

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

**September 22, 2020**  
**10:00 A.M.**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**

*In attendance on phone conference:* Tony Podojil, Jessica Voltolini, guest Jim Betts, and member representatives from 40 school districts.

Tony Podojil convened the meeting by phone conference at 10:06 a.m.

**State Health Requirements – COVID19**

- K-12 Virus Reporting Systems for Schools
- Guaranteeing Staff, Students

The Alliance members received a copy of the Governor’s Virus Reporting Order via email on September 4, 2020 from Jessica. Our meeting today will focus on any issues with the reporting system, questions, or feedback that districts may be facing and would like to share.

**Are there any concerns on the above or any of the other mandated health screenings/testing?**

**Questions:**

**Q.** Districts are concerned with the vision and hearing testing with students being virtual, would like to know how other districts may be handling those screenings and assessments.

**A.** We are still waiting on ODE for gifted identification requirements for virtual students. They are working on a guidance document, that we hope will be released Thursday, that hopefully will address all the testing and screening issues.

Kathy from Twinsburg stated that ODH has extended hearing /vision screenings for K-1 until January 30<sup>th</sup> with an option for parents to opt out. She will share that information with membership.

**Q.** Deadlines for immunizations has not changed, however, parents are not able to make office visits as soon as the deadline due to COVID issues, but have a doctor’s note with a scheduled appointment date and time for the immunization, should we extend the time and if we do what legal issue could we be facing?

A. Some districts are currently bringing students in for screenings/testing while full remote, working with each family to be sure they are comfortable bringing in the student. They are following guidance for distancing and such as testing/screening occurs. Most parents have been cooperative with this approach. The Alliance will bring this into conversation with ODE.

Q. How do we handle reporting if parents refuse to come in for testing/screening?

A. This should be covered in the new guidance that will be coming out. Jessica did ask about this on the last call with ODE. Jessica will go over the information she has from last week and confirm the information, she will update members via email.

Q. Can we start a conversation with the Governor's office about athletics? We are a month away from Jr. High Basketball tryouts and the districts need guidance sooner than later because some districts have travel teams wanting to use the facilities. Having two plans would be nice, one if the virus numbers go up and one if the numbers go down, so decisions can be made now rather than a few days before the start of the season.

A. Tony will reach out to OHSSA and the Governor's office on this topic.

Q. In some districts quarantine numbers are very high, sometimes 250 students at once are sent home for 14 days, can we start a conversation about shortening the number of days? Can we use WHO guidelines of 3 foot 15 minute instead of a 6 foot 15 minute and if you are a district with over 1,000 kids in your district, you would start to look at 1% of your students that have a positive case at the same time in any of the buildings so that you could flex back to the 6 foot guidelines.

A. The health director stated that they are considering several options and are discussing shortening the number of quarantine days. Their office hopes to give some guidance next week.

Q. Have we gotten any news on the mask/religious requirement?

A. Districts will have to defer to local legal counsel until the Governor's office can respond. The Governor's office has been informed about this from several districts. Jessica will keep members updated.

### **Legislation**

- HB305 - School Funding
- SB358 - COVID Flexibility Extensions
- ED Choice

Jessica stated she has been talking with legislators, ODE, and the Governor's office since before Labor Day on all of the challenges surrounding testing administration this fall, (vision, HRA, hearing, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading guarantee, etc.). Unfortunately, there is not a bill that can cover these issues and pass before the deadlines of the required testing/screenings. However, policy makers,

leadership in the House and the Senate, the Governor's office, and ODE are aware of these issues and realize district concerns. They understand even if districts make the assessments available that some parents just will not let the student participate in person. Jessica will continue to work on this and keep members posted.

The Senate has been in session more than the House, both are in this week for session tomorrow. This is the only House session before the November 3<sup>rd</sup> election. They are limiting the number of sessions they have between now and November so that is why we are having trouble passing amendments we have been advocating for.

Committees on the Senate side will be having sessions, but the House will have limited committees on the Energy Replace Issue.

**HB305** This bill is a priority for Speaker Cupp. There will be a sub-committee having hearings on the Substitute version of 305 beginning next week thru October. They hope all the hearings can be finalized by October before the election day. Senator Lehner will introduce a companion bill in the Senate. If anyone has any questions about modifications on this bill, please call Jim Betts at 614-565-0591.

**SB358** has had 3 hearings, the bill would extend the provisions in HB197 and HB154 thru the 20-21 school year. SB358 was introduced by Sen Manning and Sen. Fedor, the issue with the bill is that it request to waive all Spring assessments and would require ODE to request a wavier from the Federal Government, however, September 6 a letter went out to State chiefs stating no testing waivers will be issued for this year.

Jessica will have more information around testing and ED Choice after Lame Duck which starts after the November 3 election and continues until the third week of December. She will keep members posted.

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

The next call **TBD**.

The meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m.