



Shaker Heights Teachers' Association

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Dear SHTA Members, Shaker Heights Administration, School Board and Community,

As we prepare to reopen schools in the fall, the SHTA Executive Board recommends the following practical ideas to ensure the safety of our students, teachers, staff, and community. During a pandemic which has now taken over 112,000 American lives (and counting), we need to take the appropriate precautions, including protecting the most vulnerable individuals among us. We realize that these recommendations may need to be updated during the coming weeks and months as the scientific community learns more.

At this point, due to the latest findings from the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and the Ohio Department of Health, we are recommending the following:

- Buildings and classrooms must maintain the recommended six-foot distance between students and teachers.
- Smaller class sizes, that make social distancing and safe movement in classes possible, including within resource rooms and multi-handicapped spaces. This may also include a hybridized on-line and in-class school model.
- Appropriate, district-provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for each student and staff member.
- Hand sanitizing at each entry and throughout buildings.
- Deep cleaning at the building level after each school day. This may necessitate a limited number of in-person school days to facilitate deep cleaning, with one day with students and one day without students for cleaning and disinfecting.
- COVID-19 testing for any student or staff member returning to school after suspected or diagnosed COVID-19 illness.
- Limiting non-essential visitors to the schools, including parents/guardians (unless a virtual meeting is not possible).
- Creating alternate spaces for visitation, conferencing, and aftercare that offers a dedicated, non-classroom space for necessary in-person meetings and functions. This will allow time and resources to be dedicated to maintaining classroom spaces that can be cleaned before and after students and teachers occupy them.
- To the extent possible, keep students from moving between locations in the schools. Instead, teachers should move between classrooms. (Understandably, this may be less possible at the High School level).
- Alternate lunch schedules and locations to maintain social distancing and sanitation protocols.

- Alternate school schedules and technological supports for students, teachers, and staff that cannot return to schools due to immune deficiencies.
- Accommodations for students, teachers, and staff who will not be able to return to the schools until a vaccine is widely available (including exclusively on-line teaching and learning).
- Increased bus routes to accommodate alternate schedules with proper social distancing enforced.
- Additional health services, staffing, and spaces for students (including a triage area for those potentially infected). A separate space so that typical medical needs in buildings can have their needs met will also be necessary.
- Additional mental health services for students dealing with infected and ill family members.
- Consistent and transparent communication with teachers, parents, and the community about the number of infections within school buildings.
- Willingness from school districts to close individual school buildings when a case appears within a school building.
- Continuous and ongoing communication and discussion with the Shaker Heights Teachers' Association as a partner in keeping students, teachers, staff, and community members safe until a vaccine is made widely available.
- In the same spirit of collaboration, subject area and/or grade level teachers should be included in strategizing how to teach their subject and/or grade level. Kindergarten teachers should be part of strategizing how to teach kindergarten with social distancing; physical education teachers should be part of strategizing how to teach physical education with social distancing; science teachers should strategize how to teach science classes with social distancing, etc. Decisions should involve the stakeholder groups. If top down decisions are made, important safety considerations may be missed.

We encourage all our members, advocates, school administrators, and the school board to share, consider, and adopt these recommendations for the safety and well-being of our teachers, staff, students, and community

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association Executive Board

References:

- “Coronavirus (COVID-19) *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. 6/3/20.
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- “Coronavirus (COVID-19) *Ohio Department of Health*. 6/3/20.
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