



NEA-NH Statement of Principles – COVID-19

As the state of emergency continues, the safety of our students, educators, and all their families remains our top priority. Our actions, decisions and recommendations are based on these principles.

Health and Safety of Students and Educators: To continue to ensure the well-being of our members and the community, we believe

- School buildings should be closed to all employees, administrators, students, and members of the public. School openings should occur only after medical experts publicly recommend the opening of schools.
- If a school district insists that employees report to the building, employees should not be required to clean or sanitize school buildings or property if cleaning and sanitizing is not in their normal job descriptions.
- If a school district insists that custodial staff report to empty buildings to clean them, they should be provided the appropriate supplies and protection to prevent exposure to the Coronavirus.
- Districts should take all necessary steps to ensure students who rely on school meals are still able to access them. If school staff is required to work in a school building for the purpose of preparing meals for distribution to students, their work environment should be appropriately cleaned and their exposure to the Coronavirus should be minimized.

Professional Issues Relating to Teachers, ESPs and other Education Employees: School buildings may be closed, but school is still in session. We believe

- All public-school employees and public higher education faculty and staff should be paid for the duration of this crisis. This specifically includes hourly employees, such as ESP and other education employees. NEA-NH believes every person employed by a school district and university system is valuable to a student's success. Paying hourly employees demonstrates a recognition of their worth to the community, relieves undue financial stress on the employee and their family, and provides the district a consistent and experienced workforce when this crisis abates. School Districts should commit to this now so that school employees are not balancing the anxiety of losing their pay while they are trying to support remote learning.
- All mandatory standardized testing should be canceled for this school year.
- Remote learning is a short-term answer, not a long-term solution. Students need the socialization neighborhood schools provide and one-on-one time with their teachers, paraeducators and other school employees who contribute to their success. As parents return to work, they will be unable to assist in the remote learning of their children.
- The State of New Hampshire must issue clear guidance regarding the education of our special need students in conformance with the NEA-NH Statement of Principles – COVID-19.

March 27, 2020



- Statutory deadlines involving the non-renewal of teachers must be followed. Teachers are educating their students while dealing with unseen challenges, they do not need to deal with anxiety over job security when deadlines already exist which remove that anxiety.
- Students must have access to technology and clear procedures and guidelines which allow them to learn remotely. This includes internet access. Elected officials must work with internet companies to require internet service to students' families along with guarantees that such service will not be slowed or interrupted regardless of the reason.
- The New Hampshire Department of Education should grant requests to waive the renewal of teacher credentials for this year as many opportunities for professional development have been canceled. NEA-NH will continue to investigate and offer professional development opportunities for all members.
- That remote learning should not be the basis of any K-12 teacher evaluations yet to be done; that all higher education faculty evaluations be suspended for the remainder of the spring semester; and that student teacher internship requirements be waived.

Information and Communication: As the scope and impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis continues to evolve, information is our most valuable commodity.

- NEA-NH believes that communications from our federal, state, and local government agencies and elected officials must be accurate, informative, and provide facts that enable NEA-NH members to make informed decisions about their lives, the lives of their families, and their students.
- NEA-NH is committed to working with our public education allies and coalition partners to advocate for public education and all education employees regardless of their job title, so that students continue to receive a great public education.
- NEA-NH is committed to educating public officials about the effects their policies and decisions have on public school students and the education profession. We are dedicated to working with elected or appointed officials collaboratively through frank and honest discussions.
- NEA-NH believes that the ending of this crisis requires an assessment of what worked, what didn't work, what we can do better, and how we prepare for a similar crisis in the future. This examination must include all parties but especially educators and school employees, administrators and special education advocates and providers.