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MEMORANDUM

To: Superintendents and Charter Leaders

From: Dr. Ryan Stewart, Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Public Education Department

Cc: Katarina Sandoval, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Public Education Department
Gregory Frostad, Director, Safe and Healthy Schools Bureau

Date: March 25, 2021

Re: Emergency Drills

To support reentry efforts and recovery of lost instructional time, the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) is waiving some of the required school emergency drills in the 2020/2021 academic year.

Each pre-K – 12 public school (not including schools designed to be entirely online) is required to complete two emergency drills, one of which will be a fire drill and one of which will be an active shooter drill. One of these drills will occur during the month of April and the other during the month of May.

Schools will need to meet the emergency drill obligations while maintaining 6-foot social distancing requirements to the greatest extent possible. In advance of any emergency drills, students and staff will need to be taught and to practice how to participate in the emergency drills while maintaining social distancing. For fire drills, social distancing requirements may necessitate new or additional evacuation locations.

Active shooter drills must also be developmentally appropriate for students and must be conducted in such a way as to minimize potential emotional trauma for students and staff. Emergency drills in preparation for an active shooter will also likely need amended to account for social distancing.

In locations where a fire department is maintained, a member of the fire department shall be requested to be in attendance during emergency drills for the purpose of giving instruction and constructive criticism.