



Commissioner Richard Corcoran
Florida Department of Education
325 W. Gaines St.
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

April 28, 2020

Dear Commissioner Corcoran:

We appreciate the monumental task that lies ahead when we reopen PreK-12, college and university campuses for the 2020-2021 school year. To ensure that our students, parents and education employees have all the support and resources needed to be successful, we are encouraging you to create, in addition to the current taskforce, two statewide committees comprised of experts and advisors to help guide all our campuses through this reopening period.

We suggest the formation of a committee for the PreK-12 public school system and one for our state colleges and universities. The committees should be led by those with experiences grounded in public schools and higher education institutions.

For the PreK-12 committee, we recommend the following groups be included:

- Students (2)
- Parents (4)
- Community groups with a vested interest in public education, such as the NAACP and the Hispanic Federation (2)
- Superintendents (2)
- School board members (4)
- Teachers from all levels and curriculum areas (8)
- Instructional support staff, such as school counselors, social workers and school psychologists (3)
- Education support professionals, such as bus drivers, paraprofessionals, secretaries, etc. (4)
- School-based administrators (2)
- Medical professional (1)
- Business leader (1)
- State senator and state representative (2)
- Health-care administrator (1)
- Locally elected officials from a county and municipality (2)
- Public health expert (1)

This committee will bring forward recommendations on the reopening of schools in which they address the health and safety of students and staff, including mental health, and the curriculum needs for student learning. Furthermore, the committee will have a specific focus on our youngest students, students with disabilities and students from lower socioeconomic communities to ensure that their specific needs are fully addressed. These recommendations will support all students with a well-rounded and broad school experience. With consensus of the committee, other categories of recommendations may be added.

Finally, the committee should examine lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis and make recommendations to address the digital and academic gap that impacts so many of our students.

For our colleges and universities, we recommend the following groups be included:

- Students (2)
- Parents (4)
- Community groups with a vested interest in public education, such as the NAACP and the Hispanic Federation (2)
- College president (1)
- University president (1)
- Board of trustee members (4, with 2 from colleges and 2 from universities)
- Professors (8, with 4 from colleges and 4 from universities)
- Deans (2)
- Mental health professionals (2)
- Medical professional (1)
- State senator and state representative (2)
- Health-care administrator (1)
- Public health expert (1)

Here too, the focus of this committee should be the health and safety of students and staff returning to campus, including mental health, and on ensuring opportunities for students to be able to meet all curriculum and degree requirements on campus. Student housing and activities should be examined to ensure all student experiences have health and safety as a top priority.

Time is of the essence. Many decisions for the 2020-2021 academic year already are being discussed. Direction must be given soon, and these committees will need time to do the work. We look forward to working with you to assist in identifying key individuals to serve in the various categories. We have a unified goal and hope to work together to provide the safest and best environment to support and educate Florida's students.

Sincerely,

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