

**Hamilton County
PECCA UPDATE
August 4, 2020**

Teacher Team Members:

Steve Hinkle: Chair
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Central Office Team:

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The Collaborative Conferencing team met on August 3, 2020 to review the budget and address employee working conditions concerns about safely reopening school during pandemic. Below is a summary of the information discussed by the team. If you have questions please contact a member of the PECCA team. You can contact the teacher team at: <http://bit.ly/PECCA>.

Budget Update

- The BEP allocation from the state is \$1.7 million less than budgeted in the spring. Funds designated to the fund balance by the school board will be used to accommodate this reduction of revenue.
- In June, the school board declined to use the additional funding from the county government to reinstate the salary scale step increases even though the PECCA team recommended doing so. There is not enough revenue available to unfreeze the step increases at this time because of the reduced BEP allocation, expense of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and enhanced cleaning costs due to COVID-19.

Insurance Update

- The team agreed to waive the 30-day waiting period for new hires to access medical benefits during the first semester.

Class Size

- Phase 3 concerns: six feet of distance between students, ventilation in full rooms without openable windows.
 - Phase 3 includes masks to avoid easy spread of respiratory droplets

- in the air when closer than six feet to others. Management tried to balance having students at school 5 days a week with the need for social distance in classrooms.
- Student enrollment in At Home learning is not evenly spread across the district, but potentially reduces class sizes. Student assignment is a factor in the class size challenge. Central office is allowing schools flexibility to determine the best method of student/teacher assignments.
- HCS applied for a waiver to adjust maximum class sizes to 30 for K-3, 35 for 4-6, and 40 for 7-12 - **virtual or remote learning classes only**. This will help to maintain smaller classes for in person learning.
- For Phase 3, principals were advised that 20 or less is the *recommended* class size in the building with as much social distancing as is possible.
- Phase 2 is designed for increasing/moderate risk of spread. Six feet of social distance can be accomplished more easily with fewer students in the classrooms. Principals were advised that 10 or less is the *recommended* class size in

the building with six feet of social distance as a must.

- Masks, hand washing, and staying home when sick are important mitigation strategies at phases 1-3 of the reopening plan.

Virtual Learning

- Employees are concerned about liability involved in virtual learning.
 - The Code of Acceptable behavior has been updated to include virtual and online behavior.
 - Teachers may stop a live stream lesson when inappropriate circumstances occur in the classroom and begin streaming again when the lesson proceeds.
 - Content demonstration teachers have been selected to address the challenges with content creation that may be encountered with virtual classes.
 - Working smarter rather than harder is the recommendation to avoid multiple teachers doing the same work to accomplish virtual learning.
 - An HCS at Home Learning Handbook for faculty and staff will provide guidance for structuring remote learning.
 - Schools have flexibility to implement virtual learning in a way that is reasonable, manageable, and sustainable for both teachers and students.

Communication

- Employees would like direct communication from management like the FAQ on the website.
- Teachers want clarity about what can and cannot be in a classroom during a time of pandemic.
- Employees are concerned about increases to before and after school duty to accommodate more social distance among students during arrival and dismissal. School autonomy is causing schools to handle this need differently across the district.
- Information will be added to the Daily Covid-19 Staff Updates to respond to the above concerns by highlighting key guidance provided to principals on these issues.
- Employees are concerned about 10 days (until December 31, 2020) of sick time included in the law to be used during times of quarantine.
 - The COVID hotline should help determine how quickly employees can safely return to school. Human Resources will be working with teachers needing to quarantine to determine if/how they can best continue their work with students during their time away from the classroom.