

ALLIANCE FOR HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION
COVID-19 Committee
Conference Call

May 19, 2020
10:00 A.M.

MEETING SUMMARY

In attendance on phone conference: Jessica Voltolini, Tony Podojil, and member representatives from 52 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

- Educational Considerations
- Innovative Approaches – Questions from Meeting
- Issue – Transportation Guidelines
- Issue – Outdoor/Indoor School Facility Use

Tony shared that he has received feedback since our last call on two critical issues: Transportation and the use of School Facilities.

Based on the information shared by ODE this week, he is hoping to share information about the issues concerning transportation by the end of this week with the entire document being made available by ODE on June 1st. We can expect that bus capacity will be reduced to one student to a seat with siblings being able to sit together. Districts will have to assign seats. We will share the information as soon as it is received.

Based on Friday's announcement regarding youth sports beginning to meet on the 26th, we received feedback from several districts who were asking for clarification on how to implement that ruling. There are two parts to this issue, OHSSA non-contact rule related to athletes and the use of outdoor/indoor school facilities during the current closure order that runs through June 30th. The Governor's office has indicated that they are aware of the issue and has asked districts to be patient as they hope to resolve this issue this week.

Q. Can we confirm if private facilities will be able to start training students while schools will remain closed?

Q. The school districts are finding they must justify to the parents and community as to why the facilities and sports activities are still closed, when the non-school facilities are allowed to open. Can they make their rulings similar for community facilities and school district facilities so that we do not have to consistently justify our actions?

A. Those issues were addressed in the press conference yesterday. The Governor's office is working directly with OHSSA. We will distribute new information as we receive it.

Q. The ruling from OHSSA lifted the no contact for coaches rules for the sports that the state said are now open (baseball, softball, tennis, golf, and swimming) the problem is where will those coaches meet with students if they can't be on school grounds?

Q. If district coaches go to private facilities and somebody gets hurt the liability that we are exposed to because they are not in our own facilities certainly raises my concern. Our directors are not expressing the desire to do this, but parents/students want to train when they hear other teams are able to at private facilities. Can this topic be addressed?

Q. Is there a reason that they did not have any public-school athletic directors on the committee, and can it be explained why they only spoke to folks that represent private organizations?

A. We do not think the composition of the group was intentionally designed to exclude athletic directors. There are different working groups within the administration doing certain things for each area of business, education, and other areas. They simply missed adding athletic directors is our guess.

Q. We need clarification because we have a conflict with school buildings closed to June 30th but camps can come, community education and recreation activities can take place but those are either on our campus or in our schools, can we ask for direction?

Q. The current order from Dr. Acton #3, has caused us to be inundated with questions as to if all these other third parties can open then the local Health Department has the authority to tell you that while your school building may be closed it does not apply to your facilities. It says school building it does not say school facilities so there is a debate for semantics going on that needs to be clarified.

Q. We're trying to get legal direction because the Executive order opens facilities for these types of events, tennis, softball, and baseball as of May 26, if there is a public facility funded through taxpayer dollars making that public, we don't have the authority to prohibit their use under Ohio Revised Code. We think there is statutory language that prohibits us from closing the public facility if the order is that they are open. If we are required to keep them open, are the parties using the facility responsible to follow the COVID-19 requirements to ensure that those facilities are cleaned and meet the health standards each time there used?

Q. We have camps now being able to open and they can't get on school grounds or get into school buildings, how do we accommodate these variations that are going to happen across the state depending on what programs are vital to the community?

A. Because they initially decided that the school closure extension goes through June 30th, it has added a layer of confusion in how this impacts the opening of outdoor school facilities for private groups. We are working to get a clarification on this issue this week to address the questions raised in this week's call.

Q. There's too many things in play, the school building closure order, stay at home order through May 29 but now have some exceptions for some businesses to reopen, there are updates from last week on what's going to start opening on May 26th, that's not even part of an order and there's still the mass gathering restrictions as part of this so it's all very confusing, we just need to

clarify so we can plan things like cleaning, social distancing protocols, sports, PPE for band members, etc.

Q. Would it be easier to have the school closure order expire before June 30th?

A. It was the consensus from those on the call that the school closure order to remain in effect through June 30th with the caveat that it provides clarity on the use of the outdoor facility/building. Members shared that they are using the school closure time to prepare and finalize policies and procedures for cleaning and making sure that we have all that they need to open and stay open. Staffing will also be an issue this summer due to budget reductions.

Q. Is the restart document coming out as guidance or an order?

A. We understand that the document section on instruction will be guidance and the health section will be requirements.

Legislative Planning

- AHQE - COVID 19 Education Issues and Legislative Relief

Jessica stated the legislature is back and the Senate Finance Committee is meeting today. Senator Dolan, the Chairman of the Finance Committee has invited testimony from OSBA, BASA, OEA, and OAFT. They are limiting the number of people who are, The Alliance may be invited next week to testify depending on the committee's schedule and topics being covered.

Tony and Jessica have meet with Liz Connolly and Marcus Benjamin, the education policy leads for the Senate and have had a conversation with Senator Lehner, Senator Brenner, and have been in constant communication with Senator Dolan. We have also been communicating with Representative Don Jones the Chair of the Education Committee. We are going to continue to work with the Governor's office and ODE along with the General Assembly to advance the issues the committee has raised that need legislative oversight. We will update everyone if the Alliance is testifying next week and will share the information that was provided today at committee hearings.

Budget

- Reductions to FY20 Budget – Dolan Proposal

Senator Dolan is still attempting to restore some of the budget reductions. While our issue has not been dismissed and has support, it is being considered along with several other issues and may take some time to move through the legislative process. Tony reminded Senator Dolan that districts are going to have a payment due this Friday.

There has been a new lawsuit filed with respect to the ED Choice voucher program that could impact our conversations with respect to the school formula and budget cuts.

Next Conference Call:

The next call will be **May 26, 2020, at 10 AM by phone conference.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:15a.m.