Date: March 30, 2020

To: Local Educational Agency (LEA) Representatives

From: California Department of Education (CDE) —
California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) Team

During this time the CDE places the highest priority on the health and safety of students and staff. We understand that LEAs would like specific guidance on data submission as it relates to the upcoming End-of-Year (EOY) submissions and we appreciate your dedication. The CDE continues to work with state leaders and the federal government to determine which data are required during these unusual times. To that end, this FLASH communicates what is known at this time.

COVID-19 Guidance and Resources

Information and resources regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) and California’s response can be found on the CDE's homepage at https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/coronavirus.asp. LEAs are encouraged to check this page often, as it is updated on an ongoing basis. Recent posts provide guidance on distance learning, school meals, special education, and child care and student supervision.

In addition, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) specifically on closure of schools in response to COVID-19, Form J-13A, the reporting of attendance for apportionment, and instructional time can be found on the CDE’s Website under Finance & Grants, Allocations & Apportionments at https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/pa/covidfaqs.asp.

Preliminary Federal Approval of Testing and Accountability Waivers for 2019–20 School Year

State Superintendent Tony Thurmond sent out a press release on March 27, 2020 announcing that California received preliminary federal approval to waive assessment accountability requirements for the 2019–20 school year. As part of the process, the CDE is holding a public comment period for all stakeholders and LEAs through April 15, 2020. The CDE will review the comments to help inform California’s decisions moving forward about how best to support students and educators during this crisis. We will keep you informed of any decisions made with regard to the impact of this waiver on data collection and reporting.
COVID-19 Guidance for K–12 School Related to CALPADS Data Collection

The collection of data stems from state and federal reporting and accountability requirements, as well as operational needs. Therefore, any changes to the CALPADS EOY submissions that support mandated state and federal reporting and accountability requirements will depend on larger policy decisions and actions taken by the Governor, State Legislature, and the United States Department of Education. The CDE will communicate any impact to the CALPADS EOY submissions once the larger policy decisions are made.

With regard to operational needs, it is important for LEAs to continue to maintain CALPADS data, such as updating CALPADS with student enrollments and exits, even during school closures. The CDE has provided general guidance that LEAs should continue to communicate with students and their families during school closures and to provide opportunities for learning. During the course of these communications, LEAs (if staff are able to work) should continue to enroll new students and exit transferring students in their local student information systems, as applicable, update CALPADS with those enrollment/exits, and continue to resolve any concurrent enrollment anomalies within CALPADS. LEAs should continue to follow those enrollments with other student information that is known, through the Student Information (SINF), Student Program (SPRG), Student English Learner Acquisition (SELA), and Special Education (SPED) files.

With regard to collecting student attendance, the CDE has provided a series of FAQs specific to the reporting of attendance for apportionment purposes (refer to https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/pa/covidfaqs.asp). LEAs do not claim attendance for apportionment for days that schools are closed. Furthermore, per the FAQ, "Although LEAs are encouraged to provide independent study or other types of distance learning to the extent possible while closed, no attendance for apportionment should be claimed for days that school was closed." The collection of chronic absenteeism data in CALPADS through the Student Attendance Summary (STAS) file is based on the attendance data LEAs collect for apportionment purposes, and the CDE is not requiring any changes to how attendance data is collected. Therefore, LEAs are not expected to collect "attendance" for chronic absenteeism purposes during school closures, even if distance learning instruction is occurring. The CDE also recognizes that the COVID-19 may have impacted student attendance prior to the school closures and will likely continue to impact student attendance should schools reopen this year. As noted above, the collection of chronic absenteeism data in the CALPADS EOY submission, and any adjustments to how the metric is calculated based on the data collected, are larger policy decisions that have yet to be determined.