

PENC Position: Statewide School Reopening

PENC believes all students and educators have a right to a safe school environment.

PENC believes that science and the recommendations of public health agencies, not politics, should drive decision-making about reopening schools.

PENC believes that LEAs should make accommodations for teachers and staff at a higher risk because of age or underlying health conditions to ensure their health and safety, including a process for educators to work virtually should they be required to stay at home.

PENC believes all North Carolina public school students, parents, and employees deserve to have a clear understanding of the protections and protocols their local school systems will put into place to address their health and safety.

PENC believes that each school district should develop, approve, and disseminate a local policy that prioritizes student and employee safety. The policy must describe the health and safety measures the district will take to mitigate and respond to the threat of COVID-19 and what action the district will take in response to confirmed cases of COVID-19 in staff and students.

PENC believes that LEAs should involve teachers and parents in the development of school reopening plans. In addition, plans should include a process for recommending and communicating changes to school schedules.

PENC believes that statewide testing should be waived for 2020-2021

PENC believes that teachers required to quarantine at home due to exposure at school should not be required to use sick leave.

PENC believes that LEAs should prioritize the social and emotional learning of students when schools reopen.

PENC believes that districts should supply all necessary PPEs and that school spaces should be professionally cleaned.

PENC believes that teacher evaluators should consider the unprecedented nature of current teaching challenges in conducting evaluations.

PENC believes that LEA policies must include a plan for childcare for employees' children.

PENC believes pressuring district employees to sign liability waivers for COVID-19 exposure in the workplace is unconscionable. PENC urges the State Board of Education to forbid their use.

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