



Colleagues,

I wanted to share with you on the district has responded with to our questions. I met with Mr. Wakefield on Friday to go over their responses and had the opportunity to ask follow-up questions from what OEA has received after the questions were submitted.

I want to refer you to the email from the district titled, "Safe and Responsible Return to School." In this email the district has asked if you believe that you are unable to return to work for any reason to click the link and provide Human Resources with some basic information. The information you provide will remain with HR and assist them in identifying options to address the health and safety of students and staff. The district is unable to identify the best option without knowing the facts from staff. Staff that have already submitted the information have heard back from HR with additional forms to be filled out if needed. OEA encourages you to provided what is needed, feel free to loop your OS into this conversation. The district will announce assignments to the remote learning program the week of July 27th to deliver instruction virtually to students not returning to school in person. I have provided the link, if you need to notify the district.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=tm3mWBshN0q36A72lnQgwUxpt4vLko1lsVo_quAI_GNUNVNESE4zMFg2TUVHODM5NDhRV0o0VjA4Qi4u

(You may need to access this link from your OPS email. OEA doesn't have the ability to make it a live link as only OPS staff have the ability to fill out the needed form.)

The safety of students and staff needs to be at the center of any decision. No plan is ideal on return to school. It might even change before we hit August. However, that doesn't stop the planning and preparation for a safe and responsible return to school. To review, OEA was informed of the Family 3:2 Plan on June 26th, the following 72 hours I received hundreds of emails with concerns, support, and numerous questions that needed to be answered by OPS. On June 29th I made a public comment at the BoE meeting and shared the 6-page document with the entire school board, Superintendent and Mr. Wakefield. On Friday, July 10th I met with Mr. Wakefield to go over the responses and ask additional questions. I have responded to many emails on information I knew at the time. However, if I didn't respond to an email, this message will hopefully address that question or concern.

I will share with you some key questions that were submitted by the **OEA** and answers that were given by OPS...

Teachers with elementary age children in OPS lacking childcare options the days for their children are not in school--larger concern for community and childcare as well. What agencies have been contacted to support? Is there a community plan? Will teachers be forced to take sick/accrued days if they cannot afford/find childcare?

- There are options under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act for

parents that are experiencing issues with childcare due to COVID-19. We would work with any staff member in this situation to find the option that works best for them.

- The Omaha Public Schools has collaborated with our current before and after school providers to support daycare needs. Those two agencies are Collective for Youth and their umbrella agency programming partners and the Omaha Public Schools Foundation (Kids Club)

Will teachers who can demonstrate that a medical professional believes they are not able to return to work given the 3/2 plan and proposed policies (masking, cleaning, etc) due to their own health (MS, cancer treatments, etc) be permitted to work from home in some fashion or offered a transfer to the virtual school?

- Teachers unable to return in person would be considered for assignment in our Remote Learning Program. Please note the number of teaching assignments for this program will be based on student enrollment. See paragraph above for process to request to teach virtually.
- We would also work with each teacher/staff member in this situation to determine if the options under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act would benefit them.

Will kids and families have access to COVID testing?

- We are not providing COVID testing to students or staff currently. We do strongly encourage students, families, and staff work with their primary care medical provider or Douglas County Health to determine if they need a test. We are also working with our health care partners at One World and Charles Drew so that our students and families can utilize their testing services.

Can staff realistically expect to receive testing (especially if cases spike), let alone workmen's compensation, if they contract COVID at work?

- While the school district is not conducting any testing, it is our understanding that there is not a shortage of tests in Omaha.
- Typically, Worker's Compensation does not cover infectious diseases unless it can be established that an individual contracted the case at work, the disease is particular to the job, and the employee would not have otherwise contracted the disease but for exposure on the job. Each case would be considered on a case by case basis.

What's the liability of the district if a staff member dies due to COVID from being exposed because of being required to be at school? Especially those that are vulnerable?

- The District would not generally be liable for the death of a staff member from an infectious disease unless it can be established that an individual contracted the case at work, the disease is particular to the job, and the employee would not have otherwise contracted the disease but for exposure on the job. In that case, the death would be covered by Worker's Comp. Liability is determined on a case by case basis.

Will staff be required to use their sick leave if they test positive for COVID?

- Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act staff may receive up to 80 hours of paid leave if they are quarantined or experiencing symptoms of COVID and waiting for a test. Situations requiring leaves longer than this would generally require the use of staff sick leave.

How long will staff be required to stay home?

- Staff will need to receive medical clearance to return to work. The length of

time off work would be determined by the medical professional they are working with.

What happens to vulnerable staff? (older than 60, medical conditions etc.)

- Teachers unable to return in person would be considered for assignment in our Remote Learning Program. Please note the number of teaching assignments for this program will be based on student enrolment. We will work with each teacher/staff member to determine what options are available to them under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

What happens if staff are required to stay home longer than 10 days (not everyone has accrued sick leave for a variety of reasons)?

- Staff unable to return after the 10 days of Public Health leave would generally be required to use their sick leave for additional days. The District will address those staff members who have exhausted all other leave options on a case by case basis.

Can I refuse to cover classes when a colleague is absent and there is no sub? (I want my exposure to be as minimal as possible.)

- Staff cannot refuse legitimate assignments from their principal. We encourage all staff to communicate with their principal any special circumstances so that the principal can work with them to limit any potential risk.

What are the options for those who have spouse at home with underlying health issues? We will need to live a part, because of the many health issues.

- We will work with each teacher/staff member to determine what options under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and/or FMLA will benefit them.

What kind of accommodations are being considered for the teachers in order to keep us and our families safe?

- As shared at the June 29 Board meeting, we are implementing several practices that will allow us to openly safely and responsibly including:
 - Reducing class size by using the 3/2 model to allow for social distancing
 - Requiring face coverings
 - Providing PPE
 - Providing daily disinfection of spaces and materials to allow staff to clean/sanitize during the day.
 - Adjusting air flow to increase fresh air in schools
 - Etc.
- We will continue to monitor our community situation and adjust as appropriate to provide for the safety of staff and students.

What will be the threshold of percent positive tests?

- We do not have a threshold percent of positive tests. We are working closely with Douglas County Health Officials and other medical experts and will deal with situations as they present themselves.

Are the masks that were purchased at least 3 layers of fabric which the CDC and WHO recently recommended?

- The CDC recommends a two-ply cotton face covering. Five cloth face coverings were ordered for each staff member and student. The disposable face coverings are three ply and are available in every school.

Some of our schools are filthy with cleaning procedures. For example—We went several weeks without soap or paper towels last year. The staff had to bring soap to

school. How are they going to keep our schools clean when the custodians can't keep up with the cleaning without Covid-19?

- District Operations is working with each custodial team to ensure that buildings are cleaned and disinfected daily. High traffic areas will be cleaned and disinfected with greater regularity. If any staff member has concerns about their building's cleanliness they should communicate with their principal.

Will students have temperatures checked getting on/off the bus? Who will be responsible for that?

- No decisions have been made at this time about temperature checks. There are FERPA concerns with taking and recording student's temperatures.

Masks: required but how enforced? Will the Code of Conduct reflect masks as part of the dress code for the 2020-2021 school year so that building administrators have the capacity to require masks? Will face shields be ordered for students who cannot wear masks due to health issues or speech impediments? Will educators of the deaf and hard of hearing get face shields?

- Issues relating to the enforcement of the mask requirement are in the process of being addresses. The District has ordered face shields for both students and staff that cannot wear a face covering due to health needs, speech language concerns, or hard of hearing staff/students.

What will be the policy for kids/siblings who test positive for staying home? What support will be provided/expected for those kids?

- We will work with the family and follow the advice the medical professionals based on the specific circumstances of each case.

How many cases or what kind of rate of infection would cause a building to be on quarantine/moved to remote learning?

- We do not have a threshold percent of positive tests. We are working closely with Douglas County Health Officials and other medical experts and will deal with situations as they present themselves

Struggle to find substitutes; how will the district be able to manage a system in which we're encouraged to stay home if staff feel sick?

- We recognize this as a concern as well and continue to work on potential solutions. Currently, each school will have alternative plans for coverage if substitutes are not available. In addition, HR will work with principals to adjust staffing levels based on teacher availability and student enrollment.

How does having open-air ventilation from the classroom windows help come February?

- The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating & Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) recommends introducing as much fresh air as possible. We are currently targeting a 200% refresh of the air in a building.
- Increase exterior intake air past the current standard of 10% to potentially 50-70%
- Changing of filters on a regular basis and not on the current schedule
- We are considering 100% runtime and will adjust dependent upon the humidity level
- When it is too hot or too cold, we may not reach the 200% recycling of air.

How do you maintain discipline in a hallway full of teenagers in masks?

- Schools must follow the MTSS-B Matrix regarding the teaching and reteaching of building-wide expectations. Students are expected to adhere to the district Code of Conduct and school-wide expectations. Our current practices pertaining to student discipline have not changed. High staff visibility and positive relationships are key. Positive redirection and affirmation are best practices.

What if the nurse says the student has to go home but the parents don't come to get him/her?

- The nurse will work with the principal to determine next steps in this scenario.

How is the district going to make sure that numbers are cohesive to social distancing?

- By using the 3/2 plan we are reducing the number of students at a school on any given day and the number of students within a classroom. Additionally, principals are working on plans for common spaces and other areas where students and staff may unintentionally congregate.

Can a teacher get sued for negligence if a child in his/her care gets sick with COVID and the parents feel it was as a result of being in school?

- As a general rule, no.

Will everybody (specifically secondary level) be required to wear a mask? Teacher, admin, other staff, and students.

- Yes, All staff, students and visitors will be expected to wear a face covering when on-site. There are exceptions to this practice. Children under two years of age, individuals who cannot remove a face covering without assistance and/or with significant sensory needs, individuals who use sign language interpretation and/or lip reading, individuals whose breathing may be impaired by wearing a face covering will not be required to wear masks. In addition, masks are not required for outdoor activities where recommended social distancing guidelines are being met.

Will we have support to 'make' them or send them out of class if the refuse?

- Issues relating to the enforcement of the mask requirement are in the process of being addresses. Wearing of face coverings is essential. It will be a practice that will have to be taught and managed.

How will this work in Kindergarten not knowing who the students are and them missing out on roundup at the end of the year? Will there be screening or possible half days for the students?

- CIS (specifically the Director of Elementary Education) is working with a team on developing plans to better support pre-K students and Kindergarten students.

If we send a student home and parent doesn't answer or show up — how do you isolate them — nursing is stretched thin who launders the masks?

- The nurse would work with the principal to determine next steps in this scenario.
- Students and staff will be provided with 5 face coverings that they will wash at home. If a student/staff does not have a face covering or they arrive with a face covering which is dirty there will be disposable masks available.

Will CIS departments develop a model for the 3/2 plan that will ensure that teachers

are not expected to teach children remotely and live simultaneously so that there is equity in the district as to what is expected and the delivery of instruction for both students and teachers?

- Teachers will teach students in the classroom and will not simultaneously deliver remote learning to students at home learning. Teachers will be expected to plan for at home learning which may include asynchronous learning

What will be the grading policies?

- Teachers will use the current OPS grading practices and procedures.

What will happen with standardized testing?

- This will be determined by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Will teachers have direction given in terms of how to navigate the GVC and pacing guides and the reality of the 3/2 and remote learning environment?

- Curriculum guides are currently being updated by CIS and OPS teachers.
- The students and teachers will NEED more in terms of social-emotional support.

Will teachers be allowed to make space for more SEL in their time with students, understanding that the plan affects the implementation of curriculum?

- Student Community Services is planning additional SEL for teachers and students. Schools will also utilize their current MTSS-B plans for varying needs.

How will IEPs be implemented?

- IEPs are expected to be implemented. The IEP teams of students who will not be in school every day will work with families individually if changes are needed to the IEP.

What other information is there about students with special needs and special education services? What if I cannot see them in person as much as their IEP says?

- IEP teams (including the family) will need to meet to determine if changes are needed to the IEP. Some students may also be eligible for compensatory services when we move back to 100%.

Some of my buildings have 2-6 kids at them but their last names are different so they would be at school different days but get 30 minutes 3x a week on their IEP. How can this be maintained if the goal is to limit travel and transitions as much as possible?

- Teachers will continue to travel. Special Education TLCs will work closely with travel teachers, schools and families to meet the needs of staff and families.

Will allowance be made for our medical students (or parent with significant medical needs) if parents do not want them attending in person classes but want virtual services?

- Yes we are offering a Remote Learning Option for students. We will also continue to provide homebound and homebased services for eligible students.

How will evaluations happen during this model?

- Evaluations will continue as normal. Teachers teaching remotely will have

administrators observe their remote lessons.

Teachers will be asked to double their workload to offer virtual lessons as well as traditional lessons, what gives?

- Teachers will plan for in person instruction and at home learning. They will not teach simultaneously.

How does this schedule effect travel teachers?

- Teachers will continue to travel. Elementary and Secondary divisions are currently working on this.

How is the Early Childhood Special Education going to look? EC is hands on all day, their day is based off consistency and routine. Lots of need for sanitizing mats, tables, centers and the list goes on. Who will assist with that?

- Early Childhood teachers and paras will be expected to maintain a safe learning environment. The school custodial staff will also be available to assist.

Specialists who travel to multiple schools (on some days I personally go to 3 schools, I know others go to more than 3 in a day)?

- Travel teachers will continue to travel. An elementary cycle day calendar is being created.

The district's proposed reopening plan will put me in a difficult spot. I am a single parent to a child who was supposed to begin pre-K with OPS this fall. Under the district's proposed schedule, I will be without childcare 2-3 days per week.

- We understand that this may be a challenge for some of our staff families. We will work with each teacher/staff member in this situation to determine what options under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act or other leave policies will be available to them.

Am trusting the same custodial staff that doesn't always vacuum my class to effectively and daily sanitize it now?

- District Operations has been working with custodial teams to ensure a clean and sanitized building. If you see concerns regarding cleanliness please communicate with your principal and they will work with District Operations and/or HR as appropriate. Rooms will be fogged daily. This process sterilizes the room using ionization.

As of Friday, pregnant women were added to the high-risk category by the CDC. At any given time, most buildings have pregnant teachers or teachers who become pregnant during the year. Are we asking them to risk their health and the health of their unborn child?

- We do not want any staff member to risk their or their family's health. Our return to school plans are actively working to limit the level of risk that staff will experience to below the level they would experience in the community. We will continue to monitor circumstances and adjust as appropriate.
- If any staff member has a documented medical reason that attending school is too high of a risk, we will work with the staff member in to determine what options under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act or other leave policies will be available to them. Asking to teach virtually may be viable alternative for those teachers. Respond to the email sent by the district.

What safety measures will there be for students and staff at various programs, such as ACP, JP Lord, BSP and ILP?

- Disposable Gowns, gloves, shields will be available for feeding and diaper changes. The district will maintain a 60-day supply on hand for the materials being used. Staff members are to ask Principal when they need to be replenished.

In closing, teachers will need to work with building administration to identify a plan on what the expectations are of the wearing of masks. This will need to be identified in the building MTSS-B plan.

I am sure there are additional questions and concerns, please email me and I will get the answers.

Be well,

Robert
OEA President
