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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Mitigation Measures for the 2021 – 2022 School Year
DATE: June 25, 2021

Background

Pursuant to Emergency Directive 044, effective May 1, 2021, authority for managing certain COVID-19 mitigation measures is delegated to charter school sponsors. Therefore, the SPCSA may determine capacity limits, social distancing protocols, and sanitation protocols for school transportation, spaces within school buildings or on school grounds, and for public gatherings and events of up to 250 people¹. With regard to face coverings, pursuant to Emergency Directive 045, face coverings requirements continue to be governed at the state level through Emergency Directives. The current guidance on face coverings was issued by the Nevada Department of Education on May 11, 2021 and allows schools to relax requirements for face coverings for students that are nine years old and younger, though schools may maintain stricter standards.

On April 23, 2021, the Authority established the following COVID-19 mitigation measures for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year:

- Schools were required to maintain a minimum of 3 feet social distancing for students and 6 feet social distancing for adults at SPCSA-sponsored schools, including within school buildings, on school grounds, and within school transportation vehicles.

¹ Public gatherings and events of over 250 people require a Large Gathering Plan pursuant to Directives 044 and 041.

- Except for large gatherings for 250 people or more, which require Large Gathering Plans pursuant to Directives 044 and 041, schools were responsible for establishing any capacity limits.
- Schools were allowed to continue existing sanitation protocols as determined at the school-level and to make adjustments in line with any updated public health guidance.

On May 21, 2021, the Authority voted to continue the COVID-19 mitigation measures that were established at the April 23 meeting for summer school programming during the summer of 2021. Additionally, schools that are located in counties with less restrictive social distancing guidance were allowed to seek an exemption from the Executive Director. At this time, no school has requested such an exemption.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released detailed guidance for schools in February: [Operational Strategy for K-12 School through Phased Mitigation](#). On May 15, 2021, the CDC issued a recommendation that schools continue to use the current COVID-19 prevention strategies outlined in the Operational Strategy for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. Additionally, the CDC indicated at that time that they planned to release updated guidance that can be used to plan for the 2021-2022 school year. However, as of Friday, June 18, 2021, the updated guidance has not been released.

Recommendation

With less than two months before schools open, planning for the 2021-22 school year is well underway. In an effort to streamline expectations and ensure schools can continue with their planning, I recommend that the SPCSA encourage schools to follow prevailing guidance from the CDC and local health officials with regard to COVID-19 mitigation measures for the 2021-22 school year. Schools will continue to be required to follow prevailing directives and guidance regarding the use of face coverings.

To ensure that SPCSA staff is aware of these mitigation measures and to enable oversight, schools will be required to report how they are addressing the CDC's recommendations within their reopening plans required under Emergency Directive 044

Proposed Motion

For the 2021-22 school year, recommend that schools follow prevailing CDC guidance and any guidance provided by local health officials when determining capacity limits, social distancing protocols, and sanitation protocols for school transportation, spaces within school buildings or on school grounds, and for public gatherings and events of up to 250 people. Require schools to report how they are addressing the CDC's recommendations within their reopening plans required under Emergency Directive 044.