



Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D., Commissioner

NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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To: Nebraska Public School Superintendents

CC: State Board of Education, Commissioner's NDE Cabinet

Re: The Annual Health Screenings

The purpose of this document is to provide clarification regarding the annual health screening exams. Many school officials have asked about flexibility around this mandated regulation. Although COVID-19 has impacted schools greatly, the health screening should continue to be in effect for the 2020-2021 school year. Screening is mandated by law for a reason. Students who have hearing or vision concerns or dental pain are not going to learn as well and school screenings may be the only medical attention that some students receive during the year. In some schools, dental screening is performed by hygienists who also perform fluoride treatments, among other things. We do not want those kids to miss the screening opportunity if it can happen safely.

While schools typically begin the process of checking students' hearing, vision, dental, height, and weight in the fall, regulations do not mandate the completion of screenings in the first quarter or even in the first semester. If schools feel it is in the best interest of students and staff to wait until later in the year to begin screening students, they can choose to do so and remain in compliance. Regulations on screening can be found here: https://www.nebraska.gov/rules-and-regs/regsearch/Rules/Health_and_Human_Services_System/Title-173/Chapter-07.pdf.

Many schools already have plans for implementing screening this year or have community partners ready to assist with this task. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) is working closely with its partners to monitor the COVID-19 situation to keep students and staff safe. The NDE and the Nebraska Department

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of Health and Human Services encourage districts to consult their local health departments and follow CDC recommendations for social distancing and mask wearing while conducting these exams. This will help to ensure that the health and safety of all students and staff are prioritized while working to provide a high-quality education to all students.

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