff leave and work environments; further, the State Board of Education supports the Commissioner in the delegation of duties to agency leadership and staff within the Nebraska Department of Education consistent with emergency needs; and

**RESOLVED,** That the State Board of Education recognizes the intentional and purposeful work of the staff of the Nebraska Department of Education through the COVID-19 pandemic and recognizes the additional demands on their personal time and efforts and the unknown demands forthcoming.

Signed on behalf of the Nebraska State Board of Education, this 3rd day of April 2020.

Maureen Nickels, President

Patsy Koch Johns, Vice President

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# Guidance for the Class of 2020

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- Districts should review the status of each senior to determine the extent which students have met graduation requirements.
- It is important to understand the needs of students and have, to the extent possible, a plan to help each student complete these requirements during the remainder of the school year.
- Course grades and promotion for the Class of 2020 are determined by local school board policies.
- Districts have latitude in determining what grades to award, if any, for coursework and what coursework is required for credit.

# Class of 2020 - Scenarios

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It is likely in your Class of 2020, students are in the following categories:

1. Students who currently have attained the district graduation requirements, which include the state-required credits.
2. Students who have completed the state-required graduation credits but have not completed all the district requirements.
3. Students who have not met the minimum state-required graduation credits but were on track to meet those requirements through current coursework prior to entering an alternate learning environment.
4. Students who are further behind in meeting high school graduation requirements and who would not have been able to meet the state graduation requirements with the normal coursework currently taken prior to the end of the 2019-20 school year.

For questions, contact Cory Epler, Academic Officer:

[cory.epler@nebraska.gov](mailto:cory.epler@nebraska.gov)

# IDEA Considerations

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- Graduating with a regular high school diploma or reaching the maximum age of eligibility both result in termination of a student's eligibility for Special Education (IDEA) services.
- IEP team must meet to review the student's status and issue the appropriate coding for the student, a reasonable time before the student's eligibility is terminated.
  - These meetings may be held via the telephone or through a virtual platform (e.g. Zoom, Google, etc.) and should include the student (if possible).
- The school district must also provide the student with a summary of performance prior to graduation or ending services because of age.
- Some IEP teams may have already provided a Notice of Graduation or Notice of Ending Services Due to Age to certain students.
- The NDE recommends that school districts make every effort to complete these steps in a timely manner.

For questions related to these requirements, contact Amy Rhone, Administrator of the Office of Special Education: [amy.rhone@nebraska.gov](mailto:amy.rhone@nebraska.gov)



# Food Security-Meals To You

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- Eligibility:

- Have at least 50% of enrollment eligible for free or reduced-priced meals
- Be closed for at least four weeks, and
- Fall under the designation of rural (can be checked here: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/rural-designation>).

- Districts not “rural” can qualify if:

- Transportation barriers
- Contracting with a mass caterer is not viable
- For districts that meet the criteria
  - Administrative support and technical assistance
  - Connect to vendors with capacity to purchase, package, and deliver a box of meals containing 10 or more meals that meet SFSP nutrition requirements
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#).



<https://mealstoyou.org/>

# SNAP Benefits

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- Maximum benefits
  - Emergency allotment to households not currently receiving maximum benefits
  - Waiting on approval (soon)
- P-EBT
  - Value of 5 breakfast and 5 lunches per child in household
  - Amount based on reimbursement value for these meals
  - Anticipate issue of benefits in May

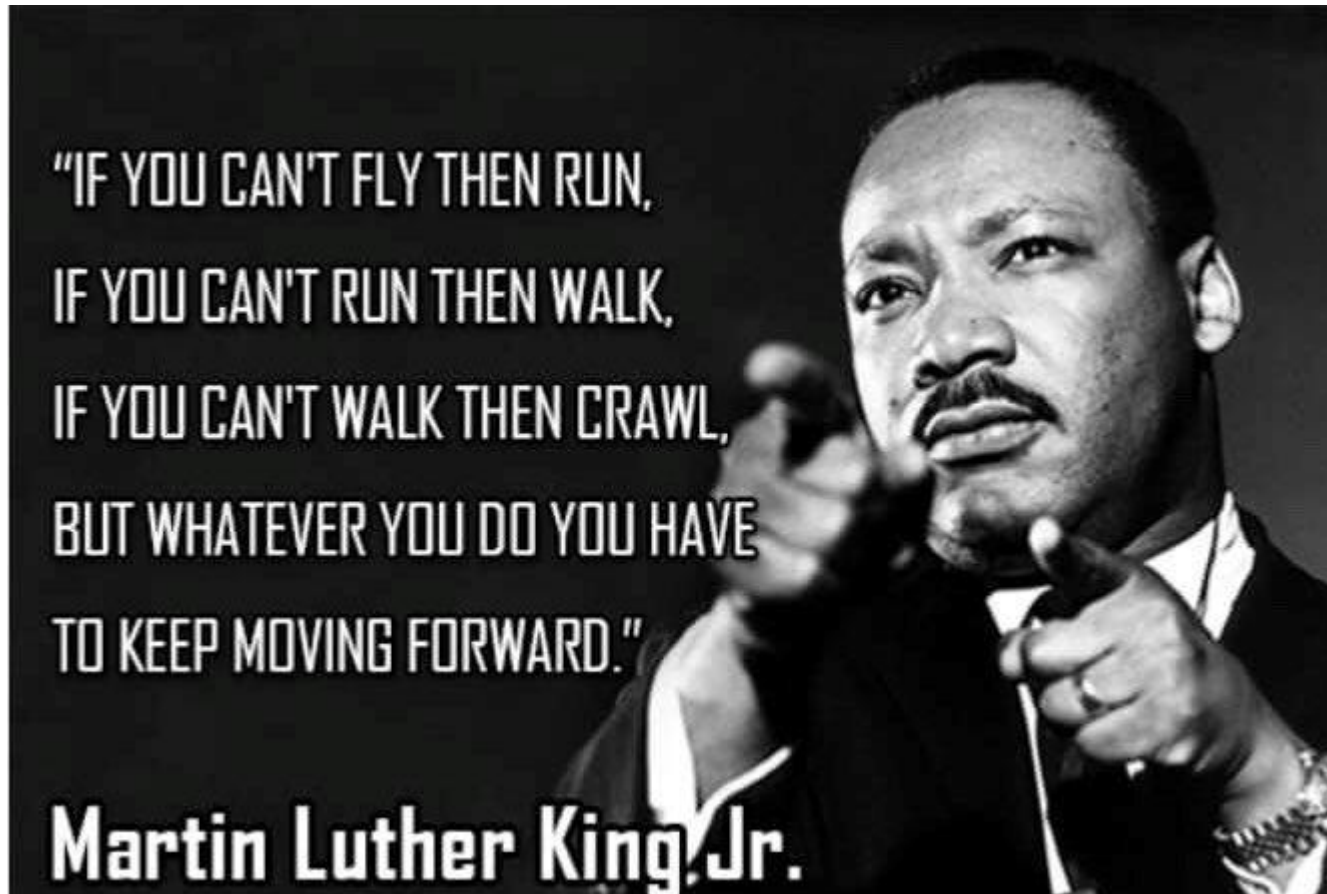
For more information contact:

Sharon Davis

[sharon.davis@nebraska.gov](mailto:sharon.davis@nebraska.gov)

# Wrap-Up

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"IF YOU CAN'T FLY THEN RUN,  
IF YOU CAN'T RUN THEN WALK,  
IF YOU CAN'T WALK THEN CRAWL,  
BUT WHATEVER YOU DO YOU HAVE  
TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD."

**Martin Luther King Jr.**

Please continue to submit your questions to  
<https://www.education.ne.gov/publichealth/contact/>



**Thank you!**