



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education  
Commissioner of Education

201 East Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203-1799

May 15, 2020

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Directors,

I hope this Friday finds you well and that you will get a little down time this weekend. It sure is hard to find down time these days.

I have a couple of important updates and reminders for you before you head into the weekend:

- We continue to work in partnership with the Governor's Office as they determine how to support schools in this upcoming year. While we don't have all the details to share with you now, we wanted to let you know what we are working on so you know what is coming. We are looking at ways to dramatically expand [Colorado Empowered Learning \(CEL\)](#) which is our state-supported supplemental online program that provides Colorado districts, BOCES, and charter schools access to fully-designed online courses with LMS platform options, teacher professional development and technical assistance for implementing blended and online learning models. Right now, CEL is currently only available in limited school districts at a cost to districts. However, given the potential for remote learning needs this fall and beyond, we want to give all school districts greater access to this already developed and adaptive virtual content at low to no cost, and to build the capacity of our teachers by expanding access to professional development and coaching, whether in-person or virtual, in blended instructional models. Under a CEL blended-learning model, a **student remains enrolled in his or her home school district and takes courses online**, whereas under a traditional virtual school model, a student would need to enroll full-time in the virtual school. We expect to have more details to share with you very soon.
- The district application for Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds will be available later this month. The application will be as simple as possible given all the federal requirements. Again, you can find your [estimated allocation on our website](#). A general list of uses of these funds include: coordination with public health, purchasing educational technology, planning for long term closures, training and supplies for sanitation, mental health support, summer school and after school programs, funds for principals to address local needs, and other activities to continue school operations and employment of existing staff. For a full list of allowable uses, please review [Appendix A of the ESSER Fund Certification and Agreement \(PDF\)](#) from the U.S. Department of Education. [Our survey](#) to gather your input on the best use of the 10% of funds reserved for statewide support to districts is open through May 18.
- We continue to work on the draft toolkit to help you plan for the 2020-21 school year, and should have portions of it ready for feedback next week. Remember, this toolkit will continue to develop over the coming months as we learn more and the situation with COVID-19 evolves.

Thank you for all you are doing,

More soon,





Katy Anthes, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

