

Hello MIEA Members,

I hope this email finds you well and feeling a little better informed, ready to move into this unchartered path online and collaborating with other members.

The District and MIEA have been working hard to find answers to questions and provide you with clear up-to-date information and guidance. Last night at about 8pm O.S.P.I. did an about face and changed it's guidelines in regards to online learning. They are telling districts that by March 30th we need to have a plan for online learning in place. This was a little surprising, but I think MISD handled the change well, and I know that teams have been collaborating at the District level to create a path that makes sense moving forward, get the food service for children in place, childcare running, and provide guidance on how to best interact with our families. These teams with our members involved are working on how best to serve our students going forward in to these unchartered waters. I feel confident that MISD will do it's best along with our members to create a workable learning and teaching environment for us all.

I also want to share that today we held our first Google MIEA Representative Council meeting. It was great to hear how things are going across the District and get some of the questions answered. Below, please find a few more MIEA member questions and answers, an update from WEA and NEA about what we can do to support legislative priorities to help students, educators, and families weather the coronavirus pandemic

Member Questions and Answers:

**Some school districts have taken the governors mandate to provide childcare and turned it over to the Boys and Girls Club. All their childcare centers in Seattle schools will be staffed by boys and girls club staff members. Why is Mercer Island having to staff our childcare with school employees and not use boys and girls club like Seattle did?**

I asked the same question when I found out about the childcare. In a nutshell, the District tried to find a provider on MI to take care of this as some of the surrounding larger districts were doing. Kidsco, which leases space in our district to run daycare, declined to provide services to the District because they were not licensed to be in other spaces or increase capacity. Boys and Girls club on the Island is looking to add some staff, but only has room for maybe 5 or 10 more kids if they find someone. The District also asked Bellevue School District if we could piggyback on what they are doing since the hospitals are mostly in Bellevue and Seattle and we figured it would be closer for the parents who are first responders and health care workers, Bellevue declined. MISD also reached out to other local private daycares and discovered that most of them are full to capacity or have closed. Soooo...MISD realized they had to figure this out themselves.

**There was an email sent out by Fred regarding online classes. Is it mandatory we take them if we are in a para educator position?**

No, it is not mandatory that you do online classes at this point, but it might be a good idea to do some online professional development that is helpful to you in your job.

**Is the culminating activity regarding planning in Fred's email necessary for me, since I do not have a classroom, nor do I make lesson plans in my role as a para?**

These courses seem more applicable to current teachers. I think that part of Fred's email was mostly geared toward the certificated teachers you are correct

**Can the building administrators include para educators and other classified staff in the cabinet and staff meetings too?**

Yes, I spoke with HR about this today and was assured that is possible and will be discussed at their next leadership team meeting.

**Are there certificated staff on the team that is working on the childcare?**

Yes there are certificated members, teachers and nurses.

[Link to NEA](#)

On March 18, the president signed into law the bipartisan [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) that provides free testing and paid sick and emergency leave for some (steps must be taken to cover more); the bill also bolsters unemployment insurance, food initiatives, and federal support for Medicaid. But it's just a start. Additional legislation is already in the works and we need to weigh in—**right now**.

[NEA's top legislative priorities](#) include:

- Putting money in people's pockets by sending "stimulus" checks to households, cancelling federal student loan payments, and further expanding unemployment insurance
- Injecting more money into state budgets and Medicaid to help avoid laying off educators and ensure access to health care
- Closing the "homework gap" by providing devices and Wi-Fi hotspots for students who lack internet access at home
- Providing flexibility in U.S. Department of Education regulations, especially those that govern Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) testing and interventions, and reasonable flexibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Guaranteeing paid sick and family medical leave for everyone who needs it
- Taking steps to prevent housing instability and a rise in homelessness

Email your representatives and urge them to support these legislative priorities to help students, educators, and families weather the coronavirus pandemic.

**Help build Support-** Thank you for writing Congress. We need your help getting more people to write them, too. [Write to Congress](#)

Stay Well and Informed.

Sincerely,  
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