

Frequently Asked Questions:

Returning to Work MOU

(This FAQ sheet addresses questions that members may have about the MOU of August 15, 2020, between NTEA and NTPS regarding returning to work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional MOUs and member questions may become part of this FAQ sheet. Any changes to the August 15 MOU will be reflected in this sheet, as well. Last updated: August 25, 2020)

WORK LOCATION/ACCOMMODATIONS

Will employees have a choice about working from home or at a District site?

Answer: It is not an individual choice. We will begin the year in “phase 3” as detailed in the NTPS reopening plan. The expectation is that employees will work from their assigned work site.

What is the difference between the “increased health risk” accommodation for HR and the building level request for accommodation?

Answer: Employees that are “increased risk” as defined by CDC guidelines may request accommodations through Human Resources. It is a legal responsibility for the District to process these requests to ensure the safety of staff.

At the building level, the term “flexibility” is used to describe accommodations that are needed by folks that have circumstances that might require them to work from an alternate location (child care or family members that are at risk or need care). This request is processed with the building administrator.

How does an employee request an accommodation, especially about work location?

Answer: When making a request as an “increased health risk” employee, an email should be sent to HRCOVID@nthurston.k12.wa.us. You should provide your contact information to them and expect to be contacted directly. **You may work remotely until a determination is made.**

When making a request at the building level, a [form](#) will be provided for staff to complete and turn in to the building administrator. **You may work remotely until your plan is approved.**

What does the MOU mean by Alternate Assignment?

Answer: If your job or any of the phases of reopening requires you to be on campus to serve students, and your accommodation requires you to work off campus, an alternate assignment might be an option.

Can staff be reassigned because they are working from home?

Answer: No. Staff would not be reassigned due to a request to work from home. Reassignment only becomes an option if the staff member can't perform the requirements of their job from home at any phase of reopening.

Who should submit accommodations requests to HR?

Answer: If you are at "increased risk" according to CDC guidelines or your health care provider and you desire a possible accommodation at some phase of the reopening plan.

Here is a link to the CDC's description of who is at "increased risk": [People At Increased Risk](#)

Do I have to request accommodations if I am at "increased risk"?

Answer: No. It is not a bad idea to inform HR that you are at "increased risk" even if you aren't requesting a specific accommodation as your need for accommodation may change.

Can I submit my request later?

Answer: Yes. You can submit for accommodations or flexibility at any time.

Who should submit a Flexibility request to their worksite supervisor?

Answer: Staff that are living with someone at increased risk, experiencing child care complications or have other challenges that need to be addressed related to the worksite.

Can HR make a determination that I cannot work from school/work site, if I submit to them that I am at increased risk, but would prefer to work from the worksite?

Answer: No. It's about making the workplace safe for the employee.

Will the form I fill out for building level flexibility be cc'd to NTEA (Ray Nelson, President)?

Answer: Not automatically. Before an administrator can deny a request for accommodation, it will need to be processed with Troy Oliver. If it is still denied, Ray will be notified and work with you on the request.

Is working from home the only accommodation or flexibility option to be considered?

Answer: No. Any accommodation necessary to do your job may be considered.

If you are increased risk and you choose to work on site and you get sick, does that impact liability on your part?

Answer: No. If you get sick at work, there are other processes that kick in like Worker's Compensation.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Why are we having 3 PD days in September right before the start of the 2020-21 school year?

Answer: Based on the Spring NTEA survey results, the majority of members wanted to move the already calendared PD days to September in preparation for the upcoming year. The District wished to maintain the days inside of the student year. That left us with the other three days next August (they are part of the 2020-2021 contract). Now, all of the 6 days we are contractually obligated to work and compensated for will happen between September 2020 and June 2021 (rather than 3 in the student year and 3 next August).

What do I need to document for these three days?

Answer: The 22.5 hours accounts for three working PD days (not just class hours). These 22.5 hours were designed to give staff the ability to individually determine what they need to do to develop professionally and be prepared for the opening of the school year. Many staff have been engaged in training all summer and this is time is an opportunity to continue new learning, reflect on new learning and plan for implementation alone and with colleagues.

The form that has been provided to staff is intended to document three days of work, not necessarily 22.5 hours of class time. Staff are asked to fill out the form with time blocks identified and a description of how the time was spent. Individuals should incorporate breaks and lunches within those time blocks just as breaks and lunch would happen on traditionally scheduled PD days. When complete, it should be turned into their building supervisor. The total time needs to add up to the 22.5 hours/three contracted days for a 1.0 FTE or pro-rated for less than 1.0. If you have questions about prorated hour totals, you can contact Jessica Pike at HR.

Will we still have PD next August?

Answer: That is yet to be bargained. If there are any days in August of 2021, they would be part of the next Collective Bargaining Agreement and would be paid as PD days for the 2021-2022 school year.

What if I don't want/need PD in September?

Answer: The 22.5 hours that are to happen anytime between 9/1 and 9/4 should be documented and turned into building administration. (The form is attached as a Word document in an email from Charlie Burleigh sent on Monday, August 24 to all certificated staff.) It is not an approval process but rather communicating your professional responsibility and completing the 3 days worth of work we are paid for. Most staff will have no problem documenting 22.5 hours of preparations for the school year. This time is entirely employee determined and intended to be flexible to meet the needs of the staff. If you don't wish to work these 22.5 hours, you can use leave.

How do I get clock-hours for the September PD days?

Answer: NTEA will work with WEA and NTPS to make sure that some online options that are pre-approved will be available for those needing Clock Hours.

When will we know our daily schedule?

Answer: Building principals are given the responsibility to develop Master Schedules for their site. They should be shared out on or before building directed PD Days in August.

What will grading look like?

Answer: OSPI has declared that grading will look like it did prior to the closure last March. There may be a need to have further discussion about these expectations through bargaining.

LEAVES

What do we do when we are sick? Can we work from home and not take a sick day?

Answer: If you can do your job from home, it may be possible to call in and communicate that and get approval from your building admin. If you are unable to perform your job, you may need to take a sick day. What that means for instruction and how substitutes will be used is yet to be discussed in bargaining.

Stipends/Supplemental Contracts

What about Activity Stipends this year?

Answer: The Stipend Committee (Bargaining sub-group) will need to meet and revisit job descriptions and impact on current stipend agreement.

Will I still receive my Supplemental Days Contract described in our current CBA?

Answer: Yes. It was negotiated as part of the MOU that all extended day contracts outlined in the CBA will be honored as part of your total compensation. These are not the same as the Activity Stipends mentioned in the previous question.

TECHNOLOGY AND PRIVACY

Will parents be asked not to record or share teaching videos on social media and elsewhere?

Will parents be told/reminded that recording of teachers without their consent/knowledge is against state law?

Can the district check or confiscate personal equipment, if used for teaching?

Instruction/Staffing

Will secondary teachers be expected to make monthly phone calls for ALL students or just advisees? This is a workload issue.

Who is responsible for “Face to Face” small group instruction when we move to that step?

Answer: This is about bringing back students that are “furthest from Educational Justice”. This will be determined at the Building Level and could include any staff.

What about class size and overage pay?

Answer: We are operating under the current CBA related to class size, caseload and overage pay agreements for the 2020-2021 school year. Keep in mind that in General Education, overage pay does not get calculated until October when the counts are more “stable”. This will be an especially challenging year as we don’t know what to anticipate in terms of enrollment and attendance. Funding is dependent on both.