

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

**May 12, 2020
10:00 A.M.**

MEETING SUMMARY

In attendance on phone conference: Jessica Voltolini, Tony Podojil, and member representatives from 60 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

- Daily Precautions to Practice
- Document Due Date

Tony shared that Paolo indicated on this week's stakeholder call, that ODE will be asking for feedback on the Education Recovery Plan Framework document. Feedback from the superintendents related to recommendations on such items such as students wearing masks, cleaning, and disinfecting protocols and building and classroom capacity limits. John Richards suggested that feedback should start with the How to get Started section, which is closest to being finalized. Tony sent that draft to the superintendents, prior to the call for review and feedback in today's call.

Feedback/Questions related to the Health and Safety Draft are listed below:

- Under Social Distancing, what does minimize the number of students and staff and common spaces including hallways mean?
- What definition will be used by the Fire Marshall or Health Department in terms of building codes and student and staff capacity?
- If we are part of the Career Tech consortium and we decide that everybody's going to come to school all five days and our Career Tech program decides they are only open two days a week, how are we going to address those things within the rules and guidelines?
- Are we to use the 6-foot spacing guidelines for establishing how classrooms should be designed to meet the social distancing requirements?
- When it says prohibit visitors in schools, is it prohibit visitors, period? Or can we come up with a process that makes that safe in terms of contact with students and accessibility and parents?
- What options, other than requiring face masks can be used in classrooms? Can we use dividers, like what restaurants are doing? Does everybody need to wear a mask if they are within a 10-foot radius of anybody else and doing their work at their seat or eating in the cafeteria?
- On the physical and social distancing, I am especially concerned about the guidance given for the use of the cafeterias. Our elementary school is 3 stories, and our cafeteria service line is on the 1st floor. First and second graders must climb three flights of stairs with a tray full of food, will we be able to modify that as appropriate to the local conditions?
- Transportation guidance limiting one student to a seat or less on buses will result in additional costs to run extra routes and the more scheduling conflicts with Parochial and Private schools.

- Will we need to submit our plans that follow these guidelines to our local Board of Health for approval? Our local media is already asking us for copies of our plan.
- Will masks be required for staff or students who have a medical reason, hearing deficiencies, autism, or some other reason why they could not wear masks? What other barriers can be used?
- The provision that requires students or persons who travel out of the state or to a location with a known outbreak to quarantine for 14 days may be difficult to enforce? Students who may be traveling prior to the start of school, are they supposed to quarantine for 14 days before they can come to school? Also, staff members that leave for the weekend to go out of state to visit family or staff, will they have to wait 14 days before coming back to work? What if it's only the parent that travels and could expose the student?
- Under the diagnosed or exposed to COVID-19, if one of our students or staff members or a student or staff member has a family member diagnosed or exposed, then that means them and probably everyone in the class will have to self-quarantine for 14 days. Will we have to shut the entire school down for 14 days.
- What about kids that have been diagnosed, hospitalized, and recovered from COVID19, how do we treat that situation, when are they allowed back to school? What if parents decide not to send students back to school because of another child in that classroom that has recovered but fears they still can pass the illness?
- Based on how restaurants are operating, is it fair to say that I must keep first graders 6 feet apart, but multiple families can go in and eat at a table of 10? Can the guidance provide alignment with other industries?
- Is the receptionist or someone we hire required to take temperature at the enrollment centers, schools, etc. We have 50 families that may come into the enrollment center in one day. If staff, students, visitors are self-checking do we just take their word? This is yet another responsibility that we must perform. Is additional funding going to be provided to cover these increased costs.
- I have heard that Minnesota has three feet of social distancing if people are wearing masks. What does that guidance look like? To clarify, the guidance for social distancing in schools on the Minnesota Department of Health website says a 3-foot radius around each student resulting in a 6-foot total distance between any two students, so it is 6 feet it's just three and three. Is this what is meant for our guidance? The World Health Organization did distribute on Sunday a document that did state 1 meter, 3 1/2 feet apart.
- In terms of requiring a separate isolation room, setting aside a separate room for our young students means that we are going to need another person to supervise that student in that room.
- When reaching out to local health departments, we are hearing that they are waiting to hear from the ODH for guidance. Approving plans at the County level will require their understanding of how school environments, school settings operate.
- Can all employees be trained before the start of school on PPE guidelines and procedures, does the training come from the health department, ODE, or do we need to create it? Does it have to be in person, can it be done on-line, what is the timeline for this requirement?
- On cleaning frequency for high touch, high traffic areas, in and out of classrooms, are they expecting our building custodian to do all solely? How will students and staff get involved in this activity? Should they? Where will the PPE products be located and what type will we use, spray/wipes?
- If we close our buildings in the evening would that indicate that we can plan that there is not going to be athletics, plays or concerts in the evening. That is a big part of that cleaning piece.
- How do we manage younger students and their level of PPE with what we are able to provide?
- How deeply is the Governor's office involved in these plans and do you know if the governor has seen it?

Jessica requested that any other question be sent via email to be added to the list.

ESC of Central Ohio – Considerations for Reopening School

Tony reminded those on the call that he had sent a copy of the ESC of Central Ohio report – ‘Considerations for Reopening Schools’ as a resource. It is still being updated but can be used as a checklist, items to consider prior to reopening. Tony asked that any feedback on the document be emailed to him.

Legislative Planning

- AHQE - COVID 19 Education Issues and Legislative Relief
- ODE - Long-Term Education Issues – Potential Legislative Changes

Jessica stated the legislature is back; this is week two, with both the House and Senate Finance Committee meeting again. The House Education Committee is meeting for the first time on Wednesday. We are waiting to hear what the schedule is for the Senate Education Committee.

Jessica and Tony have taken the list of unanswered questions and have circulated that list to the legislative team at the Department, the Governor's office, to the education policy folks in the House and the Senate and to Chairman Jones in the House, Senator Dolan, Senator Lehner and Senator Brenner. They will be talking to Senator Lanier later today.

A document from ODE was sent prior to this meeting to give an idea of what ODE is thinking about from a legislative perspective. ODE is interested in feedback from the field regarding ideas around graduation requirements and blended learning.

Budget - Reductions to FY20 Budget

Jessica stated she and Tony are working with Senator Dolan with respect to the school funding reductions that were announced last week. Senator Dolan has proposed to the Governor's office a proposal that would help districts that have been disproportionately affected by the cuts. A spreadsheet was sent prior to the meeting for review.

Senator Dolan lined up the Governor's cuts with the Care funds to determine what the net losses were for every district. There are a few districts that had a net gain, mostly urban high poverty districts because the CARE's money offset the state reductions. Senator Dolan is asking the Governor's office to cap its reductions at 3.7 which adds up to just under \$36,000,000 for those districts impacted.

Regarding the budget cuts, we are still waiting for clarity from the Office of Budget and Management and ODE regarding the \$55,000,000 in cuts that are coming out of the ODE line items that are not part of the 300 million in the formula. That information was supposed to be out by the end of last week but has been delayed. Information will go out as soon as we receive it.

Next Conference Call:

The next call will be **May 19, 2020, at 10 AM by phone conference.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:15a.m.

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- **Daily Precautions to Practice:**

Through partnership with the Ohio Department of Health, the following daily precautions to practice are outlined below.

- **Daily Health Assessments:** Require students and personnel to take their own temperature before reporting to school and to stay home if above 100F or if experiencing other symptoms. Schools should also consider the reality that all students will not be equally supported in a self-assessment and should be aware of those students with higher needs (single parent, both parents working, etc.). Personnel and students who are ill must stay home from school and must be sent home if they become ill at school, particularly if they have COVID-19 symptoms – cough or shortness of breath without any other explanation, or fever. While waiting to go home, ill persons should continue to wear a facemask and be placed in a separate isolation room overseen by school personnel who is also wearing a mask.
 1. **How do we monitor? Enforce?**
 2. **In lieu of requiring a separate isolation room, require additional social distancing requirements but not a separate room which would require a staff person to monitor.**
- **Physical/Social Distancing:** Maintain physical distancing (at least 6 feet apart) among all persons on school grounds and those utilizing school transportation. Utilize visual cues (i.e., floor markings) and other strategies to reinforce (i.e., alternative units that are meaningful for students to understand 6' spacing). Create transition schedules that minimize the number of students and staff in common spaces including hallways, cafeteria, etc.
 1. **What does this mean? Will there be restrictions regarding maximum number of students in a classroom like business requirements regarding 50% building capacity? For example, will the state set restrictions based on square footage, etc.?**
 2. **Need flexibility regarding social distancing on school buses. For example, siblings could sit next to each other on a bus without social distancing.**
 3. **Regarding school cafeteria, please do not be more restrictive than what is required for restaurants.**
- **Face Masks:** Require all persons on school grounds and utilizing school transportation to wear facemasks. School nurses or personnel who care for sick persons should utilize appropriate PPE. Will this be provided by districts/schools? Will employees be expected to have their own? What standards must be met?
 1. **What level of PPE? Medical level?**
 2. **What about masks or dividers?**
 3. **Flexibility regarding masks for younger students? Just require masks on school buses, playgrounds, outside the classroom and/or cafeteria?**
 4. **Exceptions for students with disabilities, autism, etc. who cannot wear a mask.**
- **Good Hygiene Practices:** Make hand sanitizer (60-95% alcohol based) and sanitizing products available for personnel and students, especially in high traffic areas, including at each school entrance and in every classroom (See *Guidelines for the Use of Alcohol*

Based Hand Sanitizers in Ohio Schools guidance document at:

https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/school-nursing-program/media/use_of_alcohol-based_hand_sanitizers_in_ohio_schools).

- **Clean and Sanitize:** Frequently clean surfaces paying attention to high-touch areas (stair handrails, door handles, counters, desks, tables, chairs, lavatories, computers, books, etc.). Cleaning and disinfection should be done after each cohort of students leaves a facility or classroom, including between class changes (if applicable), between groups in the cafeteria (when utilized), and after each school day. Limit sharing of supplies and equipment and sanitize between student use. What is the appropriate level of staffing to accommodate additional needs?
 1. **Correct...what is the appropriate level of staffing required to accommodate to these requirements!**
 2. **What can students be responsible for based on grade-level appropriateness?**
- **Student Learning:** It is important to note that expected health practices will require new learned behaviors. Implement age-appropriate learning about COVID-19 control strategies for students. This should be on-going to reinforce the importance of handwashing, physical distancing, appropriate use of facemasks, cough and sneeze etiquette, and the importance of staying home when sick or displaying symptoms. All schools and offices should display environmental print promoting infection control strategies (i.e., cough/sneeze etiquette, proper handwashing, appropriate use of facemasks, physical distancing, importance of staying home when sick, etc.). Find examples at coronavirus.ohio.gov.
- **Employee Training:** Education and training for all employees must be provided on how to properly put on, use, take off, and dispose of PPE. Adequate education must be provided for all school personnel to know and recognize the most likely symptoms of COVID-19 and how to protect employees and students from transmissions.
 1. **What is the required timeline for training all employees?**
- **Showing Symptoms of COVID-19 at School:** Should students or employees exhibit symptoms while physically attending school in-person, they should report to a quarantine room, be required to wear a face mask and any adults interacting with them should be required to wear a face mask. Those showing symptoms should be required to go home at the earliest convenience.
- **Visitors:** Prohibit visitors in schools, or limit to emergency situations and enrollment. Require temperature checks and a symptom check for any visitors.
 1. **Need guidance regarding what exactly is required.**
 2. **Do not put new requirements on school staff to monitor; require visitors to take their own temperature before entering school property and provide confirmation.**
- **Diagnosed or Exposure to COVID-19:** Families and staff must notify school if they have been exposed to COVID-19 and are quarantined, or if a family member has been diagnosed with or presumed to have COVID-19 and/or is being isolated; Personnel and students with known exposure to someone with diagnosed or presumed COVID-19 must self-quarantine at home for 14 days; Personnel or students who travel out of state or to a location with known community spread must self-quarantine at home for 14 days. Guidelines should be considered for holding students and personnel harmless for required quarantine period(s).
 1. **We have school districts with staff that live across state lines.**
 2. **What about student's who are traveling (i.e. vacation) up until first day of school. How does this impact 14 quarantine period? Holidays and spring break?**

- **Returning to School Following Quarantine:** Personnel and students with confirmed or presumed COVID-19 must meet these conditions prior to returning to school: Persons with confirmed COVID-19 may return to work/school after fever is resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication **AND** respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) improve **AND** they have two negative COVID-19 test results; Persons with presumed COVID-19 may return to work/school when at least 7 days have passed since symptom onset **AND** 72 hours after fever resolves without use of fever-reducing medication **AND** respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) improve.