



SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL DISTRICT MEMORANDA

ed.sc.gov



March 23, 2021

Missed last week's memos?

All SCDE weekly memo communications are archived [here](#). Individual memos can be found on the [School District Memoranda Archive](#).

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced on March 19, 2021 that it has updated school guidance to incorporate the [latest science](#) on safe school operation during COVID-19. Most notably, CDC has updated its guidelines to revise the physical distancing recommendations to reflect at least 3 feet between students in classrooms (with universal mask use) and provide clearer guidance when a greater distance (such as 6 feet) is recommended. CDC states that correct and consistent use of masks is critical to reducing risk of transmission in schools, particularly in schools that use less than 6 feet between students in classrooms.

CDC made this decision based on new studies it released today that indicate that limited in-school transmission occurs in schools that implement universal mask use with other mitigation strategies, even those with less than 6 feet between students. According to CDC's announcement, the science from these and other studies indicates that using a distance of at least 3 feet between students in classrooms could be a feasible option for schools providing full in-person instruction, provided universal mask requirements are in place.

CDC's [Operational Strategy for K–12 Schools through Phased Mitigation](#) is now updated online to reflect this revised guidance in physical distancing. In addition, the CDC made the following updates to its guidance:

- Clarified that ventilation is a component of strategies to clean and maintain healthy facilities.
- Removed recommendation for physical barriers.
- Clarified the role of community transmission levels in decision-making.
- Added guidance on interventions when clusters occur.

Additional Information from DHEC

The CDC updated its guidance on school operations on Friday, March 19, 2021 to include the option of reduced social distancing from 6 feet to 3 feet. However, the CDC states that 6 feet of social distance is still the safest option, and the definition of a close contact (any person within 6 feet of a positive COVID case for a cumulative 15 minutes within 24 hours) has not changed. The DHEC Interim School Guidance, which references the CDC's preventive actions, recommends that social distancing be implemented to the extent possible and will, therefore, not be changed.

Likewise, there is no change in guidance on the use of Plexiglass in Schools to prevent close contacts, and districts and schools may continue their use. If individuals are within 6 feet of a positive case without proper use of a physical barrier and mask use, they will be considered a close contact.

COVID-19 CASES

COVID-19 Cases Associated with Staff and Students

DHEC began reporting positive COVID-19 cases in K-12 schools on September 4, 2020. Since that time, there have been **15,396** [positive cases among K-12 students and staff](#) who attended school face to face during their infectious period. During that same time period (9/4/2020 to 3/23/2021) DHEC has reported **460,277** [positive cases among all South Carolinians](#).

This means that positive cases among K-12 students and staff who attended school account for **3.3%** of South Carolina's total since K-12 positive case reporting began. Public and private K-12 students and staff make up approximately one fifth of South Carolina's total population.

[COVID-19 Cases Associated with Staff & Students](#) (as of 3/21/2021)

[Recent Disease Activity, by County Report](#) (as of 3/17/2021)

GRANTS

21st Century Community Learning Centers Subgrant Opportunity

AUDIENCE: District Superintendents, Principals, Public Information Officers

CONTACT: Joyce Patterson, jypatterson@ed.sc.gov or Amy Bosch, abosch@ed.sc.gov

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) announces that the 2021-22 Request for Proposals for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) subgrant program is now available online. Approximately \$4.5 million in funding will be distributed on a competitive basis and the deadline to apply is **May 3, 2021**.

For this funding round, the SCDE will fund public school districts, community-based organizations, Indian tribes or tribal organizations, and other public or private entities. All applicants must meet the criteria of a joint applicant to be considered for funding. Applicants must propose to establish or expand activities in community learning centers that provide opportunities for academic enrichment and tutorial services; offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities; and offer families of students served opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

[21st Century Community Learning Centers Subgrant Opportunity - Memo](#) PDF (139 KB)

RECOVERY PLANS

Academic Recovery Plans

AUDIENCE: District Superintendents, District Instructional Leaders

CONTACT: David Mathis, dmathis@ed.sc.gov

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) recognizes the interruptions in learning

that districts have faced during the past year and remain committed to assisting districts in accelerating learning for all students. The SCDE is requesting that each district develop an actionable plan that addresses unfinished learning experienced by students.

All districts are required to submit an academic recovery plan detailing goals and strategies for providing annual growth in English language arts (ELA) and math for all students and catch-up growth for those most impacted by the pandemic. While the request focuses on ELA and math, it is understandable that districts may need to give attention in the plan to other areas, particularly for credit-bearing pathways that lead to on-time graduation. Districts are encouraged to use the interim data spreadsheet provided by Education Analytics on March 5th as well as other data sources within the district to develop this plan. It is recommended that districts complete a similar process with schools prior to completing and submitting the district plan. This plan should be submitted by **May 28, 2021**, and may be completed here: https://scde.formstack.com/forms/2021_district_recovery_plan.

[Academic Recovery Plans - Memo](#) PDF (194 KB)

VERIZON HOTSPOTS

Verizon MHS900 Overheating

AUDIENCE: District Superintendents, District Information Technology Leaders

CONTACT: Jeff Henry, rhenry@ed.sc.gov

Verizon has contacted the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) to inform us of an overheating issue with the MHS900 series hotspots and have a plan to get these devices switched out. Please let your parents know that if they have a hotspot that is experiencing smoking, melting, or swelling around the battery, please immediately stop using the device. The districts will need to recover all MHS900L and MHS900LS devices and return them to Verizon when the new ORBIC replacements arrive.

Please view details in the memo linked below.

[Verizon MHS900 Overheating - Memo](#) PDF

