

This week my letter is going to focus mainly on Frequently Asked Questions from our members and across the state. The first link I am going to add is for the Education Minnesota website page that deals with all things involving Coronavirus.

<https://www.educationminnesota.org/resources.aspx#in-the-classroom>

Here you will find the Governor's orders, the Safe Learning Plan for 20-21, online learning and educator resources and most importantly the FAQ section. This is updated with new information as it comes in to Education Minnesota. Last night, I learned on the weekly President's Zoom meeting with Denise Specht that guidance on air flow in classrooms will be coming today. Please check it out.

Now for some local FAQ's

How did this model to reopen get chosen? Public Health, Mayo Clinic actually suggested a more robust model, but the district chose to be more conservative and went with a scaled back model. They felt it was more important to slowly open and see how it goes before adding more students.

Is the district following CDC guidelines? Yes, they are following the masking, social distancing and cleaning guidelines. I have sent the airflow studies that I have received, to the district as well and they are trying to work with those by addressing exchange rates and filter types.

Are there separate guidelines for elementary specialists that see several groups of students per day? Not at this time. That was posed to the EdMN last night and, as of right now, if all CDC health guidelines are being met it is considered ok. There will be follow up.

If secondary is doing DL, do they have to be in a building? That is currently being discussed.

If I am secondary teacher and didn't receive a survey about needing to do DL remotely due to health what do I do? Send an inquiry to COVID-HR@rochester.k12.mn.us if that doesn't work use the new rochesterschools.org suffix. You will receive an answer of what to do next.

If the Board isn't meeting in person, why do they expect us to be in school? I can't answer that for them. All I can say is that I am going to be sending a letter to the Board asking them to resume meeting in the Board room.

Things of note:

I am asking the Negotiations team to be ready to meet due some issues that may to have a Memorandum of Agreement to cover our staff for 20 -21. You will have that information, before action is taken. One of them is a change in how the schedule is going to run in the secondary and the other concerns the elementary. With dismissing an hour early, that takes away Specials time from a group of students and some teach lose prep on those days. We have to find a way to make it work. I hesitate to put this out there because I don't

want staff to panic, but I also want you to start thinking how that might look. More to come in the future.

Denise Specht pointed out in our Zoom meeting last night, with lots of districts doing Hybrid in the elementary and DL in the secondary, staff members are tending to be protective of their own group. This is a time that we have to be supportive of all of the staff as we go back into a year with more questions than answers. What does support look like? It is asking questions – not pointing fingers. It is reaching out to colleagues and asking how you can help – not accusing others of having a better deal. It may mean facilitating a group and developing some action items that can be presented to solve some issues – not privately complaining nothing is being done. It might simply mean contacting someone and supporting what they are doing to help our members. We have lots of members that are currently working to make our re-opening better than it may have been otherwise. This is going to take a monumental lift from all our members to make sure that our students get the best possible education they can get during a very trying time. We have to be the professionals we were trained to be because our kids are depending on us!

Sincerely,

Dan Kuhlman, President
Rochester Education Association
dan.kuhlman@edmn.org
507-319-7321