

February 11, 2021 COVID Update

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The decision to move to Stage 4 and other considerations:

Per our MOU, the decision to move from Stage 3 to Stage 4 (thus starting Hybrid instruction-services at our elementary schools) was based on reviewing the Phase Shift Readiness Questions provided by the Department of Health (see [page 17 of K-12 School 2020-21 Guidance](#) document). We asked to move beyond simple "yes" or "no" to check a box and formulated questions about how and what is being done to demonstrate readiness. The determination of readiness was made with the NTEA Bargaining Team and members of the NTEA Executive Board. [Phase Shift Readiness Questions](#)

Connected to readiness and monitoring, NTEA Building Reps have a copy of the NTEA safety checklist available for members to review. It should be updated as we move ahead and checked to make sure that the plans are being followed.

PreK and K are up and running. We are monitoring the management of arrival and dismissal procedures, health and safety protocols and daily schedules to make sure the workday continues to follow the agreements in our CBA. First and Second Grades are scheduled to begin the hybrid model on February 17th.

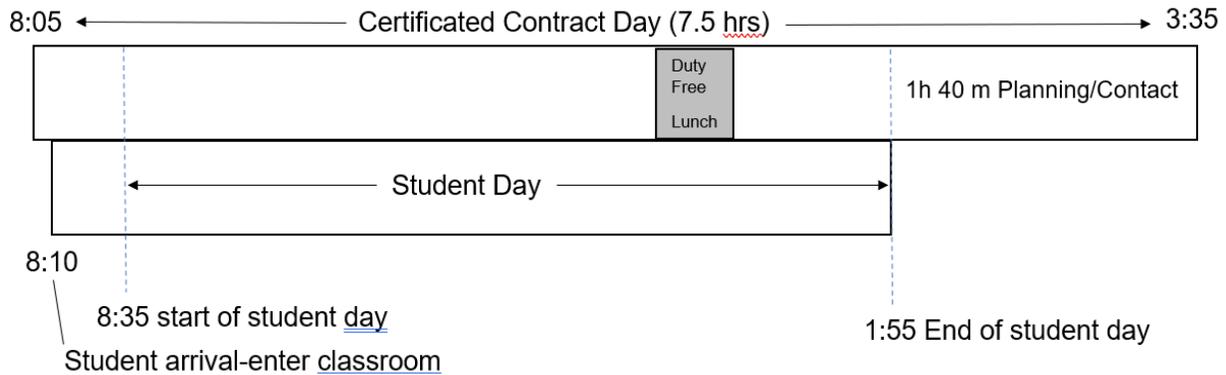
As we bring on additional grade levels, NTEA has shared that staff need at least the Friday prior to onboarding a new grade band without live instructional responsibilities. Rather it has been requested that staff be allowed to plan and work through routines and procedures with their teams and building administration.

NTEA is in the process of creating a reporting form that can help report and track incidents of mitigation strategies and protocol violations, so that they can be addressed in a timely manner. COVID Supervisors (primarily building admin) should always be made aware of these concerns as well as the building Safety Committee.

Elementary Student Day:

Students are coming to school and going directly to classrooms. Because teachers are now expected to provide supervision as soon as students arrive in the morning, the traditional 30 minutes of contract time built into the morning schedule has been shifted

to the end of the workday. The student day is 75 minutes shorter than the traditional school day (ACT schedule). Elementary planning time takes place after the student day ends (40 minutes). The 60 minutes that used to be split 30 before and 30 after school, will now be placed mostly at the end of the day.



Additional PPE:

All teachers/staff that supervise students eating should have access to a face shield and KN95 masks and be trained on the storage and refresh process for the masks. Questions were asked about the safety of students eating in classrooms. We reached out to the Thurston County Public Health staffer in charge of reviewing safety plans with the question: "How is it safe to eat in classrooms when there are such strict regulations around eating in public spaces?" It was explained that in a restaurant, workers interact with potentially dozens of unmasked customers seated and facing one another who are engaged in eating and conversations throughout the course of their shifts. This exposes those restaurant workers to a different risk level than in a classroom eating situation. In the elementary classroom setting, students in a classroom will be eating at their individual desks, facing in one direction, for a limited period of time, usually no longer than 20 minutes. Staff are then exposed to the same group of students that they have been with all day. Therefore, less time unmasked and same cohort.

Clarification on NTEA's position on INCompletes for first semester:

It is our belief that the District's new policy regarding incompletes may be in violation of Articles 30 and 37. We have filed a grievance with the District on behalf of our secondary members. Our interest is to protect our members from excessive workload, and also to allow for your professional discretion when it comes to supporting your students in achieving academic success.

You are still obligated to record incompletes for students who would otherwise receive a failing grade for first semester. There are two credit retrieval options that could be supported by our current contract. First, you may issue credit for first semester for students who demonstrate mastery of first semester standards during second semester. Thus, "back-filing" the credit for the student. Many classes do not cover the same

standards in second semester as they do in first semester or are single semester classes. A second option is that you access the class size review process to account for the work you do to help these students retrieve first semester credit. If your request for assistance or a remedy (as described in our CBA) is denied by your administrator, you have the right to appeal to the Class Size Review Board (Article 30, Section 6 of the CBA). Please send your appeal request to Human Resources (Charlie Burleigh) and NTEA (Ray Nelson).

There are additional credit retrieval options that do not violate our contract nor require extra work of the teacher such as APEX or summer school.

Hybrid Instructional Model: We have had NTEA representatives involved in the planning teams per our MOU Appendix C. That does not mean that all aspects of the models have been bargained. We are aware that while some substantial improvements have been made through the work of the committees, there are still working condition and safety concerns that need to be addressed.

COVID-19 NTPS Dashboard:

The Dashboard is intended to help communicate COVID-19 positive cases that enter our worksites and monitor for virus transmission in our schools. It will be updated weekly by the District. Staff have the responsibility to inform their supervisor if they have a positive test result. This is not a HIPPA violation. A violation would occur if the District informs others, without consent, that a specifically named employee tested positive for COVID-19. The supervisor will report this result to the DO Point of Contact. The building supervisor will then be instructed to send out a letter to their staff confirming there is a staff member (or student who has been in the building) that tested positive. NTEA President Ray Nelson will be cc'd on these communications. The letter is a form letter that is part of the One Note Binder.

The Health Department will also be contacting the District whenever there is an employee that tests positive. The District and TCDOH work together to share information about the worksite and other possible exposures and then contact tracers do the follow up interviews and advising. The numbers on the dashboard will reflect confirmed cases in staff and students. Identity is confidential, but numbers will be reported. You must be signed in to the district website to access the Dashboard. **PATHWAY:** North Thurston Public Schools website > Community > Back to School: Return to Learn > COVID Dashboard (Link to the [Dashboard](#)).

Leaves:

There have been many questions around what leaves are available to meet the needs of membership. With respect to COVID-19, there are four (4) basic options.

1. District sick leave
2. Shared Leave
3. Paid Administrative Leave
4. WA Paid Family and Medical Leave

First, you may always use District provided sick leave if you or a family member must quarantine or contracts COVID-19 and must recover. Many members are rightfully concerned about using the sick leave they've accrued for this unique situation. That said, another option is to apply for "shared leave" through HR. Until the Governor proclaims the COVID-19 pandemic over, the usual rules about shared leave are suspended. Shared leave allows an employee to request assistance from colleagues. If approved, employees will be sent a message asking for donations of sick leave time to be shared with a fellow employee. For members with a great deal of accrued sick leave, donating to a member with little of their own sick leave is an act of compassion and solidarity. Another leave option, if you should be told by a health agency to quarantine because of a suspected "close contact" while at a District worksite, is Paid Administrative Leave. This leave option was written into our MOU months ago and continues even though the Federal COVID Leave expired December 31, 2020. Finally, Paid FML through Employment Securities Department can be accessed if you or a family member contract COVID-19. Paid FML can be used to reimburse your District sick leave balance and restore what might be used initially during recovery from COVID. We hope this form might answer some of your questions: [NTEA Guide to COVID Leaves](#)

NTEA is in the process of creating a reporting form that can help track incidents when mitigation protocols are failing so that they can be addressed in a timely manner. COVID Supervisors (primarily building admin) should always be made aware of these concerns as well as the building Safety Committee.

Calendar

In looking ahead at the 2021-2022 School Year, there are still 6 Professional Development Days that NTEA members are paid for beyond Base Pay. Three are scheduled prior to the start of the year and three within the student year. The three days that would have been scheduled for the last week in August of 2021 were completed in September, 2020. The three PD days that appear on that appear on 8/31/21, 9/1/21, 9/2/21 will be paid in your 2021-2022 employment contract.

WEA Survey Result

WEA Research complete its analysis of the results of the second round of COVID-Hybrid surveying. The plan is to have a WEA researcher take Building Reps through the results at our Feb 22 Council meeting and then make the results available to all NTEA members.