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Fedrick C. Ingram
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July 21, 2020

Jimmy Patronis
Chief Financial Officer
Florida Department of Financial Services
200 East Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0301

Dear CFO Patronis:

On July 6th, Richard Corcoran, Commissioner of the Florida Department of Education (Department), issued an emergency order [see DOE ORDER NO. 2020-E0-06] requiring that all school boards and charter school governing boards must open brick and mortar schools at least five days per week for all students. We do not argue the soundness of that mandate here nor do we detail the dramatic surge of coronavirus cases in Florida that show no sign of slowing.

The purpose of our letter is to request that state workers' compensation coverage be extended to all district school employees. The Commissioner's emergency order clearly states that education is critical to the success of the State of Florida and to fulfill the requirement when schools open, frontline school employees will be required to have substantial contact with populations known or suspected of carrying COVID-19.

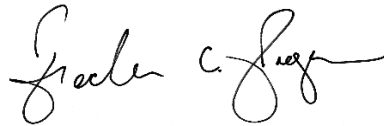
As you pointed out in your March directive 2020-05, the State Surgeon General and State Health Officer have declared a Public Health Emergency exists in the State of Florida as a result of COVID-19; and we are seeing dramatic numbers of positive cases. You have been afforded the authority to suspend the provisions of any regulatory statute of that agency, if strict compliance with that statute would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with this emergency.

On behalf of the nearly 150,000 members of the Florida Education Association, and all school district employees, we are requesting, as you did for other frontline workers, that you direct the Division of Risk Management to process Workers' Compensation claims, as the primary coverage before any district insurance, for any district employees who test positive for COVID-19, as compensable claims for occupational disease pursuant to Section 112.1815, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 440, Florida Statutes, unless the State of Florida can show, by preponderance of the evidence, that the district employee contracted COVID-19 outside his or her scope of employment.

We fully endorse the sentiment in your March order that these critical employees deserve to know we've got their backs if they get sick. Workers' compensation insurance can cover a portion of lost wages and medical costs so that districts and employees don't have to worry as much. As you have rightly said, "Providing this important coverage to our men and women on the front line is just the right thing to do."

We look forward to your favorable and timely response to this request

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fedrick C. Ingram". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "F" and a long, sweeping tail.

Fedrick Ingram
President