

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

**June 2, 2020
10:00 A.M.**

MEETING SUMMARY

In attendance on phone conference: Jessica Voltolini, Tony Podojil, guest Kevin Miller (BASA), and member representatives from 48 school districts.

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

ODE Stakeholder Call – Update

Reset & Restart-Education Planning Guide for Ohio Schools and Districts

- Issue – Health Requirements Release
- Mask, Transportation, Cleaning Requirements

The Governor held a conference call this morning at 6:30AM and invited Paolo, Lieutenant Governor Husted, Kirk Hamilton from BASA, Rick Lewis from OSBA and superintendents from several different districts (Dayton, Cleveland, Akron, Hilliard, Upper Arlington, Dublin, Ashland City, Fort Frye, Switzerland of Ohio) to participate.

Paul Imhoff, Superintendent of the Upper Arlington School Districts who was on the call, shared that the Governor requested feedback on the restart/reopen document regarding Ohio schools. The Governor was very open to the feedback and stated he would need more time to review the document before announcing its release. He stated that his goal was to safely open schools in the fall.

Paul Imhoff advocated for a process whereby a group of practitioners work with the Ohio Department of Health directly like several sectors of business. The Governor wants to make decisions based upon science and pandemic concerns but also understands the district's needs regarding transportation, six-foot distancing in classrooms, and wearing mask in classrooms all day.

Note: Jessica stated while on yesterday's call with Paolo, joining for the first time was Erica Wilson, policy adviser for health who was able to hear the concerns related to wearing masks all day in the classroom, clarity around social distance and transportation.

Questions:

Q. Has it ever been thought about as 2 separate documents?

A. Yes, one of the points that Kirk Hamilton made on the call and we reiterated as well, was to really look at this as two separate documents, a public health guidance document and then a separate document from the Ohio Department of Education listing educational items to consider.

Q. Were there any mixed messages that you were concerned about on that call that we need to address?

A. I can't think of any, there were some differences of opinions and ideas that's been put forth by different parts around the state, for instance, that the Governor should mandate that schools aren't allowed to go back until after Labor Day to give everyone more time.

Q. Did you get anything on transportation that might be something we can get in front of soon because of the routing issues and the implications of what it means for scheduling?

A. I think everyone on the call made it very, very clear that transportation is an enormous issue and we cannot teach kids if we cannot get them to school.

Q. Was there any discussion regarding the financial difficulties facing the fall versus the FY20 cuts as well as what we are expecting in FY21 as far as funding cuts?

A. This was more a call for safety. The Governor briefly acknowledged the issues with the cuts and the issues moving forward with all the things we are responsible for doing with less funds, he is aware but did not share anything beyond that.

Q. Was there any specific discussion about the actual start of the school year or school calendars with regards to heading back in the fall?

A. The governor wants us to get back to school safely and he said he is going to continue to make it clear that the goal is that we are going to get back to school in the fall.

Q. Eric Gordon sent an email saying they might be delaying issuing guidance until early July, was that mentioned in the call?

A. The governor did say he is receiving a lot of pressure to get guidance out sooner rather than later, and he hopes to do so. We did ask him to take another look at the document and he agreed to do that so several concerns could be addressed before releasing the document. We also continue to talk with other policy makers within the Department of Health to get this finalized so something can get out sooner than later. We asked that the administration make a commitment to continue to monitor and keep districts updated in safety parameters before August 1st prior to the first day of school.

Q. I have a question regarding the coordination of this with the potential budget information coming out because what you're talking about does influence staffing and budget will also influence that so did you get a sense while you were in the meeting of the coordination of that portion of the Governor's work?

A. He did not get the chance to comment on that but is keeping in mind the cost of disinfecting requirements, staff, mask, transportation cost and other budget cost. It was briefly discussed that some districts do not have the funds to put all these requirements in place.

Legislative Planning

- AHQE - COVID 19 Education Issues and Legislative Relief

Budget

- Reductions to FY20 Budget – Amendment
- Ohio Treasurer’s COVID-19 Community Response Initiative

Jessica stated we're still working with Senator Dolan and other legislators with respect to potential amendment to offset some of the FY20 cuts. Jessica will follow up with ODE this week with respect to the timeline for making decisions around FY21 school funding formula cuts. As of last Wednesday, Jessica understood that the governor's office, OBM, and OD were just starting to talk about FY21 as it related to funding. The Controlling Board met yesterday and approved ODE’s requests that would allow the Federal Cares Act dollars to flow. The application through CPIT is available, you can apply to get Cares Act funding backdated to March 13th for this year, based on your title one allocation formula.

Last night through the Director of the Office of Budget and Management it was stated that all state employees are going to be getting a salary cut (Agency directors cut 4%, all non-union state employees cut about 10 business days’ worth of pay) with respect to something that the Governor is doing to help reduce expenses from state salary perspective for FY 21.

Senator Dolan talked to Tony on Friday last week, he does not know whether the amendment will go into the capital budget or another bill. At this point the amendment calls for a 6% cap versus the 3.7% originally discussed. It will impact approximately 45. He felt confident that there's support in the Senate, and the Governor's office but work still needs to be done in the House.

The Senate Education Committee meets tomorrow, Senator Matt Hoffman has introduced a new bill with respect to extending COVID-19 relief for schools. Tony and Jessica have been working very closely with the folks in the Senate with respect to the regulatory relief that is being requested for districts.

Chairman Jones in the House will also be focused on a similar set of issues that need to be addressed by the legislature before they break this summer. Focus has been on getting temporary furlough language, additional changes for teacher and principal evaluation requirements for next year, extending the state testing wavier next year, and flexibility around licensure etc. Jessica will send to the group once available.

Questions:

Q. Can you give us some clarification on the furlough language that is likely to emerge in the legislature and how we could potentially implement it?

A. The goal of the language was to permit school districts to have temporary furlough authority up to a certain number of days. There seems to be some interest in it because it is just temporary for this year however, the associations are pushing back.

Note:

On Dolans bill, there are a several House members that we will be contacting such as Jamie Calendar, Chris Jordan, and Dave Greenspan to give them an alert that the bill Senator Dolan is still working hard on and will continue to work through his office to support the bill.

Q. Is there a document that tells how much the total salary for educators in the state of Ohio is within all the districts? If the governor had a single document indicating similar things happening across all agencies, what would the calculation be if all school districts were involved in a furlough that received one consistent across the state? This is what we will do, this is the amount of revenue that would generate, which would provide the Governor relief as well as the rainy-day fund.

A. There should be a way to get that number, whatever that number is, 85% of that is salaries then if it's divided by 185 and you take one day away what is the potential reduction in total amount.

Next Conference Call:

The next call will be **June 9, 2020, at 10 AM by phone conference.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:50a.m.