

Administrative Memo

Date: April 23, 2020
To: School Administrators
From: Chris Neale, assistant commissioner, Office of Quality Schools
Subject: QS-20-005 – Summer School Task Force Recommendations & DESE Guidance

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recently convened a Summer School Task Force, comprised of school leaders from across the state, to discuss 2020 summer school questions and the options available to school leaders amid COVID-19 and public health orders.

DESE received three recommendations from the Summer School Task Force in how best to support schools as they develop their summer school plans. Those recommendations are as follows:

1. Provide maximum flexibility to schools
2. Provide clear expectations for summer learning
3. Provide clear expectations for virtual summer school

The following information from DESE relates to each of the task force recommendations listed above.

Recommendation #1 – Maximum Flexibility

DESE has identified specific areas of flexibility for 2020 summer school, in addition to those already found in the Summer School Handbook. Important flexibilities for school leaders to consider this year include, but are not limited to:

- Summer school can begin any time once the school year ends and may be held at any time during the break between the end of a school year and the beginning of the next school year.
- Average Daily Attendance (ADA) submitted by August 31, 2020 will be included in the 2020-21 formula calculation.
- Schools may apply for summer school using a “window” approach. A school can specify start and end dates on the application and then complete the minimum of 120 hours of summer school during that period, scheduling classes based on local factors and conditions.
- Schools may implement a “stacking” approach to meet the 120 hour requirement. Guidance on stacking is found on page one of the Summer School Handbook.
- Summer school may be structured in phases.
- DESE will review shortened sessions of summer school on a case-by-case basis; LEAs may explore this option as a “jump start” to the 2020-21 school year.
- There is no penalty for summer school that experiences interruption, as long as the 120 hour minimum is met. If an interruption occurs and the minimum 120 hours are not met, schools may submit a waiver request. If that request is approved, ADA will be prorated.

Recommendation #2 – Clear Expectations for Summer Learning

DESE expects summer learning to exhibit the following characteristics:

- Be available to all students
- Be purposefully constructed courses
- Have regular interactions with a teacher
- Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students

- Have assessments that provide evidence of learning aligned to course expectations
- Have content aligned to Missouri Learning Standards and local curriculum
- Provide for monitoring of student engagement
- Provide for monitoring of assignment and course completion
- Use the principles of learning designed to meet all learners' needs
- Has content that is equivalent to the same course offered during the regular term

Recommendation #3 – Clear Expectations for Virtual Summer School

In addition to the characteristics listed in response to Recommendation #2, virtual summer school must also exhibit the following characteristics:

- Meet the requirements of Section 162.1250, RSMo
- Use a platform that ensures web accessibility for students with disabilities

Additional Information and Guidance

More detailed summer school information can be found [here](#) in DESE's new COVID-19 and Summer School 2020 Questions and Answers for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) document.

In addition to responding to the recommendations of the Summer School Task Force, DESE urges school leaders to review the information and guidance below as summer school plans are developed.

- **Consider the most appropriate method to deliver summer school instruction, either virtually, in-person or a combination of those approaches**
 - Remote learning, virtual or non-virtual, can take place but must meet the required summer learning characteristics listed above in Recommendation #2, and Recommendation #3, if applicable.
 - When considering virtual summer school, LEAs must think about the degree to which students can access learning experiences online. This will include not only the availability of devices and access to the internet, but also the degree to which faculty can develop and deliver high-quality virtual learning to all students.
 - If an in-person summer school is determined to be the best local option, schools should consider how modifying the schedule may better safeguard public health. Schedules could be modified in a number of ways, including, but not limited to:
 - **Altered Start Date:** While summer school traditionally begins shortly after the regular term is completed, it is not mandatory; summer school can begin in July or August. A delayed start date may give time for public health conditions to improve and allow for more planning and preparation. A later start date also decreases the amount of time between the end of summer school and the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, which may be beneficial.
 - **Phased Scheduling:** The number of students in the building at any given time can be reduced by holding separate summer school sessions for elementary, middle and high school students, or by grade level in cases where students occupy the same building. For example, second graders could attend in July and third graders in August. Schools can take further advantage of phased scheduling by reducing class size for those attending, creating better opportunities for social distancing.
 - **Staggered Class Scheduling:** In addition to reducing the density of students in buildings through phased scheduling, schools can also implement staggered scheduling, which helps reduce the density of people in common areas. By starting classes 30 minutes apart, fewer people will be in the hallways, restrooms and other common areas at any one time.

- **Consider public health measures**
 - DESE urges school leaders to make summer school plans in consultation with their local public health officials and published CDC guidance.
 - Schools must plan for increased deep cleaning during in-person summer school. Daily disinfecting of hard surfaces, particularly in common areas, is advisable. This may require additional staff and supplies.
 - Schools should consider safety protocols, including:
 - Maintaining social distancing measures
 - Washing hands frequently
 - Wearing masks
 - Taking temperatures
 - Suspending the use of drinking fountains
 - Altering food service routines
 - Revising procedures for passing out and collecting materials, using common workspaces and playground equipment, etc.
 - Communicating new procedures with students, families and staff

School leaders are encouraged to review the Pandemic Recovery Considerations: Re-entry and Reopening of Schools document from the Missouri School Boards' Association Center for Education Safety when it becomes available. The document will go into further detail about the public health and social distancing measures that school leaders should keep in mind.