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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GUAM EDUCATION BOARD APPROVES EXPANSION OF FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING, ELIMINATES HARD COPY MODEL OF LEARNING FOR SY 2021-2022

In a unanimous decision, the Guam Education Board (GEB) approved the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) recommendations to expand opportunities for more face-to-face instruction at all GDOE schools and to eliminate the hard copy model of learning by the end of this school year. The board's decision was made at the regular GEB meeting on Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

With the board's decision, GDOE has opened up the registration period for students who wish to sign up and participate in the online model of learning next school year. Students who do not register for online learning will be automatically registered for face-to-face instruction at their respective schools. GDOE will work through the fourth quarter to assist hard copy students to prepare for either online or face-to-face instruction. The registration period will begin March 17, 2021, and end on April 9, 2021.

The Board feels strongly that kids need to be back in school, and based on our experience over the past year, we believe this can be accomplished safely," said GEB Chairman Mark Mendiola. "With the vaccination efforts moving forward and the community taking the appropriate measures to contain COVID19, we are now on the path to recovery for our island. This path has to include a return to school for our students, especially our younger ones. We will continue to engage with our stakeholders and to support them as we navigate together through these unprecedented times."

There is still time for parents and students to register for face-to-face instruction for the remainder of the fourth quarter of this current school year. Those who are interested are encouraged to register at their schools, and schools are requested to accommodate these registrations. For those who wish to transition online, GDOE will be providing a department-issued laptop and devices for internet access to support the students.

"There is a light at the end of this tunnel, and that means we have to put in that extra effort to define the 'new normal' at all of our schools this coming school year," GDOE Superintendent Jon Fernandez said. "With the board eliminating the hard copy model of learning and allowing us to focus just on face-to-face instruction and online learning, we want to free up as much time as possible during the week to support classroom instruction and to do so safely. We know that we need our kids back in school, so we can assess the impact of COVID19 and to support

our kids getting back on track academically and socially.”

Safety will continue to be a priority for GDOE. On-campus safety protocols include daily symptom and temperature checks, the use of face masks, regular washing and disinfecting of hands, frequent cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, physical distancing, and other protective measures. More information about on-campus safety protocols may be found on the GDOE website at <https://www.gdoe.net/District/Portal/health-safety-guidelines>.

For those who require assistance, please contact your school directly or you may contact the GDOE Hotline at 300-1322/2. For more information about this press release, you may contact Interim Public Information Officer Michelle Franquez at 300-1677.

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