

Ensuring Safe & Just Schools for All Students

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of each public school and institution of higher education to ensure a welcoming, healthy and safe community for students and educators to thrive regardless of their ZIP Code, color or background; and

WHEREAS, schools should work to foster a sense of community among students, educators and families; and

WHEREAS, given the conditions of human interaction at public education worksites, it is necessary for school districts and institutions of higher education to establish and adhere to rigorous protocols for the safe operation of such; and those protocols must be far more detailed and rigorous than what the federal government has thus set forth; and

WHEREAS, school districts and institutions of higher education must create protocols for safe reopening of school buildings in partnership with educators and other education stakeholders --including local education associations/unions, families and students; and

WHEREAS, if public schools and higher education institutions are to return to in-person learning in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the responsibility of each school district and institution to do so safely, responsibly, and equitably; and

WHEREAS, leading public health experts agree that reopening school and campus buildings for in-person learning must wait until transmission rates in the community are both low AND declining over at least the past two weeks as measured by key indicators such as infection rates, hospitalization rates, and hospital capacity; and

WHEREAS, [District or IHE] decisions about school restrictions and the way in which schooling can occur either by In Person Instruction, Blended Learning, and/or Remote Learning will be built upon and in compliance with federal, state, and community health guidance; and

WHEREAS, the fact that COVID-19 risks and impacts are disproportionately concentrated in America's communities of color, including medical risk factors, job losses, housing insecurity, food insecurity, and mortality rates has been well-documented; and

WHEREAS, as COVID-19 has shined a bright light on vast racial inequities in society, the pandemic also highlights vast systemic injustices in the education system, including the facts that Black and brown students, LGBTQ students and differently abled students face disproportionately high discipline rates; 47 states and DC do not meet the recommended student to counselor ratio; and, although funding for law enforcement in public schools has been on the rise, according to the US Office of Civil Rights data:

- 1.7 million students are in schools with police but no counselors
- 3 million students are in schools with police but no school health professionals
- 6 million students are in schools with police but no school psychologists
- 10 million students are in schools with police but no school social workers
- 14 million students are in schools with police but no counselor, school health professional, school psychologist or school social worker

WHEREAS, education technology is a tool to enhance and enrich instruction for students and access to working technology and WiFi is a necessity for students to complete assignments and access needed resources -- even when not facing full-time virtual learning environments; and

WHEREAS, 1 in 5 Black and Brown households and 37 percent of rural households do not have access to high-speed internet; and

WHEREAS, the effective use of technology for the enhancement of student learning across different learning styles and needs requires training and support for educators, and it is the responsibility of each public school district and institution of higher education to provide such training; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that [District or IHE] and the public education worksites within our jurisdiction will not reopen for in-person instruction until the COVID-19 pandemic is under control in the community around us in accordance with CDC guidelines, and will only reopen for in-person instruction when we can do so in a safe, responsible and equitable manner that ensures the health and safety of our students, staff, families, and community, and can guarantee our students the opportunity to grow and learn academically, socially, and emotionally in a safe manner.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that [District or IHE] is committed to ensuring that all students are able to effectively access and engage in high-quality virtual learning opportunities, and as our community has varying health and family needs, virtual learning options will remain available during the COVID-19 pandemic even in the case of a full or partial return to in-person learning, to ensure that students can continue to learn while addressing their family's safety.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that before [District or IHE] returns to in-person learning, specific protections will be in place to keep the virus under control and protect students and staff, including making sure high-risk students and staff are protected through appropriate accommodations; ensuring all necessary steps have been taken to maintain six feet of physical distance among all students, staff, and visitors throughout the day; using strong deterrence measures like mandatory face coverings, regular hand washing, plexiglass protections, effective HVAC systems, clean water, and sufficient classroom supplies so that students don't need to share; deep cleaning protocols for schools, campuses, and buses; detection procedures that apply to students, educators, and visitors; quarantine, isolation, and notification procedures; policies ensuring educator, student, and family engagement in decision-making and implementation; regular monitoring and whistleblower protections; and enforcement of protection measures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that [District or IHE] has developed plans to ensure continuous learning for students, including a plan for instruction (whether in-person or virtual) that addresses racial and social equity in the provision of instruction and support services; includes training for educators, students, and families on the processes and protocols in the event a COVID-19 outbreak necessitates returning, in whole or in part, to virtual instruction; has involved educators, students, and families in each step of the planning process for any form of virtual teaching and learning, including adjusting the curriculum and methods of instruction; and addresses device access for every student and educator, high-speed internet access for every student and educator, and accommodates gaps in such services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED [District or IHE] will train staff in proven strategies such as restorative justice practices and trauma-informed practices, and will work to increase counseling and school health staff to effectively and empathetically support students so they can learn, grow and thrive through the pandemic and beyond.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that [District or IHE] will provide coordinators to support and respond to student and family concerns around issues (including but not limited to technology access, student health and well-being, students with IEPs, English Language Learners, students who are differently abled, students experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ students, students experiencing grief, and students accessing school meals), as well as offering additional supports such as group counseling, adult mentors, or referrals to community organizations that offer social services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that regardless of the education delivery system during the pandemic, [District or IHE], will provide all students the care and attention and learning opportunities they are guaranteed and deserve.