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Reopening Nevada's Schools to In-Person Instruction Safely And Equitably

The Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) understands the critical role of public schools in our communities. Our members are essential to the academic and non-academic success of our students. NSEA is also cognizant of the role that reopening schools to in-person instruction will have on the well-being of our students, their families, and our communities. Any plan to reopen our schools to in-person instruction must balance competing factors to maximize opportunity and equity for our students and ensure the safety of the entire school community.

NSEA maintains that any return to in-person instruction, in any form:

- **Must fully comply with all CDC and local health department requirements.**
- **Must fully involve local education associations to ensure that the voices of both teachers and education support professionals are heard; this includes engaging in collective bargaining as needed to ensure the safety of our students and our communities.**
- **Must include a fully remote education option for medically fragile/susceptible students and staff at their request.**
- **Must include protocols for managing both small-scale and large-scale outbreaks of COVID-19 at a school site and include a threshold for re-closing schools.**

Prior to the reopening of our schools to in-person instruction, the COVID-19 pandemic must be under control in our communities. To that end, education should continue remotely until the transmission rate within the community is low and infections have been declining over at least a two-week period with falling infection rates, test positivity rates, hospitalization rates, and sufficient hospital capacity.

To be prepared for a return to in-person instruction, at a minimum:

- ▶ At all times, all schools must be able to accommodate a minimum physical distance of six (6) feet. Plans should provide reduced class-sizes, reconfigured classrooms, installation of physical barriers where needed, and reconfigured school buses.
- ▶ Additional professional development and training to ensure educators are well-equipped to deliver instruction remotely.
- ▶ Adequate staffing, particularly paraprofessionals and substitute teachers, must be provided to ensure that all educators may be able to isolate as needed to protect their health.
- ▶ Testing and reporting of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning unit ability to deliver fresh air and/or filter recycled air in school classrooms.
- ▶ All schools should have adequate supplies of all appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), masks, hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, and other materials needed to protect the health of our community.

- ▶ All schools must have adequate supplies of classroom materials to ensure that all students have their own in order to limit possible disease vectors.
- ▶ All surfaces must be cleaned at least daily with certain high-touch surfaces being cleaned multiple times daily.
- ▶ Additional time allowed for custodians, nutrition workers, nurses, and others who engage in certain high-risk activities to ensure their work can be done in a manner that maximizes the safety of our students and school communities.

Understanding that COVID-19 infections will likely continue or accelerate during any return to in-person instruction, school district and local officials must, at a minimum:

- ▶ Develop protocols to manage a singular case (adult or student) in a classroom and identify case thresholds for individual class, school wing/department, and full school closure.
- ▶ Develop and implement procedures to ensure that COVID-19 can be detected, such as educating students and other as to the symptoms, allowing individuals experiencing symptoms to remain at home with no loss of pay, and requiring the closure of specific buildings in order to contain outbreaks.
- ▶ Develop and implement a protocol to allow for contact tracing and notification to all individuals who are exposed to someone with COVID-19, as well as requiring all exposed individuals to quarantine for fourteen (14) days.
- ▶ Engage in collective bargaining with all relevant parties as required by law, prior to the implementation of any changes.
- ▶ Allow for the regular, unannounced building inspections of local health officials to ensure compliance with all CDC and local health department directives.
- ▶ Allow for a well-publicized, anonymous hotline to report any violations. Any violations must be investigated and remedied, if necessary, within 48 hours. Whistleblowers must be protected against any form of retaliation.
- ▶ All high-risk students, staff, and families must be protected through the continuation of remote learning and instruction.

Any plan to return to in-person instruction must ensure continuous learning to all students, at a minimum:

- ▶ Any plan for either remote, hybrid, and in-person education must address racial and social equity in the provision of instruction and supportive services.
- ▶ Training must be provided to educators, students, and their families, to allow for the immediate conversion of in-person instruction to remote instruction as needed.
- ▶ Educators must be included in the planning process for any form of reopening or remote learning.
- ▶ Technology devices and high-speed internet must be available to ensure that all students have reliable, quality access to remote learning platforms.
- ▶ Wraparound services and staffing to protect the social, emotional, nutritional, and health needs of those students at-risk, particularly those who live in poverty must be available.