

**ALLIANCE FOR HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION
COVID-19 Committee
Conference Call**

**July 14, 2020
10:00 A.M.**

MEETING SUMMARY

In attendance on phone conference: Tony Podojil, and member representatives from 46 school districts.

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

ODE Stakeholder Call –

Tony reminded members the State Superintendent had suspended, for the time being, his weekly calls addressing COVID19 and restart issues.

State Health Requirements – COVID19

- Mask Policy
- Student Activities – Fall Sports and Band Program

Questions and Comments:

Mask:

Q. Does anyone have an actual mask policy that they are working on to bring to their board?

A. Scott Goggin shared a draft policy for use of face coverings that was emailed to the members during the call. That policy was created by Walter-Haverfield.

Q. Does NEOLA have a policy out yet?

A. NEOLA has not yet released their policy draft.

Q. Where are we with staff negotiations? Is anyone having conversations with their teaching staff about returning?

A. OEA has been supportive of everyone wearing mask while in the building. Most districts are considering having staff and students wear mask or face shields.

Q. What are people doing in terms of enforcement on students to wear mask? What are you doing with the students whose parents are against the student wearing a mask?

A. Some districts are making it a requirement not allowing the student to attend in person and requiring them to online only. Mask will be supplied initially/ Exceptions will be made for the younger students in grades K-2 and medical reasons. Parents will be encouraged to take on this as a parent responsibility rather than simply a school requirement in terms of prepping students and purchasing masks.

Q. How do we enforce wearing a mask or explaining why some students, for medical reasons, do not wear a mask? We are not allowed to disclose medical reasons.

A. Some districts are handling it as a 504 request and working with the parents and students through that process. For valid medical reasons students will not be required to wear a mask and can still attend school. Staff experiencing medical issues are going thru as an ADA request.

Comment: Some districts, with the approval of the health commissioners, are allowing face shields to be used instead of the mask for teachers, especially those working with younger kids.

Q. I am under the impression that our cafeteria workers are not allowed to wear the shields, is that correct?

A. The only group that we have heard anything related to restrictions on face shields relates to bus drivers. During a meeting with superintendents, the Highway Patrol indicated that they would not approve shields because of a safety concern related to restricting the driver's vision. It was recommended that you speak with your local health commissioner in your area on this issue.

Sports Programs:

Q. Has anyone heard from the OSHAA on student activities starting August 1st?

A. While unconfirmed, one member on the call indicated that they had received an email on July 9th, stating that we are on track to start in the fall. That was not confirmed officially by OSHAA.

Comments: There appears to be a contradiction in terms of allowing contact between and amongst athletes and then the need to provide masks to all students while in the building. How do we reconcile this and still meet the state requirements?

ODE Guidance Documents

- Remote Learning Guidance
- Remote Learning Attendance Guidance (Pending)
- Transportation Guidance (Pending)
- Preschool Issues (Current Restrictions)

Remote Learning Guidance:

Q. I still find it confusing that the guidance indicates the use of remote learning only if you do not have a blended learning plan? Do I need both?

A. In my conversations with Scott Hunt, he advised that you should simply move your blended learning plan and place it as part of the remote learning plan. Your remote learning plan is your total online option and adding your blended learning plan under this designation will provide you with more flexibility.

Remote Learning Attendance Guidance:

The Remote Learning Attendance Guidance is still pending, we will update as soon as we have information.

Transportation Guidance (Pending)

Transportation guidance is still pending, we will update as soon as we have information. As was stated during our last meeting, Paolo has indicated the guidance will be a reiteration that it is your responsibility to follow the current rules and guidelines in terms of transporting everyone, both public, parochial, and private.

Comment:

We heard earlier that the State Highway Patrol will not approve face shields for bus drivers because they could hinder the driver's line of vision. I have not seen anything in writing yet.

Preschool Guidelines - (Current Restrictions)

There have not been any updates released related to the preschool issues discussed earlier. ODE is still working with the Health Department to see if changes can be made to the ratios and staffing changes instituted through the Governor's Health orders in June.

Q. Was there a meeting Friday that gave preschool directors guidance on the preschool programs?

A. Bob Scott said that his preschool director received guidance yesterday and he is planning to meet with her about the meeting they had. He was not sure of specifics until he could meet with his director.

Funding

- CARES ACT additional Fund Distribution

The controlling board approved funding on Monday but it is not clear on how the new dollars are going to be distributed. ODE will be giving more guidance on how those funds will be distributed although Paulo indicated that they could be by district demographics, urban, rural, and suburban. Tom Burton sent CCIP note 442 to committee members for their information and use.

Q. Does anyone have any insight on how they are interpreting that ruling in terms of using it for title or not using it for title and how that impacts the amount of money you have to send to private and parochial?

A. Each district will be different and should look at the difference and what the impact is for your district.

General Questions and Comments:

Q. Are superintendents linking the new color-coded system to their approach in returning to school?

A. Yes, some districts using that system but are concerned with making the transition from one color code to the other color code as needed, per day or per week. It would be good if the Governor would consider aligning the colors with the meanings, with purple meaning all virtual, etc. Districts are also concerned with giving the communities mixed messages since most of the districts have linked the Governor's color-coded rating system to what plans they will be using.

Q. Are the districts using the same color pattern? Purple online only, red is for hybrid and yellow is 100% open?

A. Districts are looking at color as one piece of data. Some districts are looking at the data per zip code while other districts can not use data within the zip codes. Some districts are within several counties.

Q. I understand the color system and changing the type of learning based on the codes but how do we communicate that to our entire communities in a short time frame?

A. Locally, plans will need to be communicated that address how the system will be used in a district.

Q. Does anyone know if there is a specific reason why local health commissioners and local health departments do not want to provide guidance?

A. It would be nice as a state if we did have some more clear criteria for decision making because the concern that we're having is we're getting parents pushing back because we have two counties right next to us in a different zone but they're literally across the street and so decision making is very different in those 2 counties. It would be nice if we can get the health departments on the same page.

Q. I hear how you are utilizing the color code system to transition in and out from one model to the next but how flexible are you in utilizing the six feet social distancing that some districts are using and other districts are using this three feet?

A. We are utilizing the three feet in order because that is the only way to have all students back. We do not have a choice for fitting our students in, but we are implementing the mask requirement for all.

Q. Has anyone been hearing from your associations about returning to work since it is publicly being stated you should be keeping 6 feet in your classroom and you are going to be 3 feet?

A. Some districts have done surveys for the staff and a very high number of them say they have a pre-existing condition that will keep them from returning to work.

Q. Has anyone given any thought to a staffing threshold of which regardless of the color of your County you are going to be required to go remote because you simply cannot staff?

A. We have discussed this with our board and there could be situations where we must move to online instruction or close the building because of a lack of staff and substitutes.

Next Conference Call:

The next call will be **July 21, 2020, at 10 AM by phone conference, if needed.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.