

ALLIANCE FOR HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION
COVID-19 Committee
Conference Call

May 5, 2020
10:00 A.M.

MEETING SUMMARY

In attendance on phone conference: Jessica Voltolini, Tony Podojil, and member representatives from 32 school districts.

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

ODE Stakeholder Call – Update

Education Recovery Plan Framework -ODE

- Health and Safety
- PPE supplies, transportation, building usage

Tony shared that Paolo indicated on this week's stakeholder call that ODE is in the final stage of completing their Education Recovery Plan Framework document. Paolo centered this week's call on the Health and Safety section of the document that they have been working on with the Department of Health. Although the document contains a comprehensive list of health and safety measures to consider, some of the areas lack specifics in terms of how to operationalize them in a school setting. Also, the document generalizes the guidelines across the K-12 spectrum. A break down by level, elementary, middle school, and high school, will be necessary if we are going to be able to meet the needs of students based on their age and maturity levels.

Paolo shared that they would like to get the document out as soon as possible for feedback on recommendations related to such items as students wearing masks and cleaning and disinfecting protocols. For example, what should be done in terms of cleaning and disinfecting after each student leaves a facility or classroom including between class changes.

Tony shared that Scott Hunt and John have heard from several superintendents who have expressed the urgency to get these guidelines in place as soon as possible. The Health Department guidelines related to reopening, proper supplies, and plans to calculate student attendance. Guidance needs to be developed on how attendance is calculated based on hybrid scheduling and for situations when a student's medical condition precludes them from attending a brick-and-mortar option.

Q. What is the process they are using to write the plan? Is a committee involved?

A. There is a small working group of superintendents of which Paul Imhoff and Todd Hoadley are a part of. That group has been meeting weekly providing the department and the Governor's office with feedback and recommendations. They have been providing input into the document.

Q. I have put in a couple of requests to ODE for guidance related to year-round schooling since our 2021 school calendar starts on July 6.

A. We have asked for guidance related to how to manage summer programming and will include in that conversation the need to create guidelines for year-round schooling. This is also an issue for some of the large urban districts since they also conduct year-round programming.

Q. What strategies are districts considering in terms of enhanced cleaning and disinfectants processes? Do we ask our students and our teachers to take the last five minutes to grab a wipe, clean off your device, clean off your computer and desk on your way out of the classroom?

A. ODE is working with the Ohio Department of Health setting guidelines about sanitization. That information will be in the restart document.

Q. Is it practical for everyone in the building to wear a mask at all times such as staff, teachers, custodians, smaller children, children with special needs, and are we able to purchase enough product to be able to hand out every day?

A. Rethinking the use of custodians, teachers, and students as part of the cleaning process is probably the best chance of being able to meet the expectations going forward.

Q. The emails I get start with how parents appreciate all the efforts by the district and appreciate everything the teachers are doing, but I need to go back to work. What is the plan going forward to address this issue?

A. Yes, this is a very good point and we have requested that the Department look at this by age groupings. Senator Dolan and the General Assembly, the Governor's office, and the Health Department are meeting on the appropriate strategy moving forward that meets the economic needs as well as the health and safety needs of the state and the kids.

Q. We are also talking budget impacts. My full day every day kindergarten pays a fee that generates about \$400,000 a year. If we deliver instruction on an every other day format, how do I charge a fee? The other issue is if all kids can return to school, we may have a significant portion of parents that are going to have their kids just not show up and will still want education done remotely based on fear. A large group of teachers were voicing concern for employee safety.

A. Guidelines and guardrails related to what are the parameters regarding reopening are items we have been asking ODE to address with the Health Department. It is very difficult making decisions about programming and numbers without knowing what is and what is not allowable.

Q. We have some students that are not reporting to school. My administrators and counselors are reaching out to locate them and when we call the Department of Children and Family Services and our local authorities to make a wellness check we are having difficulty coordinating those agencies in an effort to work with us. Any suggestions?

A. Coordinating your searches with other districts in your area may help with getting the outside departments to work together with the districts. Attendance is an issue throughout the state.

Q. Can we add attendance to the list because if we're going to have, for example, 7 through 12 on different schedules and some offsite learning, or a mix of both, we need a better definition around electronic offsite learning in terms of how we track attendance?

A. There is an attendance piece in the document that ODE is working on that they said would address that concern.

Budget

- Care Funding (487 Million with 90% Distribution through Title Program)
- Reductions to FY20 Budget – Coming Soon

Both Tony and Jessica urged everyone to take a cautious approach in terms of anticipating what level of federal dollars will be available to spend for COVID-19 cost, we are anticipating that with the General Assembly meeting next week, adjustments will be made to this year's budget. In addition, the Governor will also be weighing in on what they may be planning to do. We will follow up on the budget next week once we have more information.

Legislative Planning/Priorities

The legislators are returning this week, they will have a few committees this week and will have even more committees in the upcoming weeks. The House has indicated that they will be holding hearings in session through the 2nd week of June before they break for summer recess. The House Finance Committee is meeting today, and the Senate Finance Committee is scheduled for tomorrow.

The first order of business is going to be how to balance the FY20 budget. I think we are also going to see the legislature try to take action to limit the Governor's authority to make decisions on reopening the state.

Chairman Jones of the House Education Committee and Senator Lehner of the Senate Education Committee plan to meet Wednesday the 13th. Most of the issues that education committees are likely to deal with will be additional COVID-19 related legislation, funding, and the budget. The capital appropriations bill will likely go through the House and Senate Finance Committee, respectfully.

Q. Will each individual local school district decide as to how we come back?

A. School districts are expected to utilize the ODE and ODH guidance currently being developed and then work with their local health departments. There should be some variability and flexibility related to how certain communities need to respond to COVID-19 that should allow for some local flexibility in collaboration with their local Health Department.

Q. Guardrails need to be put in place to create some form of equity across the state so we're not pitting kid against kid, family against family and economics against economics, food, money and everything else for what a suburb can do versus a rural or an urban inner city can do.

A. Once we see the planning document that the department is working on in collaboration with ODH we should be in a better position to determine if appropriate guardrails have been established.

Follow-up from last week's call

The Executive Committee will meet on Thursday with Jeff Snodgrass from Ohio High School Athletic Association, we will be asking for some information on summer athletic programming based on the August 1st start date. We will be reporting that back on Tuesday next week.

Q. Related to the rumors going around that there's going to be some flexibility currently being considered by OHSAA related to the no contact order that only extends to June 1st, we are questioning that because the current school closure order goes to June 30th. Will they allow some form of contact because of what's happening for clubs or what clubs are potentially doing so this is a major concern and needs to be discussed, facilities are closed until June 30th, no contact has to stay in place because we cannot create the paradigm where kids are going to try to come back to school campuses because coaches are not allowed to have contact when our schools are closed through June 30th

A. This conflict will be discussed with Jeff Snodgrass when the Executive Committee meets on Thursday. We will report on that discussion when we meet next week.

Next Conference Call:

The next call will be **May 12, 2020, at 10 AM by phone conference.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.