

Newcastle Board of Education Special Meeting
March 18, 2020 9:00 AM
Administration Office Board Room
101 N Main St
Newcastle, Oklahoma 73065

1. Call to Order and Roll Call of Members.
2. Discussion and possible board action on school policies regarding emergency preparedness, sick leave, and online instruction in the event of school closure regarding the COVID-19 (also known as Coronavirus).
3. Superintendent report and/or discussion regarding school closing.
4. Adjournment.

This meeting was posted by Darla Allen on March 17, 2020 at 8:45 am.

LEAVE

General: This policy shall apply to all employees of the District except those covered by an applicable negotiated agreement. The leave benefits provided in the negotiated agreement to certified teachers shall be provided to certified administrators; however, certified administrators employed on an 11-month contract shall be entitled to 11 days of sick leave per year. Support employees shall be entitled to leave according to the negotiated agreement even though the particular support employee may not be subject to the negotiated agreement and may not be a member of the bargaining unit.

Sick Leave: According to applicable law, accrued but unused sick leave may be transferred to another school district or to the Oklahoma School for the Blind or the Oklahoma School for the Deaf or may be used for service credit with the Oklahoma Teachers' Retirement System. According to applicable law, employees may transfer sick leave from another school district provided that the number of days transferred shall not exceed the maximum days permitted by the receiving school and that such transferred days shall be used first in case of illness and, provided also, that if the receiving school pays teachers for unused sick leave upon retirement or termination of contract, then said payments shall be for only those days accumulated in the receiving school. The school board of the sending district shall certify the exact number of days that are eligible for transfer.

An employee who is going to utilize sick leave shall notify his/her supervisor as much in advance as possible and may be required to provide documentation of illness in certain circumstances, including, but not limited to, when sick leave is taken on days of unusual or inclement weather, during the last four (4) weeks of school or prior to the end of employment, immediately preceding or following holidays or non-work days, or whenever cause exists to believe that Sick Leave is being abused.

After an employee exhausts accumulated sick leave and any applicable 20-day substitute-deduction leave, the employee may request sick leave donations pursuant to the applicable Sick Leave Sharing Plan.

Sick Leave Sharing: All full-time employees shall be eligible to participate in the Sick Leave Sharing Plan set forth in the negotiated agreement applicable to certified teachers.

Family and Medical Leave: Pursuant to the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993("FMLA"), an employee who has worked at least one thousand two hundred fifty (1250) hours during the previous twelve (12) month period and all teachers shall be allowed up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave for the following reasons: 1) the birth or adoption of a child, 2) the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care; 3) for the employee's own serious health condition, 4) to care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a serious

health condition; or 5) because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on active duty or has been notified of an impending call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation.

In addition, an eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member who is recovering from a serious illness or injury sustained in the line of duty is entitled to up to 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member. The single 12-month period for military caregiver leave begins on the first day the employee takes leave for this reason and ends 12 months later. An eligible employee is limited to a combined total of 26 workweeks of leave for any FMLA qualifying reason during the 12-month period. Up to 12 of the 26 weeks may be for an FMLA-qualifying reason other than military caregiver leave. Military caregiver leave is available to an eligible employee once per veteran, per serious injury or illness.

Prior to taking unpaid leave, an employee must utilize any accrued paid leave to which the employee is entitled. An employee may be required to provide certification from a physician of the necessity for such leave, including the date the condition began, the anticipated duration, and the medical facts regarding the condition.

With the exception of leave approved for military care-givers, District will abide by the Rolling 12-Month Period. The 12-month period is to be measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA Leave. Under the Rolling 12-Month Period, each time an employee takes FMLA leave, the remaining leave entitlement would be the balance of the 12 weeks which has not been used during the immediately preceding 12 months.

Emergency Leave: At any time during the fiscal year, District's Board of Education may grant up to ten (10) days of emergency leave for all employees to be used for days when District's schools are closed due to inclement weather, unsafe conditions of physical facilities, lack of proper supervision of students, unsafe conditions for students, and other unforeseen conditions that are declared an emergency. Emergency leave will only be available in the year during which the Board approves such leave or during the following fiscal year. In approving district emergency leave, the Board or Superintendent may designate that employees whose services are essential, are not allowed district emergency leave for the days designated as an emergency. Provisions may be made to provide district emergency leave for essential personnel at a later date following the declared emergency.

Jury or Witness Leave: All employees shall be excused from employment without loss of pay when summoned for jury service or when subpoenaed in a criminal or civil proceeding to testify as to matters related to their employment with the District. The employee shall remit any compensation received for such service to the District to be applied toward the expense of any substitute or to be applied to offset the employee's salary.

Military Leave: All employees shall be excused from employment for military leave according to applicable law.

Leave of Absence: Any employee who has been employed full-time for at least three (3) consecutive years with the District may request an unpaid leave of absence for a period which shall not exceed one school year in duration. Requests for such leave must be made in writing, submitted to the Superintendent, and contain sufficient detail as to the reasons for the leave so that a decision may be made based on the merits of the request. Requests must be submitted at least one (1) month prior to the commencement of the requested leave. As a condition of approval, the employee must state that the reason for the leave is not for the purpose of accepting other employment or other activities for direct personal financial gains. A leave of absence may be used when all other applicable leave had been exhausted and the employee is unable to return to work. The Board shall determine if an employee's request for a leave of absence is to be approved, and approval of a leave of absence is contingent upon the needs of the District. An employee who returns to work after an approved leave of absence shall be returned to the position previously held or to another comparable position for which the employee is qualified. Employees on an approved leave of absence may participate in and pay for continued insurance coverage or professional memberships.

Vacation Leave: Unless otherwise provided in any applicable negotiated agreement or contract, the District shall provide all twelve-month employees with ten (10) days of paid vacation each fiscal year. During an employee's first fiscal year of employment, the employee shall not be entitled to take any vacation leave until the employee has been employed at least six (6) months, and the employee shall only be entitled to five (5) days of vacation. Employees who are employed for less than twelve months shall not receive any paid vacation. Upon termination of employment, no employee shall be compensated for unused, accrued vacation pay. Unless otherwise provided in an employment contract or negotiated agreement, employees shall not be entitled to accrue vacation leave from one (1) fiscal year to the next, but must use vacation leave in the current fiscal year or lose it. If an employee entitled to vacation leave begins employment after the start of the fiscal year, the employee's vacation leave shall be pro-rated. Employees shall submit a request for vacation leave to the Superintendent and must obtain the Superintendent's approval of vacation leave prior to taking vacation leave.

BASIC COMPONENTS OF PANDEMIC PLANNING

Every District should have an Emergency Management Plan that:

- Addresses all four phases of emergency management planning (Mitigation and Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery).
- Is flexible enough to address multiple hazards (be “all-hazard plans”).
- Is practiced on a regular basis.
- Is developed in an interactive, cross-cutting manner, in collaboration with community partners and stakeholders.
- Is based upon sound data and information.
- Includes provisions for being continually reviewed and updated regularly.
- Is coordinated with community pandemic illness planning efforts, as well as state policy and planning efforts.

Pandemic Plan: This plan is built upon components in existing emergency management plans and would contain elements unique to a pandemic.

Communication Plan

- Identify audiences and key messages (students, parents, staff, etc.).
- Focus on clear, accurate, consistent, and timely communications.
- Identify trusted spokesperson (also, identify who will be lead for health matters).
- Identify trusted media partners.
- Establish redundant communications methods identified in advance (primary, secondary and tertiary methods identified and all parties are familiar with them).

Plan for continuity of learning or instruction

- Consider alternate learning strategies.
- Consider potential restructuring of school calendar.

Identify stakeholders and partners. Identify a contact within the local public health department and collaborate with that entity to create complementary plans, coordinate with other partners, and communicate consistently with the public.

Identify and coordinate with other key stakeholders, such as law enforcement, school security personnel, local emergency management office, businesses, community and faith-based organizations.

BASIC COMPONENTS OF PANDEMIC PLANNING, CONT.,

Review and reline policies and authorities: Review school district’s or crisis management plan, which outline procedures for continued function during an extended emergency.

Consider:

- Essential functions, goods, and services that must be maintained under a variety of conditions;
- Essential tasks that can be performed from other locations such as home, as well as technology support necessary to implement such measures;
- Essential people and material support;
- Delegations of authority; and
- Personnel/Human Resources policies (leave, disability, payroll, potential high absenteeism).

Identify legal authorities for school closures, limitations on responsibilities and functions (such as school lunch provision), and school’s potential responsibilities and liabilities.

Review and refine supply policies and contracts including potentially ordering and warehousing items such as tissues, soap, or hand sanitizer.

Initiate or expand prevention and education efforts

- Conduct preventive hand-washing and cough/sneezing etiquette campaigns.
- Encourage staff, faculty, and students to stay home when ill.
- Provide information to parents, staff and students about elements of pandemic plan.

Create and implement a surveillance system in partnership with state and/or local health departments to identify and track student absences due to illness, which would allow the rapid detection of unusual changes or trends in student health.

Develop an Incident Command System (ICS) specific to a pandemic that identifies roles and responsibilities of educators, law enforcement, and health officials in advance of an incident.

Consider and plan with community partners to address issues specific to your school environment, such as:

- Students with special needs, including those who are in special education, receiving supplemental services at school, English Language Learners, or have special health care needs;
- Working with Child Nutrition Directors to help families identify sources for feeding programs for students who receive meals at school in the event of long-term school closures;

BASIC COMPONENTS OF PANDEMIC PLANNING, CONT.,

- Potential social services needed during and after pandemic has ended;
- Possible alternative uses of school buildings during a pandemic (such as for mass immunizations or hospitals);
- Potential uses of school buses during pandemic and if/how this affects contracts;
- Current alternative uses for schools and determine necessary policies/procedures under school closures;
- Capacity to address requirements for cleaning the building if it was used for community health needs or if there were sick students; and
- Fiscal, academic, emotional and physical recovery issues, including;
 - Return to learning;
 - Ability of students, family, and staff to access available mental health supports, particularly during a crisis if schools are cancelled;
 - Bereavement needs; and
 - Availability of mental health service providers, including community and faith-based organizations.

Summary: Basic Components of Pandemic Planning

- Every district should have an Emergency Management Plan.
- The Plan should be flexible to encompass all hazards.
- Every district should develop a Pandemic illness Plan.
- Plans should address four phases of emergency management planning: Mitigation and Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.
- Plans should be practiced on a regular basis.
- Plans should be developed and communicated in an interactive manner with stakeholders, including parents, faculty, other community partners and first responders.
- Plans should be based on sound data and information; www.cdc.gov should be the main resource for pandemic planning and information.
- Plans should be continually reviewed and updated as new information is available. The complete planning checklist can be viewed at www.cdc.gov.

BASIC COMPONENTS OF PANDEMIC PLANNING, CONT.,

Instruction

Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness

Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies

The Board recognizes that a pandemic/epidemic outbreak is a serious threat that stands to affect students, staff, and the community as a whole. With this consideration in mind, the Board establishes this policy in the event the town/municipality and/or school district is affected by a pandemic/epidemic outbreak. At all times the health, safety and welfare of the students shall be the first priority.

Planning and Coordination

The Superintendent shall designate one or more staff members to serve as a liaison between the school district and local and state health officials. This designee is responsible for connecting with health officials to identify local hazards, determine what crisis plans exist in the school district and community, and to establish procedures to account for student well-being and safety during such a crisis. The designee shall work with local health officials to coordinate their pandemic/epidemic plans with that of the school district

The Principal and/or school nurse or other designee shall develop a curriculum component to health classes that is designed to teach students about preventing or limiting the spread of communicable diseases.

With fiscal concerns in mind, the District shall purchase and store supplies necessary for an epidemic/pandemic outbreak, including but not limited to disinfectant products, face masks, water, examination gloves, and other supplies as recommended by the school nurse and/or State or county health department.

The Superintendent shall develop procedures and plans for the transportation of students in the event of an evacuation. Such procedures shall include provisions for students who cannot be transported to home at the time of the evacuation.

Response

In the event anyone within the school is discovered or suspected to have a communicable disease that may result in an epidemic/pandemic, that person shall be immediately quarantined pending further medical examination. Local and state health officials shall be notified immediately.

In conjunction with local and state health officials, the Superintendent shall ascertain whether an evacuation, lockdown, or shelter-in-place needs to be established. As soon as such a decision has been made, the school district shall attempt to notify the parents of all students.

BASIC COMPONENTS OF PANDEMIC PLANNING, CONT.,

Instruction

Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness

Pandemic/Epidemic Emergencies (continued)

In the event of an evacuation, the Superintendent is charged with determining when the school shall re-open. In the event of a lockdown or shelter-in-place, the Superintendent shall notify all proper authorities and relief agencies to seek their assistance for the duration of the lockdown or shelter-in-place.

Infection Control

Any student or staff member found to be infected with a communicable disease that bears risk of pandemic/epidemic will not be allowed to attend school until medical clearance is provided by that individual’s primary care physician or other medical personnel indicating that that person does not bear the risk of transmitting the communicable disease.

Students with excessive absences due to a communicable disease shall be given a reprieve from other Board policies relative to excessive student absences. Efforts will be made by the staff to determine what, if any, school work the student can complete while absent.

Staff members who are forced to miss excessive days of work shall first use sick leave. If a staff member has still not received medical clearance to resume his/her work duties, absences in excess of a staff member’s allotted leave will not affect the employees right to continued employment.

Continuance of Education

The Superintendent shall develop a plan of alternate means of educating students in the event of prolonged school closings and/or extended absences. Such a plan may include providing students with assignments via mail, local access cable television, or the school district’s website.

The Superintendent is authorized to amend the traditional class schedule and schedule of days. Such a plan may include extending the school day, having school days held on Saturdays, the use of previously scheduled vacation days, and/or extend the school year beyond the previously established end of school year, within applicable statutory requirements.

Public Health Instructions During a Pandemic Illness

Throughout a pandemic illness, people may be asked or required to do things to help hold back the spread of the disease in our community.

Here are some examples of what public health officials may ask people to do:

STAY HOME

People who are sick should stay home. Children should not go to school if they are sick. Staying home will be absolutely necessary during a pandemic illness to limit the spread of the disease.

BASIC COMPONENTS OF PANDEMIC PLANNING, CONT.,**AVOID LARGE GROUPS**

People - even those who are well - should stay away from gatherings of people such as sporting events, movies and festivals. During a pandemic illness these kinds of events could be cancelled because large gatherings of people help spread of a pandemic illness.

Isolation and quarantine are public health actions used to contain the spread of a contagious disease. If asked, it will be important to follow isolation and/or quarantine instructions.

ISOLATION

Isolation is for people who are already ill. When someone is isolated, they are separated from people who are healthy. Having the sick person isolated (separated from others) can help to slow or stop the spread of disease. People who are isolated can be cared for in their homes, in hospitals, or other healthcare facilities. Isolation is usually voluntary, but local, state and federal government have the power to require the isolation of sick people to protect the public.

QUARANTINE

Quarantine is for people who have been exposed to the disease but are not sick. When someone is placed in quarantine, they are also separated from others. Even though the person is not sick at the moment, they were exposed to the disease and may still become infectious and then spread the disease to others. Quarantine can help to slow or stop this from happening. States generally have the power to enforce quarantines within their borders.

FACT SHEET: Stopping Germs at Home, Work and School

How Germs Spread: The main way that illnesses like colds and viruses are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This is called “droplet spread.” This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Sometimes germs also can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches his or her own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks.

How to Stop the Spread of Germs: In a nutshell: take care to:

- Cover your mouth and nose.
- Clean your hands often.
- Remind your children to practice healthy habits, too.

Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing: Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

The “Happy Birthday” song helps keep your hands clean? Not exactly. Yet it is recommend that when you wash your hands — with soap and warm water — that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. That’s about the same time it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice!

BASIC COMPONENTS OF PANDEMIC PLANNING, CONT.,

Alcohol-based hand wipes and gel sanitizers work too: When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.

Germ and Children: Remind children to practice healthy habits too, because germs spread, especially at school.

More Facts, Figures, and How-Tos: CDC and its partner agencies and organizations offer a great deal of information about hand washing and other things you can do to stop the germs that cause pandemic illnesses, the common cold, and other illnesses.