

Dear Members,

Well, June 17<sup>th</sup> we ended our school year very different than any other. I again want to express how proud I am to be surrounded by so many amazing colleagues. I truly in the deepest part of my heart feel that everyone did an outstanding job, and that our students couldn't have asked for any better support than what you all gave. With September 1st upon us, we are now faced with, "What will September look like?" Eleanor Roosevelt said, "With the new day come new strength and new thoughts". With these new days ahead of us, renewed strength and solidarity will certainly be required.

Last Thursday, NYSED published guidelines for reopening schools and the requirements districts must put into place. All districts, including BOCES, must create a reopening plan and submit this plan by July 31<sup>st</sup>. I have attached this guidance document. Some administrators are seeking input from members to help facilitate the creation of this plan. Where this is extremely important as you know your programs needs and concerns, we also know, we are not all COVID-19 experts or experts on the guidance that came out at the end of last week. We will have NYSUT experts review the final plans and advise us accordingly.

BOCESTA will be sending out a survey shortly. We thank you in advance for taking the time to complete it as it will help assist us advocating for your needs.

I will attach many resources within the email for your reference. Please also visit NYSUT's website. Here you will find all the most up to date information about all things reopening.

<https://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/coronavirus-toolkit/reopening-schools>

NYSUT combined with AFT is also holding a Q & A presentation at 4pm today via Facebook and YouTube. Here is the link for this presentation.

<https://www.nysut.org/news/2020/july/reopening-q-and-a>

*(editor's note: NYSUT is providing a rebroadcast of this presentation on their YouTube channel and Facebook page)*

## Attached Resources:

- Emergency FMLA Expansion Act Explained
- Employee Rights- Families First
- Health and Safety Transportation Concerns Resource
- DOH Interim Guidance
- Federal Relief available under Federal Law Poster
- NYSED Reopening Guidance
- SED Reopening Guidance Presentation
- NEA Health & Safety COVID Liability Document

*(editor's note: these resources were attached to this original email. They can be found on the website or click the title of the document you wish to view to see the link.)*

## Health and Safety Committee

BOCESTA currently has a Health and Safety Chair on our board. We are looking to create a health and safety committee to help navigate COVID-19. Ideally, we would like one individual from each site or representative group. This committee will meet separately from the board and training will be provided by NYSUT. If you are interested in getting involved in this manner, please let your building representative know.

## Union Impact Reminders:

- There must be an open line of communication between the membership and union leaders so that leaders are aware of all new directives from administration concerning required job duties and any changes to current terms and conditions of employment. Members should know that failure to report changes in job duties or terms of conditions of employment to their union leadership in a timely fashion can cause the union to forfeit the right to challenge the changes. Further, such a failure can result in the new conditions becoming permanent not only for the immediately impacted member, but also for all members of the bargaining unit.
- Members should be told to comply with directives to avoid insubordination charges and potential discipline. If a member believes that the directive puts their safety at risk, or that they were asked to perform an illegal act, they

should immediately contact the union. Leaders should immediately speak with their LRS and address directives to perform out-of-title work, new job requirements and/or duties, and all other changes to the collective bargaining agreements.

- We may need to negotiate MOAs to address added work, additional compensation, changes to work schedules, bidding requirements, and all other issues that are impacted by reopening plans.
- We want to ensure that the employer properly trains union members on how to use PPE, what to do in the event that a student is showing symptoms of COVID-19, and all new rules and regulations concerning safety, health, and interactions with students.

**In Solidarity,**

Deborah Hillburn