

# ALLIANCE FOR HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION

## All Member Conference Call

April 7, 2020  
10:00 A.M.

### MEETING SUMMARY

*In attendance on phone conference:* Jessica Voltolini, Tony Podojil, guests Kevin Miller (BASA), Craig Burford (OESCA), and member representatives from 44 school districts.

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

#### ODE Stakeholder Call- Update

##### A. Cares Act – Title Program Funding Guidelines

The CARES ACT for COVID-19 signed by President Trump allocates emergency funding for primary and secondary education. From what has been reported, the funds should be appropriated to the state within the next 30 days.

The CARES ACT appropriated 13.5 billion dollars for K-12 education, 90% of those funds will flow through education agencies with allocations based on the Title 1 application formula. Ohio will receive 489.2 million dollars. There will be additional dollars that are going to the Governor's office for discretionary funding for schools in the amount of 105.2 million dollars.

The funds will be used to support COVID-19

- mental health support
- continuation of distance learning and remote educational programs for students such as homeless students, students in foster care, and students with disabilities
- for cleaning, disinfecting and purchasing school supplies
- for one on one devices and connectivity for students to have internet

The Title 1 funding calculations may make it difficult for districts in our membership to see significant funding in this area. We intend to talk to the Department of Education and the Governor's office to determine what their thoughts are on how and when these funds would be available. There is concern in all districts that the current revenue forecasts will have a corresponding negative impact on future state funding levels. Districts have begun conversations with their respective employee organizations in preparation of possible budget reductions.

**Q.** Is anybody starting to have conversations with their organization, their unions in terms of looking forward and the possible fiscal issues districts are going to be facing beginning next year? Are districts consider renegotiating contracts and/or looking at the next two years?

**A.** Answers varied; some are in the process of starting the negotiation, some are postponing those conversations until summer to better understand what the financial impact might be, some have discussed extending current contracts but don't know if they could certify at that point, some are thinking about granting teachers the contractual step increase but no salary increase.

**Q.** Is anyone exploring lay-offs (furloughs) and how to keep staff on their insurance plans if they can't work from home?

**A.** One suggestion shared was to consider staging the layoffs into levels. The first level would impact personnel attached to buildings that are closed such as custodians, the second level would be started in May and would include classified staff that are not filling current positions.

In terms of furloughs and layoffs, this may not be a tool that schools can use based on the CBA. Another idea shared would be to reduce employee work calendars for next year from anywhere between three or five days. Each day reduced would provide a corresponding payroll reduction.

**Q.** Are there any other thoughts from anyone on how to scale back expenses for next year?

**A.** Answers varied; some talked about reducing supplemental contracts and reverting back to full pay to pay and others talked about scaling all supplementals and extras, including field trips.

**Q.** This is maybe a statement that ends up being a question but so far the CARES ACT and the two stimulus packages before that, that aren't really talked about that much are really more about economic stabilization and stimulus focused on the private sector, if you think about the 13 billion that's coming to K-12 that converts to 100 billion that went to K-12 between 2008 and 2010 and I'm just wondering, if there is a fourth stimulus package if there shouldn't be a broader scale advocacy effort with our Ohio delegation and through our national organizations to pump some more money into education?

**A.** I think that's on our radar and again a lot of it determines what we do as an organization. Disbursement becomes an issue for us because of the state share calculation that provides many of our members with small shares.

## **B. Responsibilities related to reporting child abuse**

During the stakeholder call with ODE this week, Paolo raised the question of how districts were meeting their responsibilities related to reporting child abuse and neglect. What are the responsibilities for teachers and caregivers in terms of reporting child abuse during this online environment and what can we do to help reinforce the need to be vigilant in this area?

Suggestions that could help:

- resend staff and students the safe school helpline information
- follow up with families we deem are at risk families by having our guidance counselors do checks
- ask your local law enforcement agency to make Wellness checks
- create a spreadsheet of all the students that have not participated with lessons and reach out to them
- try to contact each child so that no one falls through in this timeframe

## **C. School Calendars/District Modifications Beyond Prior Published**

**Q.** What are districts options in terms of their school calendars? Can you let us know what your district plans to do?

**A.** The majority of the members on the call indicated they intend to complete their calendars as initially published.

**Q.** Is anyone considering using the last week or two as an opportunity to bring back staff to close out the school year and begin planning for next year?

**A.** Most districts are looking at some plan to bring in staff to close and then plan for next year for some timeframe. In terms of planning now, a member shared that they are using one day a week (Friday)

as office hours and a planning day for staff. That day is also used for students that need additional support.

Example: Friday would be no new lessons and used as office hours for teachers to reach out to those students that need additional support.

Monday through Thursday would be traditional online lessons. Teachers would use office hours to reach out to students who are struggling and/or reaching out to students who aren't logging in, it also gives teachers time to plan and ability to balance the life and work piece.

**Q.** Can districts get more guidance around what online learning hour equivalency is in terms of regular hours in the classroom?

**A.** ODE is working on guidance in this area. Hopefully that guidance, will provide flexibility in terms of meeting hourly requirements That will be shared once it is distributed and we can talk in more detail on next week's call.

## **B. EMIS Reporting Deadlines**

**Q.** Would there be any extensions on EMIS reporting deadlines?

**A.** We asked this question on the stakeholder call and Paolo indicated that it was not currently on their radar. He indicated he would have ODE look into this and be ready to discuss when we speak next week.

## **C. Five Year Forecast Deadlines – Remaining the same**

ODE has determined that there will be no changes related to the Five-Year Forecast deadlines. Please let your treasures know your forecast report is still required to be approved by Boards based on the current rules and timelines.

## **Comments, questions, and general statements:**

### **OFCC Projects – COVID 19 Impacts**

Brunswick shared that if you are involved in a current OFCC project, due to construction delays related to COVID 19, they were informed that they should start tracking any cost associated with the delay including items such as providing hand washing stations for construction workers and any other items that would result in an increase in the overall construction budget. Their confident there's going to be reimbursement from federal funds for all districts for those costs.

Specifically, Brunswick shared that they have put in three or four hand sanitizing stations costing about \$8000 a month. In addition, the social distance guidelines instituted for construction workers is going to result in a major delay in terms of the project completion date. The OFCC has asked the district to develop a plan B, C & D for the opening of their buildings. They are going to have to keep one building open longer than expected and make adjustments to sidewalks for emergency exit purposes which could result in substantial costs.

## **Grading Policies for the Fourth Quarter and determining final grades**

**Q.** What are districts planning to do in relation to making any changes related to how fourth quarter and final grades are determined?

**A.** Most members are keeping the current grading system in place or making modifications to the way fourth quarter grades are determined. Some are considering Pass/Fail or a modified system in which a grade of A, B and C can be earned with an incomplete for anything below that. Another member said they are grading based on the percentage of completion of activities or task and C is the lowest.

Another idea shared related to offering students the option of either maintaining where they were in quarter three or they could improve based on their fourth quarter achievement. This would allow students the opportunity to earn a grade point average for the semester since some students are counting on that to improve their overall GPA. This is an issue for juniors getting ready to complete college applications.

Another district created a chart with grades in third quarter and what they can earn based on completion, so everybody starts with an A for fourth quarter and if the student completes all work, they maintain that A. If you complete another level of work it would be a B and then down to a C and then if a child is totally disengaged or there's some type of trauma in the family an Incomplete would be used as a final grade.

The National School Board Association released a recommendation endorsing Pass/Fail as a preferred option. Some districts having heard from parents of Junior students worried that the college admissions office will still need the GPA's and a pass/fail may not work.

It was requested that if any district would like to share what they are doing on grading, to send that information to the Alliance and we will be sure it is shared with everyone. This will be a topic we will follow-up on during next week's call.

### **Athletic Eligibility and Grading**

**Q.** What are the ramifications related to NCAA Clearinghouse and OHSSA eligibility if districts decide to use pass/fail as an option for fourth quarter grade?

**A.** Tony indicated he would reach out to the High School Athletic Association for an update and possible ruling and follow this up on next week's call.

### ***Next Conference Call:***

The next call will be **April 14, 2020, at 10 AM by phone conference.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.