



Colleagues,

OEA continues to receive questions from our members on a variety of issues as we head to the first day of school. To be clear, there are teachers who support 100% in person instruction, some who are fine with the 3:2 Family plan and others who feel that remote learning is the best option. Each voice matters and is being heard. OEA is advocating for whatever the model looks like, it must be done SAFELY! Our students and staff need and deserve to have a safe environment to work in.

COVID Update

So, what can we do? OEA has been advocating for safety measures, participating in meetings with UNMC medical experts, updates on the current status regularly and partnered with other metro local associations in asking for mask mandate. Are conditions changing? Yes. The current positive cases of COVID-19 continue to increase.

The Douglas County Board of Health held a meeting with 5 of the 9 members present and voted in support of the mask mandate. The mask mandate is now in the hands of the Omaha City Council. I encourage you to contact your city council representative to urge them to vote yes for this mandate. Their email addresses are below.

- pete.festersen@cityofomaha.org
- Ben.Gray@cityofomaha.org
- Chris.Jerram@cityofomaha.org
- Vinny.Palermo@cityofomaha.org
- Rich.Pahls@cityofomaha.org
- Brinker.Harding@cityofomaha.org
- Aimee.Melton@cityofomaha.org
- Adi.Pour@douglascounty-ne.gov
- Mayorstothert@cityofomaha.org

Current Action

A group of metro teachers have organized an event, that will be held at Memorial Park, **TODAY!** “The Metro needs a mask mandate to drive down the rate of COVID 19 in our community so that we can return to school. If you support this position, wear red, bring your sign, bring your friends and colleagues, to the action today at Memorial Park. Reminder that we will be spaced 6 ft apart, masks are required, there are MANY supports available to you to be successful and protected in **today's** action. 4:00-6:00 p.m.”

Addressing Concerns

It has been stated that building Principals are given the opportunity to identify how to make the safety guidelines work in their buildings. As the district shares info with the Administrators, they share that info with you. Sometimes before OEA is aware of the information. Here are some tips on what to do when you have concerns as school starts.

- **Identify problem**
- **Suggest solutions**
- **Email to Principal so the question is documented**
- **Attempt to implement solution suggested**
- **IF the solution doesn't work, report that back to Principal with more suggested solutions.**
- **Rinse ... Repeat**
- **After that process has been exhausted, call OEA. The first and best way to resolve the issue is at the building level.**
- **OEA is HERE to assist you!**

Safety continues to be the center of any discussion OEA takes part in. Students are depending on us to make sure their needs are being met, we want it to be SAFE. Hopefully, you understand that your voice is HEARD and acknowledged. We are in a situation that we have never been in and doing all we can to make sure that the learning and working environments, whatever that is remains safe for everyone.

As you go back tomorrow, know that we are here and have been advocating for you all summer long for a safe return. Will the current plan remain? That is the million-dollar question! In the meantime, breathe, be present and know that we continue the fight for the safety of students and staff.

Be well,

Robert