



THE PELICAN POST

Collier County Education Association—Affiliated with FEA/NEA/AFT
Serving the Education Community of Collier County

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

In these uncertain times, it is certain that CCEA leadership and staff are continually advocating for our members. It does not stop locally-please know that both state and national leaders are meeting with various officials to advocate for the health and safety of our students and all employees. Wednesday (3/25) evening there was a statewide meeting with over 700 participants. The meeting was hosted by President Federick Ingram, Vice President Andrew Spar and Secretary-Treasurer Carole Gauronskas. During that meeting we heard from AFT President Randi Weingarten and NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia. It was an opportunity for members to ask questions and as there were over 200 questions FEA is following up to get us those answers. This meeting was also delivered via FEA's Facebook Live. Be sure to check CCEA's Facebook Page, too.

The Executive Board met on the 24th as the work of our union never stops; thank you to all board members who participated.

Locally we continue to address our members' concerns (A reminder: in order to address a concern, we must know about it, so please contact us if you are not sure about a demand being made of you, etc.). Just as our members are working around the clock to teach via elearning, our staff is working to protect your rights; thank you Jonathan, Lyle and Rhonda.

As there are more questions than answers at this point, we have included some of the FAQ's released by the DOE as a starting point and we will continue to share information through emails and Facebook. I know I have heard from members that they appreciate the frequent communication-it might not be a bad time to encourage potential members to join the organization that is advocating on their behalf. Since you no longer have a commute time, there might be a few minutes to take advantage of the many member benefits available; more information is on the website, check your all-member email for the password-protected page on our website for members only.

As the focus is on staying healthy and flattening the curve, I also want to call attention to the fact that the activism of our membership supported by state leadership defeated a lot of bad bills this past session; see the list included in this Pelican.

Thank you for being a member. Thank you for being a consummate professional.

*In Unity,
Lisa*



WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE VIRTUAL TEACHING WORLD

CCEA began addressing working conditions with the district on Friday the 13th (appropriate, right?). The district was in a frenzy all weekend coming up with a plan for virtual teaching and learning, and addressing all the peripherals that most teachers don't really consider. CCEA was in frequent contact with the district during that time making sure that our members who were on cruises or otherwise traveled over Spring Break would not get charged sick leave to self-quarantine when they returned. We also worked to eliminate the Monday meeting on the 6th. We weren't 100% successful, but we were able to work with them to reduce it to a one-hour meeting.

CCEA has also been pressing the district for flexible working hours from home. All teachers are under contract and are getting paid for their 7.5-hour day five days a week, but it seems to us that *flexibility* should be the word of the day for the good of all. This has been a front-burner issue for us since we entered this new elearning world.

At 6 pm on 3/30, CCEA and the district agreed to apply the flexible hours in our contract for Collier Online Virtual Education (COVE) teachers to all teachers conducting remote teaching and learning during this difficult time:

4.026 Exceptions for EMPLOYEES working in an eLearning (virtual instruction) assignment:

- a. Deviations to the 7.5-hour workday may occur to provide flexibility to meet student needs
- b. In all cases, the EMPLOYEE will work total hours for the workweek equivalent to working 7.5 hours per day.
- c. The regular workweek may include work hours on Saturday and/or Sunday

In addition, we were able to iron out the confusion that arose from the state requirement for the submission of lesson plans. There was concern that the state would require lesson plans to be submitted in a particular format in order for these days to be counted as "regular" school days for our students. This specific issue has been resolved! While the requirement to submit lesson plans still stands, as long as the five required elements are included in the plans, your lesson plans may be submitted in any format you desire.

Finally, we've been hearing from some members that they

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FLORIDA DEPT OF EDUCATION Q&A GUIDANCE

The purpose of this Q&A document is to provide additional guidance and clarification regarding the Department's guidance to school districts related to COVID-19 closures. Commissioner Corcoran has made it clear that all decisions are being made with compassion and grace at the forefront.

Q: What does it mean that school districts should be prepared to expand their school calendars until June 30, 2020?

A: Our goal is to complete the school year on time and on schedule. The reason we said April 15 is because the CDC is giving updates every 15 days. We are monitoring the state and federal guidance regarding COVID-19 containment, and we will remain in close contact with districts while they are implementing their continuity of instruction plans. As we approach April 15, the date students are set to return, additional guidance on distance learning plans will be provided. Current adopted school district calendars vary; some end in May while others end in June. If you are making updates to your calendar, which is a local decision, know that you can extend your calendars as needed through the fiscal year **if necessary**. Updating calendars and adding additional days is a local decision, and districts may extend their calendars through the end of the fiscal year.

Q: What does it mean to provide flexibility for students who receive IEP services?

A: Each student with an IEP, or 504 plan, should be included in the school district's instructional continuity plan to the same extent as all other students. This plan may include virtual instruction, as well as virtual specialized instruction and related services to the extent practicable. All areas of the student's IEP or 504 must be considered. Any and all required evaluations, IEP meetings etc. may also be held virtually to the extent practical. If there is any type of delay, the nature and extent of the delay and a plan to move as quickly as possible to prevent further delay should be documented. IEP and 504 teams should monitor each student's progress and determine what, if any, remediation may be needed upon return to the student's placement.

Q: How does the cancellation of state assessments impact students?

A: The answer will vary based on students' placement within their educational journey.

- Current seniors:** If a senior is expected to graduate in spring 2020 and has not met the exit criteria for Algebra I EOC and/or Grade 10 ELA FSA, or earned a concordant score, this criteria will be waived. However, students still must earn the necessary credits and meet the GPA requirements to graduate.

- Non-seniors:** The Department is waiving the requirement for non-senior students who are currently enrolled in a course that requires an EOC to take the associated EOC. However, non-seniors who have yet to pass the Grade 10 FSA ELA must still meet the exit criteria by passing that assessment during a future administration or earning a concordant score. Though non-senior students enrolled in the EOC course of Algebra 1 are not required to take the Algebra 1 EOC, they must still meet the mathematics assessment

graduation requirement by either passing the Algebra 1 EOC (offered four times each year) during a future administration, earning a concordant score, or passing the Geometry EOC during a future administration.

•Grade 3 promotion: Generally, the Grade 3 ELA FSA is a key component districts use to make promotion decisions. Since this data will not be available due to the cancellation of statewide assessments for the 2019-2020 school year, promotion decisions should be made in consultation with parents, teachers, and school leaders based on the students' classroom performance and progress monitoring data.

•30% for final grade: For students currently enrolled in courses that include a statewide EOC to be factored into the student's grade, this requirement will be waived. Districts have the discretion to determine whether district-developed EOC assessments are necessary for these courses for the 2019-2020 school year.

Q: Will parents have the ability to request retention of their child in the current grade for the 2020-2021 year?

A: Yes, if parents, teachers and school leaders determine it is in the best interest of the student.

Parents play an important role in planning for their students' education. Promotion decisions should be made in consultation with parents, teachers, and school leaders based on the students' classroom performance and progress monitoring data.

Q: Will students receive grades for the spring semester while they are in a distance learning environment?

A: Yes, although campuses are closed, school is still in session and students are still earning grades. Districts will incorporate the process for assigning student grades in their instructional continuity plans.

Q: With the cancellation of assessments for the 2019-2020 school year and school/district grades not being calculated, what will my school/district grade be?

A: Schools and districts will not receive a grade. In the 2020-2021 school year, schools will continue their current turnaround status and tier of support from the 2019-2020 school year.

Q: Will districts have to submit another turnaround plan to the State Board of Education for approval for the 2020-2021 school year?

A: Schools shall continue to implement their state board approved plan in the 2020-21 school year. Any requested changes to a plan must be submitted to the Bureau of School Improvement for consideration of approval by the State Board of Education.

Q: Despite the absence of a 2019 school grade, will turnaround schools have to adhere to the same requirements outlined in Rule 6A.1.099811, F.A.C., for the 2020-2021 school year?

A: Districts are required to adhere to the same requirements outlined in Rule 6A.1.099811, F.A.C., for the 2020-2021 school year.

Q: Are waivers available for missed instructional hours?

A: Given that the impact of instructional hours missed due to COVID-19 is yet to be determined, the FDOE is refraining from making any decisions related to missed instructional

hours until long-term impacts can be realized. As a reminder, districts do not need the state's approval to use available calendar days to remain in compliance with the minimum instructional hours required by law.

Q: How will the cancellation of national assessment administrations (i.e., SAT and ACT) affect eligibility for Bright Futures?

A: Information regarding Bright Futures will be forthcoming.

Q: How do we address students who are scheduled to take AICE, IB, and AP exams?

A: We are working with our partners at AICE, IB, and AP, and information regarding the assessments associated with these programs will be forthcoming.

Q: Will there be a reduction to districts' 2019-2020 allocations?

A: All school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten, K-12, career and technical centers and state college programs will receive their full allocation of 2019-2020 funding.

Q: How can we support students' mental wellness in distance learning environments?

A: The Commissioner is affording K-12 school districts the opportunity to redirect unspent 2019-2020 funds from the Safe Schools and Mental Health allocations to virtual and telephonic mental health counseling services for students who need emotional support due to COVID-19.

Q: Can schools still participate in community and extra-curricular activities?

A: Commissioner Corcoran urges adherence to the CDC's guidance for higher-risk populations by cancelling any mass gatherings, community events and extracurricular activities, including sports of more than 10 people in a single occupied space at any educational program, school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten, public and private K-12, career and technical centers, and public and private colleges.

Q: Are there any circumstances under which students may return to a school while campuses are closed in response to COVID-19?

A: Yes, as long as groups are limited to 10 or fewer people, including the educator, in a single occupied space, students may return to campus when continuing operations that, to the greatest extent possible, support remote student learning, including delivery of educational and student services and resources. This includes taking an assessment, such as those related to workforce, adult education, AP, IB, or AICE; or receiving needed instruction or tutoring.

Q: Will this affect students in dual enrollment courses that are continuing at their Florida College System (FCS) institution while districts and schools are in periods of unplanned campus closure?

A: Colleges are working to adjust their schedules and course delivery methods to respond to COVID-19. The district's and FCS institution's dual enrollment coordinators should work together to ensure that students have the opportunity to complete their coursework within the semester timeframe.

Q: How will period of unplanned campus closures impact graduation ceremonies?

A: Graduation ceremonies typically begin in May, and we will provide additional guidance later.

Q: How will teacher evaluations be impacted by the COVID-19 response?

A: For the 2019-2020 school year, statewide assessments have been cancelled. This cancellation will impact the ability to calculate Florida's Value-Added Model (VAM) as well as provide statewide data that many districts use to calculate the student performance component of some annual teacher evaluations. For teachers who have not had their classroom observation completed, the implementation of instructional continuity plans may make meeting the observation requirement difficult to achieve. As a result, annual evaluations required under section 1012.34, F.S. are waived for the 2019-2020 school year. In addition, because teachers on annual contract who are on the performance salary schedule will not have evaluation results on which to base annual increases, the provisions in 1012.22, F.S. related to this requirement are waived. This gives districts the flexibility to determine how they will calculate a teacher's annual salary increases locally. The determination of how districts meet the differentiated pay component will be determined locally.

Q: What steps are being taken to help teachers who are unable to complete testing requirements for teacher certification?

A: Given the current hardships that teachers, teacher candidates, and their families are facing related to COVID-19 crisis, Governor DeSantis and Commissioner Corcoran have committed to provide opportunities for anyone to meet all testing requirements for teacher certification, including General Knowledge, Professional Education and Subject Area Examinations, OR to retake examinations not previously passed, all free of charge. Effective through July 31, 2020, anyone wishing to take or retake any of the Florida Teacher Certification Examinations will have the opportunity to take any such tests free of charge. Furthermore, the deadlines to take these tests will be tolled through July 31, 2020.

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LEGISLATIVE SESSION

As a reminder, this past October we kicked off the Fund Our Future bus tour, followed by the Rally in Tallahassee where more than 15,000 members and supporters of our public schools gathered. We had hundreds of members visit lawmakers in Tallahassee during session and thousands of members and supporters email, call and write lawmakers about our issues. None of this would have happened without your activism.

These actions led to what may have been one of the best sessions we have seen in decades. There were literally no new laws related to the operations of our public schools, other than the salary language. The following topics were part of bills that **died** this session:

- The attack on our union (HB1)
- A required moment of silence each day
- A shortening of the timelines for turnaround schools and giving more power to the commissioner with the authority to turn schools over to charters sooner.
- An early childhood plan pushed by the commissioner
- A so-called parental rights bill designed to limit the rights of teachers and schools when students misbehave
- A limit on how many terms school board members can serve
- A massive charter expansion that would have allowed universities to sponsor charters without school board approval
- Another massive charter expansion that would have allowed developers to build charters in their community and save a large number of seats just for the community – in other words giving wealthy communities essentially a taxpayer funded private school.
- A bill that would have moved the search for college and university presidents out of the sunshine and into a secret process.
- A requirement for putting cameras in ESE classrooms
- A rewrite of the laws around restraint and seclusion of students

A good bill that passed was the end of the Best and Brightest program and no new bonus programs.

Two bad bills that passed – a voucher expansion and the requirement that districts share future capital outlay referendum with charter schools.

The budget and salary plan:

- \$400 million to raise the base pay for classroom teachers – anyone making less than the new base pay must be raised to that new amount.
- \$100 million for veteran classroom teachers and all instructional staff not including substitutes or paraprofessionals.
- \$340 million in the Base Student Allocation (BSA). This can be used for salaries for any employees, including education staff professionals.

Email to Presidents from FEA Vice President, Andrew Spar

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do not want to post a video of themselves out in cyberspace for anyone to pick up. The district has agreed that if teachers make a recording for their students, teachers can record an audio greeting set to a screen with an avatar or emoji, or something personal for their students, you do not have to show yourself in the video.

We hope this information helps as you navigate elearning. CCEA continues to strive to improve the working conditions of our teachers and thereby the learning conditions of our students.

Jonathan Tuttle, Executive Director

\$47,500 MINIMUM SALARY & EQUITY

After an extended Legislative Session, \$500 million was appropriated in House Bill 641 for a “Teacher Salary Increase Allocation,” 80% of which is dedicated to increasing the minimum classroom teacher salary to \$47,500. CCPS will receive approximately \$8.8 million for this purpose which is reduced to around \$8 million after deducting for charter schools in Collier County.

Fortunately, CCEA has negotiated some good increases recently and 80% of \$8 million is more than enough to bring all our teachers above the \$47,500 mark. As of this time last year, only 702 of our teachers made less than this amount and our starting salary is only \$3,740 below the new requirement.

When determining how best to allocate the “extra” funds for those already earning more than \$47,500, the goal of the CCEA bargaining team will be, and always has been, equity. For example, while Pre-K is included in HB 641, other instructional staff is still not.

The “minimum base salary” is for classroom teachers as defined in 1012.01. There is no statutory requirement for other instructional personnel (including media specialists, academic coaches, guidance, etc.) to reach that minimum salary. Whether a requirement from Tallahassee or not, your bargaining team is committed to negotiating for equity for our entire bargaining unit.

“Equity” applies to amounts negotiated as well. In the event we provide a \$3,740 or 8.55% increase to the base salary, we would do all we can to provide similar increases to teachers across the salary schedule. Clearly there is not enough money provided by HB 641 to accomplish this, but we will not leave anyone behind with a minimal increase while others receive thousands.

Negotiations for Article 12 and the appendices for the 2020-21 school year will commence no later than May 1st. We look forward to negotiating the best and most equitable agreement we can for ALL of our members!

Jonathan Tuttle, Exec. Director