![Minnesota Department of Education logo](m DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION)

Date: April 27, 2020

To: Superintendents, Charter Directors, Site Verification Coordinators

From: Michelle Carey, MDE-ORG Administrator

Subject: Annual Certification of District and School Site Verification System for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2020-21

Each year, information regarding schools and districts/charters is updated in the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) master database for organizations (MDE Organization Reference Glossary (MDE-ORG)). MDE-ORG validates sites for all major MDE reporting systems, such as the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS), Staff Automated Reporting (STAR), Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Standards (UFARS), Assessments, etc. You have formally identified a point person as the **Site Verification Coordinator** for your organization. The site verification coordinator has access to a secure system in which to request and certify school configuration changes and update other essential contact/address information for all sites within your organization. The list of site verification coordinators by organization is available from the [MDE-ORG Contact Lists](#).

The District and School Site Verification System is a system that remains open all year for any changes. The system is a one-stop shop for contacts in your district such as the superintendent, identified official with authority (IOwA), principal, district nurse, early childhood screening coordinator, etc. For all contacts at the organization, including superintendent, executive director or business manager, it is critical to have the organization/school staff contact list current to make sure the correct staff are contacted for a number of MDE initiatives.

We ask that you review your organization and school sites, including contacts and addresses, and make changes for the 2020-21 school year. To ensure data collections, payments, and reports are correct, organization and school site information and contacts for the SFY 2020-21 school year must be reviewed and certified by **August 31, 2020**. Below, please find the timeline and critical steps to maintaining accurate organization and school site directory information:

1. Identify your Site Verification Coordinator (SVC)

Verify that you have a site verification coordinator appointed. If someone new will be taking over as SVC, or if you wish to have more than one SVC, the organization's IOwA needs to authorize the site verification coordinator role within the [Education Identity and Access Management (EDIAM) security system](#).

2. Site Verification Coordinator will notify MDE of New or Closed School Sites

Notify MDE by July 1, 2020, if your district intends to open or close sites for SFY 2021. If there are changes for the 2020-21 school year due to sites opening or closing, grade changes and/or school classification changes, use the District and School Site Verification System and refer to the "Request Changes" section on the site record. As an example, for closing a school, go into the closing school's record and click on "This Site is Closing" in the Request Change section at the bottom of the page.

3. Verification of District and School Site Information and Contacts

Verify Contact Information – The site verification coordinator should review and update the contact information for the organization and all sites within the organization. Grade and school classification changes can be requested through the system. The District and School Site Verification system allows updates to the following:

- physical location and mailing address
- phone and fax number
- name/title of lead administrator (superintendent, principal) and a number of contacts including district assessment coordinator, district nurse, early childhood screening coordinator, etc.
- email address
- website address

Verify Physical Location – Please make sure that each of your sites have the correct address listed in the "Location – Physical" description of the [MDE Organization Reference Glossary](). Please note that the physical address is frequently different than a mailing address; if you are not sure about the physical address of one of your facilities, please contact your local address authority or [county Geographic Information Systems (GIS) office](). Using an accurate physical address is critical to making sure that federal programs based on location are administered properly (more details in Section 4 below).

4. School District Attendance Area and School Building Location Review for SFY 2020-21

Public school districts are asked to review maps of school attendance area boundaries in addition to building locations; this information plays a very important role in the administration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition programs. Maintaining up-to-date school attendance areas and building locations is required in order to identify specific geographic locations in Minnesota where qualified child care providers, after school snack and summer food programs exist. The update process helps ensure that appropriate federal funds can be distributed accurately. These programs are administered by the MDE Food and Nutrition Services (FNS).

For state fiscal year (SFY) 2020-21 updates, please do the following:

1. Email Mike Dolbow (mike.dolbow@state.mn.us) to describe any changes to **attendance boundaries** from this past year. The latest copy of your district PDF map is available MDE Data Reports and Analytics Maps webpage. Under the PDF Maps heading choose **District/Charter School Location**. Choose **District** from the Category drop-down, then choose your district from the District drop-down. If you need to conduct a more detailed review, interactive maps are also available to assist in this task.

2. If there are **changes** to **attendance boundary** locations, please notify Mike Dolbow by doing one of the following:

   - Email an explanation of any changes; this would only work for simple situations.
   - Send (by letter or email) a map or image file showing changes.
   - Send a GIS file (if you have access to a GIS person on staff or with the county) showing changes.
   - Indicate on your school district website where a map is located or changes are shown.

3. Email Mike Dolbow indicating **no changes**, if you've had no changes to your attendance areas.

4. If there are **changes** to **school building** locations, make sure you report those through the District and School Site Verification System as described in Section 2 above. Cross-checking your building sites between the District and School Site Verification system and the PDF Maps page can help ensure we have the most accurate information.

Key Deadlines

July 1: Due date for adding a new school or closing school sites for SFY 2020-21.

July 31: Due date for school district attendance area and school building location review for SFY 2020-21.

August 31: Certify the official SFY 2020-21 organization and school site records by confirming all sites are listed and all sites are complete and accurate containing current contact information, physical and mailing address, grades and school classification. Certification means the pie-chart on the Dashboard will show Verification Progress at 100 percent complete (OK).

If you have any questions about the annual verification process or system, please contact Michelle Carey, 651-582-8287 (mde.school-verify@state.mn.us).

The organizational information is critical in correctly processing records for your district including students, staff, payments, federal program data and is utilized by over 350 MDE electronic systems. In addition, the information you provide is now a very useful searchable database application used by MDE staff, school districts/charter schools and the public. The MDE Organization Reference Glossary is located on the MDE website (https://education.mn.gov) under Data Center > Schools and Organizations (MDE-ORG). Click on **Enter the MDE-ORG site to get started!**

Thank you for your assistance with this very important data collection for the 2020-21 school year.