



**Joint Information Center - JIC Release No. 261
August 13, 2020, 11 a.m. (ChST)**

**GDOE Delays Traditional Face-to-Face Classes;
Home Learning Will Begin as Scheduled on August 17**

COVID-19 test results are reported from multiple labs at varying times of the day. The Joint Information Center will report cumulative COVID-19 test results once a day, unless unavailable.

For updated information on COVID-19 cases on Guam, visit the COVID-19 Dashboard and Situation Report at <http://dphss.guam.gov/covid-19/>.

GDOE Delays Traditional Face-to-Face Classes

In consultation with the Governor of Guam, Lieutenant Governor, and Director of the Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS), Superintendent Jon Fernandez has directed that the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) will delay the start of traditional face-to-face classes for all GDOE schools for two weeks. The decision comes in response to the most recent COVID-19 health information provided by DPHSS, showing a sharp increase in daily positive cases over the last seven days. While traditional face-to-face classes will be delayed, GDOE will continue moving forward, as planned, with its two distance learning options, beginning August 17, 2020.

“The safety of our students and employees has always been at the forefront of our planning and decision-making regarding school openings this year,” GDOE Superintendent Fernandez said. “I have remained in close communication with the Governor’s Office, Public Health, and the Physicians Advisory Group regarding the ongoing health situation in Guam, and based on their guidance, a two-week delay for traditional face-to-face instruction is the right decision.”

Classes were expected to begin on Monday, August 17, 2020, for all GDOE students, to include those enrolled in the distance learning and traditional face-to-face instructional models. Approximately 62% of students are registered for the distance learning options, which include Home Learning Online Instruction and Home Learning Hard Copy Curriculum; the remaining 38% of students were registered for face-to-face instruction, which requires physical attendance at school on an alternating schedule. GDOE estimates that only 16% of total school enrollment is expected on campus on a daily basis, and class sizes are expected to average around eight students per classroom.

Earlier this week, the Guam Education Board met and discussed the option of a one-week delay to the start of classes to provide additional time for teachers to prepare for the school year. However, the proposal did not have the necessary support to move forward. The Superintendent clarified that his decision to delay the start of traditional face-to-face classes was based on safety concerns and on the most recent information from public health experts.

“The Board has always entrusted me with the authority to determine the closure of any school facility due to health or safety issues,” Fernandez said. “I have assured them that this authority

will always be exercised with great care and concern for our students and employees. While I know that our department has worked hard over the summer and is prepared to carry out our mission as planned, I have based my decision to delay face-to-face instruction on the advice of our health care experts and on the data that we have been monitoring daily.”

Fernandez will continue to monitor the health situation in Guam with the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and DPHSS Director, to ensure that future school opening decisions align with the guidance of public health experts.

Further information will be provided to parents/guardians of students enrolled in the traditional face-to-face instructional model.

For the latest information on COVID-19, visit dphss.guam.gov or guamrecovery.com. For inquiries on COVID-19, contact 311 through a local number, or call the Joint Information Center at (671) 478-0208/09/10.

-###-