

August 7, 2020

The Honorable Richard Corcoran
Commissioner of Education
Turlington Building, Suite 1514
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Commissioner Corcoran:

As school districts across the state of Florida diligently prepare for the opening of the 2020-21 school year, your guidance and support are critical to ensuring the safety, wellness and instructional needs of students and staff are known and met. The membership of the *Florida Association of District School Superintendents* is working tirelessly to ready our schools and staff for what, no doubt, will be an opening that brings many new challenges for all stakeholders.

As we prepare for the physical return to school, there are two major challenges that state direction is imperative. Regardless of the date for starting face-to-face instruction, one of the challenges facing superintendents, school personnel, students and parents is the need for standardized protocols for when an individual (student or staff member) exhibits symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19. Clear and articulate processes for the role of the Department of Health as the lead in case investigation, contact tracing and quarantine direction, length and implementation are essential and must be consistent across all school districts. This also means uniform steps and implementation of guidelines for individual (student or staff member), classroom, whole school or district implications for when there is a positive case with no symptoms, a positive case with symptoms and/or cases with severe illness.

While each case, most certainly, has individualized context, the process must be known and transparent not only for continuity of school operation, but for public transparency and trust. With this in mind, it would be greatly appreciated if written protocols and matrices were developed and distributed alongside sample situations for both elementary and secondary schools that demonstrated scenarios for implementation in alignment with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

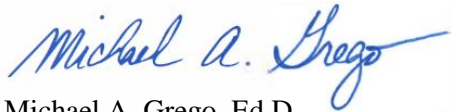
As the lead for all case investigation, contact tracing and quarantine processes, it is my understanding that the state Surgeon General is in the process of developing such statewide guidance. As superintendents, we feel it is imperative that we have these statewide protocols to guide our collaboration as soon as possible so we can provide more explicit guidance for our school leaders and clear information to our staff and community at large.

Another incredible challenge to opening schools for face-to-face instruction that will impact the ability for operational and instructional continuity of our schools is the availability of rapid testing for students and staff members. The support of all state and private health care agencies to prioritize the availability of testing and rapid results of students and staff members will be critical. The availability of these tests could significantly reduce the time students and school personnel are absent from school and corresponding disruptions that come from the need to wait days, or weeks, for results.

The Honorable Richard Corcoran
Commissioner of Education
August 7, 2020
Page Two

The safety, wellness and instructional needs of our students, families and staff are the priority of all. As superintendents, we look forward to your guidance, support and collaboration as we enter the 2020-21 school year and continue to provide a high-quality education to each and every student during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael A. Grego". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael A. Grego, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Pinellas County Schools
President, Florida Association of District School Superintendents

c: District School Superintendents