



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

July 28, 2021

TO: Complex Area Superintendents
Principals (All)

FROM: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto
Superintendent

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "CK", written over the name of the Superintendent.

SUBJECT: **Distance Learning for SY 2021-2022 Guidance Update**

The Hawaii Department of Education (Department) is focused on full in-person daily learning for the school year (SY) 2021-2022. Schools have been working diligently in preparations to welcome back all students to campus. Please continue to communicate with your families the importance and benefits of access to a complete school experience for their children and that schools are ready to safely welcome students back to campus.

My May 14, 2021 memorandum to principals, **In-Person Learning for School Year 2021-22** stated, "... schools will not be offering a full distance learning model as an alternative to in-person learning for the school year 2021-2022." A [Board of Education resolution](#) was passed on July 15, 2021, that included distance learning expectations including the following:

The Department was directed to:

- "develop and maintain an easily accessible listing of schools that offer distance learning programs along with a description of the distance learning program and whether those schools are currently accepting geographic exceptions to make it easy for families to find distance learning programs, which shall be available by July 21, 2021, on the Department's website and shall be regularly updated;"

The HIDOE has met this requirement by posting the information on the HIDOE website.
<https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/Pages/DistanceLearning.aspx>

The Department was also directed to:

- “research and develop a plan to offer distance learning at the state or complex area levels for the 2021-2022 school year rather than on a school-by-school basis in order to pool resources and expertise and reduce the burden on individual schools; and...”
- “report to the Board on July 29, 2021, with plans to offer distance learning at the state or complex area levels for the 2021-2022 school year, including a communication plan to students, parents and guardians, teachers, and principals;”

Individual schools are not required to provide a distance learning program, rather the state or complex area levels are required to provide a distance learning plan. In late spring 2021, the HIDOE Leadership determined that the focus would be on full in-person learning for the SY 2021-22. Prior to this decision, schools, complex areas, and state offices have had discussions around possible distance learning in anticipation of opening school in the fall. Some schools and complex areas planned distance learning programs for students based on needs, case-by-case, or as determined by the educator’s professional judgment and available resources, and others determined it was not feasible due to low demand or capacity.

Complex areas and schools that have previously planned to provide distance learning programs shall proceed with their plans. These plans have been approved by the complex area superintendents and submitted to the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design. If there becomes an overflow of needs that cannot be accommodated in the other complex areas, that complex area superintendent shall contact Teri Ushijima at teri.ushijima@k12.hi.us and ocidhelp@k12.hi.us to discuss whether their needs can be included in the state distance learning program.

For the complex areas and schools that did not plan to provide distance learning programs, the HIDOE will partner with these complex areas "to pool resources and expertise and reduce the burden on individual schools," in accordance with the Board resolution, to provide a limited distance learning option. These complex areas currently include: Farrington-Kaiser-Kalani; Hilo-Waiakea; Castle-Kahuku; Baldwin-Kekaulike-Maui; Hana-Lahainaluna-Lanai-Molokai (elementary grades only); Kailua-Kalaheo (elementary grades only); Campbell-Kapolei (middle only); and Kauai-Kapaa-Waimea (elementary only).

The following is the guidance for the State Distance Learning Program for SY 2021-22. Guidance is provided for all schools and specifically for those in the complex areas that did not plan to provide distance learning programs.

For All Schools:

1. Upon receiving a parent/guardian request verbally or in writing, the principal/designee shall ask for the reason a distance learning program is being requested and determine if the reason falls within one of the categories listed below:
 - (a) The parent does not feel comfortable sending their child to campus and would like to keep their child at home;

- (b) The child performed well academically, socially, and emotionally in a distance learning setting;
 - (c) The child has underlying medical conditions which place them in the high-risk category for serious illness; or
 - (d) The child would be able to get courses from another school or complex that their school does not offer.
2. A meeting shall be scheduled with the parent/guardian to discuss concerns and look at:
- a. **EL, IEP, 504:** If the student has been identified as EL, or has an IEP/504 plan, then a meeting will be arranged with the school team to discuss if the student learning plan/IEP can be provided in a distance learning program including social and emotional learning needs.
 - 1. [Please see the July 26, 2021 memo](#) regarding Distance Learning and Implementation of Individualized Education Programs and Section 50 Plans for guidance on the questions the team should consider when making the determination for distance learning.
 - 2. Team makes determination.
 - b. **General Education:** Evaluate a student's past performance (academic, social, emotional) in distance learning using available data such as attendance, formative assessments, grades, report card GLO marks or comments, Panorama SEL survey, and teacher observation. A student is a likely candidate if past performance has shown they can be successful in a distance learning environment.

When meeting with the parent/guardian, discuss the following:

- 1. Review the benefits of full in-person learning
 - 2. Describe the distance learning program and limitations (e.g. only core course for grades K to 8 and limited electives for high school) and the parent/guardian expectations
 - Use existing complex area/school documents, or
 - If the complex area/school did not plan to have a program, use the following for the state distance learning program:
 - [K12/STRIDE Program for K-8](#)
 - [HIDOE State Elementary DL Program \(grades K-5\) July 23, 2021](#)
 - [HIDOE State Middle DL Program \(grades 6-8\) July 23, 2021](#)
 - [HIDOE State High DL Program \(grades 9-12\) July 23, 2021](#)
3. Principal/Designee makes a determination to approve or disapprove.
- a. If disapproved:
 - 1. The principal will provide information/data and rationale for professional judgment that the decision was based on.
 - 2. Welcome the student for full in-person learning.

3. If the parent disagrees, a written appeal can be submitted to CAS within 10 days. CAS decision is final.
- b. If approved:
1. Complex areas/schools share and provide relevant information for the existing program, or
 2. If the complex area/schools did not plan to provide distance learning programs, they may take the following actions for the state distance learning program referral:
 - The principal will have parents sign [the Distance Learning Parent Agreement Final July 27, 2021](#)
 - The principal reminds parents that the program has limited capacity.
 - School submits necessary student information to OCID via State Distance Learning Program Form (<https://bit.ly/3ztD2GH>).
 - OCID confirms student participation with the School's Point of Contact.
 - School Point of Contact will be the liaison between OCID and families.

Should you have any questions, please contact Raymond Fujino, Administrative Services Assistant Director (TA) for the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design, at (808) 305-9641 or via email at raymond.fujino@k12.hi.us.

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c: Deputy Superintendent
Assistant Superintendents
Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design