

# Schools to issue student laptops, reopen community learning centers

By Jolene Toves

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Guam Department of Education started calling parents on Monday, the first day that schools were closed again because of the pandemic – to determine which students need laptops and assistance with internet services so they can attend online classes.

"We are not looking at the full 28,000. Our previous survey probably a third of them already have devices that they want to use. A number of students or families indicated that they will just use their phones instead of borrowing a laptop," said Joseph Sanchez, deputy superintendent of curriculum and instruction.

GDOE has one week to prepare students for distance learning, which is set to begin next week on Sept. 7.

The governor shut down schools last Friday, signing executive order 2021-21 in response to the increasing number of COVID-19 positive cases.

Sanchez said GDOE has almost 30,000 laptops on hand and is prepared to hand out laptops to at least half of the department's student population at this time.



Parents are encouraged to contact their child's school for laptops.

## Community learning centers to reopen

GDOE noted that all wifi devices from vendor IT&E have been distributed. To assist those students, GDOE has decided to open schools and community learning centers for student internet access.

Parents must register for access to these sites and schedule a time to use the services. GDOE is implementing a schedule to avoid being inundated by students at the sites.

Sanchez said elementary students must have a parent or guardian present at the sites during use, while middle school and high school students are able to attend on their own.

► **COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER:** Daniel Stone gets to his schoolwork during the opening of the first Community Learning Center at C.L. Taitano Elementary School in Sinajana on Feb. 9.

Post file photo

## Question of attendance

Although Sept. 7, is the start of online learning for all GDOE students, GDOE does not foresee 100% student attendance.

"There's going to be a substantial number of students who are just getting acclimated to getting online, getting their laptops and going to access a center. We think student attendance will improve starting from the 7th," Sanchez said.

During the mandatory suspension of face-to-face learning, GDOE indicated that student absences would not count negatively towards attendance.

This may be received by some

parents with relief. Many parents weren't sending children to school as COVID-19 numbers grew and parents feared COVID-19 transmission in schools. Some parents said with COVID-19 numbers on the rise they shouldn't be penalized for safeguarding their children's health.

On Friday, Deputy Superintendent of Operations Erika Cruz reported that about 1,000 students were being engaged on truancy concerns.

## Student schedules

When temporary online classes begin on Sept 7, students will remain in the same classes as in-person instruction, but the schedules may differ slightly.

The adjustment to schedules will address active screen time with teachers, independent learning and additional interventions needed for students, Sanchez said.

The switch to online will remain in effect until the governor reopens schools. The governor hasn't yet said what thresholds need to be met to resume face-to-face instruction.



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## INVITATION FOR BID

### GDOE IFB 040-2021

### SONICWALL FIREWALL UPGRADE

SUBMISSION DATE: Friday, September 24, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. CHST

**Note:** It is solely the Bidder's responsibility to review the website on a daily basis for the issuance of Amendments/Clarifications for any possible changes to the IFB.

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/s/ CARMEN T. CHARFAUROS  
SUPPLY MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATOR

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