

Legislative/Systems Improvement Committee
Zoom Meeting for all members

Wednesday, August 18, 2021
10:00 A.M.
MEETING SUMMARY

In attendance on phone conference: Tony Podojil, Jessica Voltolini, and member representatives from 47 school districts.

Tony Podojil convened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. The primary focus of the meeting was to receive feedback from Alliance members regarding vaccinations, mask, and House Bill 248.

I. Current Political Landscape/ Legislative Initiatives.

A. Vaccinations

- a. **HB 248** (Rep. Gross)-"Vaccine Choice and Anti-Discrimination Act" prohibits mandatory vaccinations, vaccination status disclosures, and certain other actions regarding vaccinations. It authorizes an individual to bring a civil action if the individual believes a violation has occurred and requires the court to award a prevailing plaintiff attorney's fee, compensation for court costs, and any civil penalty the court considers appropriate.
- b. **COVID-** Masks, No Mask, Vaccinations, etc.

HB248 had two hearings in the House before summer recess. Next week the House Health Committee is meeting to have a hearing and potential amendments on this bill. The House and Senate do not have their first scheduled session dates so the earliest this could pass would be September 15th. Jessica will keep members posted on this bill after next week's meetings.

SB22 has passed, effective June 23, with respect to legislative oversight of the Governor's health orders and prohibits local health districts from issuing mask mandates.

HB244 passed in June, effective October 13, with respect to not being able to treat vaccinated students differently than non-vaccinated students, once there is FDA approval this will be void.

SB209 (Senator Brenner) mask bill, has had no hearings and is at the beginning of the legislative process. It was introduced in June. Jessica will update members after next week's meeting with Senator Brenner.

Several districts have been receiving inquiries from parents and other community members during their board meetings regarding mask, vaccinations, quarantine, and religious/medical exemptions. Members on the call shared how districts are approaching these concerns.

Q: *What are districts doing around religious/medical exemptions and asking for documentations? How are you addressing those issues?*

- Most districts are being advised by their law firms on these requests.
- Several districts are receiving many requests, but the majority are being denied.

- When being asked for documentation parents are saying the district does not have the right to ask for that and are filing complaints with Ohio Board of Education for religious discrimination.
- Most medical exemption request have been provided with doctor's letters or the districts are asking for medical notes from primary care physicians and are receiving them.

Follow up Requested:

- Jessica will inquire if a district should or should not require documentation.
- Jessica is also going to update members on the Ohio Revised Code 3313.671 which parents are saying that it mentions school districts are not to require documents or request to speak to a student's religious leader regarding the exemption. Jessica will send the correct information to members.
- Jessica will circulate the orders and dates that are specific to those orders.

Q: *Do you think we will see a bill in Ohio as in other states where schools are not allowed to require mask?*

A: Jessica does not believe this has been discussed but will know more after next week.

General Questions:

Q: *Can the superintendents get notified before the Governor goes on media to discuss certain issues so that districts can handle inquiries from parents so that communities won't be so divided?*

Q: *When vaccines are available to all younger students, what advice can the ODH provide as far as wearing mask, quarantine, unvaccinated students?*

Q: *Another thought is about the unmasked staff that interact with students without mask and then need to be quarantined without enough substitute staff, will some schools have to close?*

Q: *How will quarantine and compliance be handled, can we have guidance on this as well? How do you keep students/staff from school that are not showing signs of illness? Who will do the contact tracing and how will schools know the results of the trace?*

II. Next Steps:

A. Fall 2021

We will have a discussion at the next meeting on open enrollment.

III. Next Meeting.

The next meeting will be held September 15, 2021, at 10 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.