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**July 1, 2020**

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## GUAM EDUCATION BOARD APPROVES SCHEDULE OPTIONS FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2020-2021 DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Guam Education Board (GEB) voted to support schedule options for School Year (SY) 2020-2021 as recommended by the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) District School Readiness Task Force (DSRTF) at its regular board meeting held on June 30, 2020.

The DSRTF was established by the Superintendent of Education in May 2020 to develop options and recommendations for the reopening of SY 2020-2021. The Task Force consists of six committees in areas including safety and operations, curriculum, personnel management, social and emotional wellness, communications, and finance. Due to COVID-19 safety concerns, the Guam Education Board has approved three instructional model schedule options for SY 2020-2021. All three models will be offered, and parents may select which model their child will participate in:

1. **Home Learning Online Instruction (Online Learning):** This model of instruction and attendance is 100% online home learning. Students participate in classes online and are required to have a computer or tablet, and reliable internet access. Additionally, though not necessarily required, access to a printer and scanner is beneficial.
2. **Home Learning Hard Copies (Paper Based/Hard Copy Curriculum):** This model of instruction and attendance is for students who would like to do 100% home learning but do not have the equipment to support 100% online work. This would be a home learning model supported by a paper-based or hard copy based curriculum.
3. **Traditional (Face-to-Face):** This model of instruction and attendance will be for students who will be participating in traditional face-to-face classes in school consisting of an A-B-C alternating schedule, where 1/3 of students attend classes on any given school day. The A-B-C alternating schedule entails the following:
  - Students are divided up into equally sized alphabetical cohorts (A, B, C). Efforts will be made to align schedules of siblings in the same or multiple schools.
  - Cohorts will alternate days for physical attendance on campus.
  - On days when students are not physically on campus, they will have assignments, projects or activities to complete and submit when they return. These assignments, projects, or activities can be provided and completed electronically or through hard copy depending on students' access to equipment and the internet.
  - Alternating days will follow the same order and adjust accordingly for holidays.
  - Fridays will be designated as student interventions and parent support days.

Parents/guardians are asked to submit the GDOE Model of Learning Registration Form by July 10, 2020 to select the model of instruction their child will participate in this year, regardless of whether their child is a new or continuing student. Children of parents who do not complete the form will

be automatically enrolled in the traditional face-to-face model. Parents/guardians are asked to contact their child's school for information on how to complete and submit the model of learning registration form.

The Task Force recommendations were based on planning involving discussions with key stakeholders who were consulted as part of the planning process to include school administrators, teachers, non-instructional staff, student leaders, the Islandwide Parent Teacher Organization, Guam Federation of Teachers, Physicians Advisory Group (PAG), public health experts, island mayors and government leaders. Prior to the decision, the GEB also reviewed input from both parent and student surveys. The GEB also met with the Task Force weekly during the development of school reopening schedule proposals.

Reopening plans were crafted to ensure consistency with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and public health experts. In addition to focusing on safety, the DSRTF is planning to provide social and emotional wellness training prior to the beginning of the school year and is also working on this effort with the Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center.

In light of the COVID-19 health situation, the GEB voted to temporarily suspend the following board policies this coming school year:

- Board Policy 346 regarding instructional subjects and time on task for elementary schools
- Board Policy 381 regarding service learning requirements
- Board Policy 401 regarding uniform policy
- Board Policy 411 regarding student attendance
- Board Policy 602 regarding the adoption of textbooks and instructional materials

Additionally, the GEB requested that the 35<sup>th</sup> Guam Legislature introduce legislation to suspend laws relative to instructional hours and service learning requirements due to safety requirements being implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

“On behalf of the board, we are confident that these changes and the safety measures being implemented by the Task Force will ensure we are both able to reopen schools and keep our students and employees safe,” GEB Chairwoman Maria Gutierrez said. “While this will be a major change for our school system, we have heard the concerns from our parents and community, and know that safety must remain our top priority as we work to reopen schools this year.”

“I would like to thank our team for working around the clock to put these plans in place given the unprecedented situation we are faced with, and I would also like to thank the community, including our students, parents, teachers, elected leaders and healthcare officials for assisting us with determining these next steps,” GDOE Superintendent Jon Fernandez said. “As this situation continues to evolve, we will continue to consult with healthcare experts to ensure that our actions are the best that we can take to both keep our kids safe and provide them with a quality education.”

“With this endorsement from the board, our team is ready to begin implementation of our plans to address safety, curriculum and social and emotional wellness,” GDOE Deputy Superintendent Joe Sanchez said. “This is going to be a tremendous effort and challenge, and I want to thank our team and our community for their support.”

For the latest information regarding the GDOE reopening plans for School Year 2020-2021, please visit <https://www.gdoe.net/District/Portal/school-year-2020-2021-information>.

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