



March 29, 2020

Our community, our state, and much of the world are now dealing with an unprecedented public health crisis. We hope that you and your family are safe and healthy.

Public schools are part of the essential social fabric and economy of our communities. We know that the current school closure has caused difficulties for many families who rely on their schools for meals, health care, and a safe place to be during the day. It has also caused concern for school employees and their families. We want you to reassure you, per Governor Brown's Executive Order 20-08, that all school employees will be paid and no one will lose their job because they are sick or because it would put their health, or the health of someone they live with, at risk to work.

We want to thank all of our members and educators. Thank you all for your dedication to our children, families, and to each other. Thank you for your patience as we deal with this crisis and the unimaginable impacts on our schools and students. Thank you for your understanding as we try to answer your questions and meet the challenges each day brings. We know that your communities are looking to you for answers and guidance and you have been asked to provide stability in a time of confusion, fear, and uncertainty.

Our organizations believe it is critical for our members to prioritize the tasks the Governor has asked us to complete and work together to ensure that your health and safety, and the health and safety of the students we serve, are at the forefront. We are asking you to show each other patience, grace and understanding as we work through all of the unknown challenges on the horizon. Our communities need clear and consistent information from teachers, educators, classified staff, administrators, and school board members to help reassure them that we are doing everything we can for their children.

With that in mind we want to share with you our recommendations for a set of guiding principles for collaboration and cooperation during these unheard-of circumstances:

1. School districts, charter schools, and ESDs have been directed to meet the requirements of the governor's executive orders, and those requirements include tasks that require staff to be present in buildings. This may mean staff will be asked to complete work assignments outside of their normal duties, consistent with the governor's executive order (e.g. a principal asked to deliver meals, a teacher asked to provide childcare). School districts should:
 - Facilitate telework and work-from-home for employees, as appropriate
 - Limit staff-to-staff and staff-to-student contact to that required to fulfill the governor's executive order
2. Employees who disclose that they are at high risk, or live with someone who is at high risk, should not be asked to provide medical verification or a doctor's note at this time. Now is not the time to place additional strain or burden on our medical professionals, but staff may be accountable if they provide false information.

3. Each district should establish a clear and consistent district-wide protocol for employees to disclose that they are at high-risk or live with someone who is at high-risk. The specifics of that disclosure should be confidential.
4. District employees who fall into a high-risk category, or who live with an individual in a high-risk category, should not be required to physically report to work. They are required to telework or provide out-of-office services as worked out by the district. High-risk, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Oregon Health Authority (OHA), means anyone meeting any of the following criteria:
 - a. Aged 60+
 - b. Lung disease, including asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (chronic bronchitis or emphysema) or other chronic conditions associated with impaired lung function or that require home oxygen
 - c. Compromised immune system (immunosuppression) (e.g., seeing a doctor for cancer and treatment such as chemotherapy or radiation, receiving an organ or bone marrow transplant, taking high doses of corticosteroids or other immunosuppressant medications, HIV with a CD4 count <200)
 - d. Blood disorders (e.g., sickle cell disease or on blood thinners)
 - e. Chronic kidney disease
 - f. Chronic liver disease
 - g. Current or recent pregnancy (in the last two weeks)
 - h. Diabetes, or other endocrine disorders
 - i. Metabolic disorders (such as inherited metabolic disorders and mitochondrial disorders)
 - j. Heart disease (such as congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease)
 - k. Neurological and neurologic and neurodevelopment conditions
5. Consistent with CDC and OHA guidelines, employees who are sick or who are exhibiting flu-like symptoms should not physically report to work.
6. Staff who are asked to report to work and do not fall into a high-risk category or do not live with someone in a high-risk category should report. If they cannot or will not physically report, for another reason, they should use appropriate leave for the hours they are not working in order to receive their regular pay.
7. When district employees are required to physically report to work, social distancing guidelines should be followed as closely as possible, with minimal exceptions being made to fulfill essential services. That includes maintaining at least six feet of distance between individuals to the extent possible, while still providing essential services required by the governor's executive order. Employees called back to work should be working in a sanitized environment. Given the inability to follow full distancing recommendations in all situations, such as childcare settings, employees should follow CDC, OHA and Early Learning Division guidance.



8. District employees who have children who are unable to care for themselves at home and who do not have childcare due to COVID-19 closures, may take advantage of childcare provided by the district or community-based childcare providers, if it is available. Otherwise, these district employees should not be required to physically report to work, but they are subject to telework and other out-of-office services as worked out with the district. A school employee will not be required to bring their child to work.
9. If employees feel they are in imminent danger or being asked to work in unsafe conditions, those concerns should be immediately reported to the staff member required to monitor and enforce social distancing requirements per guidance from ODE, or to their staff supervisor.
10. No school employee should suffer a loss in pay during the school closure as outlined by the Governor’s Executive Order 20-08. With the exception of situations detailed in point #6 in this document, employees should not be required to use accrued leave during school closure.
11. While employers have the authority to assign all staff duties to implement the requirements of the governor’s executive order regardless of the provisions of current CBAs, school district CBA provisions that are not in conflict with the governor’s executive orders remain in place.

We are all in this crisis together, and each of you is critical to our mission of providing essential services to our community, which includes our students. When our schools are in crisis, our community looks to all of us to pull together and deliver unified services and messages that are supportive of our students and families and help reassure them that we are doing everything we can to guide them. It is more critical than ever that we collaborate to maintain consistent and unified communications from our organizations and members.

Please let us know if you have any questions or need any additional information about our efforts to support you as you support our students.

John Larson
President
Oregon Education Association

Jim Green
Executive Director
Oregon School Boards Association

Craig Hawkins
Executive Director
Confederation of School Administrators

Susan Miller
Director of Field Operations
Oregon School Employees Association, AFT 6732

Gary Peterson
Executive Director
Oregon Association of Education Service Districts