

ALLIANCE FOR HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION

All Member Conference Call

April 21, 2020
10:00 A.M.

MEETING SUMMARY

In attendance on phone conference: Jessica Voltolini, Tony Podojil, guest Craig Burford (OESCA), and member representatives from 45 school districts.

Tony Podojil convened the meeting by phone conference at 10:00 a.m.

ODE Stakeholder Call - Update

A. Recovery Plan Framework - ODE

- a. Reopening School - Transition/Fall Opening
- b. Health Department Guidelines

The Governor has now officially closed school buildings for the remainder of the school year allowing online, off campus learning until the 2019 - 20 school year ends. The conditions in which schools will need to meet to be able to open for 20 – 21 school year have not yet been determined.

The Governor's office along with ODE have been working with a small group of superintendents to develop guidance on those topics and areas that need to be considered for school districts related to transitioning back and opening next year. This document is not ready for distribution, but we anticipate its release shortly. What appears to be missing based on our review of the draft are the specific guidelines from the Health Department related to what processes and procedures need to be in place prior to opening. Once ODE releases the document it will be shared with members.

Members brought up several questions where they believe additional guidance is needed, listed below:

1. What kind of plans should we make for the summer in terms of transitioning students back to buildings?
2. What should we be considering for reopening in the fall?
3. What is the capacity for bus transportation while still maintaining social distancing guidelines?
4. What equipment do we need, such as cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, masks etc.?
5. Will we need to provide masks for all students and staff?
6. Can you bring students back in small groups, or 1 on 1 and under what conditions?
7. Can guidance be provided on summer graduations that would be in late June or late July?

Note: Jessica stated that in addition to the extension of the school building closure order through the end of the school year, we are waiting for additional information and guidance from the Director of Health in the Governor's office regarding what happens on May 2nd related to the stay at home order and other restrictions with respect to gathering. If there are no changes to the stay at home order regarding mass gatherings, graduation exercises and commencements will continue to fall in the prohibited category. We should have more information beginning May 2nd on what the administration is going to require with respect to social distancing and mass gathering regulations and will share that as soon as it is posted.

8. Can we address issues involving the school calendars and how blended learning impacts required instructional attendance issues?
9. With school buildings closed, and the calendar year ended, we continue to have a lot of other activities, other than summer school going on in the buildings from athletics to other things that take place during the summer, can we get guidance from the Governor's office on those activities?
10. In regard to teacher evaluations for this year and for next year, if we could remove the testing data side of the evaluations for this year and next year I think that would go a long way with issues related to evaluations having to be completed based on the current criteria that simply does not fit.

11. What level of license flexibility can superintendents be granted for next year as they consider staff assignments based on new instructional delivery models?
12. Guidance is needed related to how square footage will be utilized to determine how many students can be housed in a single classroom.
13. Flexibility regarding using employees and volunteers to assist with staggered schedules and separating students for social distancing.
14. Can we give administration and the Board of Education some flexibility to avoid grievances related to assignments for a limited time?
15. Guidance on services for special needs students over the summer and the additional service time that will be needed to provide for student instructional components in their IEP's. How many students can we bring together and how can those services be delivered.
16. As we look at preparing for the fall with a partial schedule or hybrid schedule next year, will there be flexibility related to the requirements for elective courses?
17. Guidance is needed related to transportation and meeting any new Highway Patrol rules prior to next year's start.
18. Are we thinking about how parent's will be able to adjust to these new schedules, online, every other day in class, etc.? Are we thinking about how will that effect jobs and work schedules for some of the parents?

Concerns were expressed as to what level of flexibility will be afforded by the state and how each district will use that flexibility to do things differently. While appreciating the need for flexibility on the delivery of instruction, there needs to be more general guidance on things like how many students are on a bus, in a school room. Guidance needs to be specific, so we are all applying the new standards equally.

Regarding Revised Code Section 4167.06 which refers to public employees right for refusal to work in unsafe conditions, Jessica advised that each district should look at their collective bargaining agreement to see if there is similar language. Check your collective bargaining agreement with respect to whether there are provisions that will allow employees to refuse to come to work if they deem conditions unsafe and then talk through those issues with your attorneys. Even if the Governor or General Assembly grants regulatory relief collective bargaining agreements would still be controlling.

B. Budget

a. Current Budget Year

b. Financial Planning for 20 – 21.

Guidance on the federal funding from the CARES Act is still being developed. Recommendations for district financial planning for 20-21 remain cautious about what the budget implications will be and the longer the state is shut down, the greater the impact on revenue for next year.

Districts are preparing for their five-year forecast due in May and obviously there is a lot of uncertainty impacting budget assumptions. It might be worthwhile to have a conversation with ODE about are they going to operate within the 5-year forecast system when districts qualify for fiscal watch and caution. Are they equipped to handle a third of our districts are placed in fiscal watch or caution?

C. Follow-up from last week's call

a. Issuing Student Grades – OHSAA/NCAA

b. Graduation Programs/Large Group Gatherings

New rules for NCAA were sent to members. OHSAA is holding a May 1 to May 15 vote time to make changes to the fall eligibility guidelines. Members will be voting to suspend the eligibility rule so make sure your high school principals are aware of the need to vote this change in. If that vote is negative, then the eligibility rules will not be changed.

Guidance is needed around starting early workouts for the fall sport season and practices beginning on August 1.

Next Conference Call:

The next call will be **April 28, 2020, at 10 AM by phone conference.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.