

This document is a community space where MASBO members can collaborate on common issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic emergent in winter 2020. The purpose is to share practices and provide clarification where possible but this is not a replacement for guidance or orders from the MDH, MDE, Governor's office, or any other government agency.

To leave a question or comment, please include your name and district/organization with that entry, in this format:

Insert Question/Item for Discussion

Date, Your Name, Your Organization, Full Description of Question or Item

Example:

Required Staff Work Days by State

3-18-20 Jane Smith

Today we were notified by the State that all staff.....

Payments to Transportation Providers

3-18-20 John Carlson, Rochester

Paying First Student the normal daily rate through March 27. Addressing any further changes after we get further guidance.

Canceling field trips and activities busing -- not intending to pay for those as of now.

Van services that are billed hourly -- IDK yet

3-18-20 John Morstad, Orono

Paying First Student normal daily rates on the same monthly invoice schedule as previous, minus unused fuel. Expect the same arrangement with SPED transport partners.

Canceling any field trip and activity busing.

3-25-20 Kevin Wellen, Menagha

We own our own, but we are having them deliver meals and paying them in full.

3-25-20 Chuck Keller, Belle Plaine

We are paying the bus company the full amount for regular and SPED routes so they can continue to pay their employees. In exchange they are delivering the SFSP meals on a daily basis.

3-25-20 Kristin Dehmer, Moorhead

We are paying them and using them were able.

3-25-20 Aaron Leisen, Lionsgate Academy

This is a big concern in our district as well. We have interpreted MDE's guidance in favor of paying transportation providers for now and keeping driver's paid so we have them when we need them. We are currently paying our transportation contractor in full based on February averages. We are having transportation deliver meals and school material. Guidance from MDE is to maintain agreements with

contractors based on 20-02 Executive order through the 27th. I have requested guidance for 30th going forward but it also has been vague.

3-25-20 Sherry Haugen, Maple River
Maple River is doing the same as Belle Plaine.

3-25-20 Troy Schreifels, Osseo
Osseo is paying our yellow bus vendors 85% of their home to school schedule routes & mid-day routes (excluding spring break). We are also paying our Type III vendors 85% of their normal billing less spring break. We agreed to pay this the first two weeks of the governor's closure. We will be discussing this beyond that time. We believe this is important to maintain an already delicate workforce and a vital component of our education system.

3-25-20 Ellie Hill, Hill City
At one of my schools we are paying our contracted company in full at this time as they are doing a ton of working helping us deliver all our meals and educational materials to families.

My other district owns and operates our own transportation so the drivers are still being paid and again they are providing a vital service helping to deliver meals and resources to our families.

3-25-20 Kim Sandry, MACCRAY
We are paying our full contract to Palmer Bus but their drivers are doing daycare transportation and meal deliveries for us in place of the regular routes. I am hoping the governor gives more guidance in his announcement tomorrow!

3-25-20 Amy Burns, GFW Schools
We own our own and will continue to pay them in full. We are utilizing their services to deliver the meals, lesson plans and other vital items that need to go out. We are also using them to transport the daycare kiddos to our onsite daycare for the essential employees and emergency workers.

3-25-20 Elizabeth Beery, Waseca Public Schools
Any concern regarding the special education funding piece? We are asking for further guidance from MDE regarding special education. Our special ed routes are approximately \$40,000 per month. As paras (with information we know today) cannot be claimed for special education unless they are performing special education work beginning 3/30, I am concerned that this would also apply to other areas such as bussing? If the routes aren't running, can we still code it to Fin 723?

3-25-20 Derrick Agate, Hopkins
We are paying our contractor, however we are using them for transporting first responders kids to daycare and delivering meals and school supplies to our students who qualify.

3-25-20 Bill Holmgren, Lakeville
We are paying our transportation contractor on a reduced rate so they can continue to pay their employees.

We are using them now to deliver meals and transport child care students.

3-25-20 Phan Tu, St. Anthony

We are paying our transportation contractor the scheduled routes and using them to deliver meals and supplies.

3-26-30 Tim Wald, White Bear Lake

We are paying the negotiated amount minus fuel costs through March 27. Considering paying only employee costs after Mar 27.

Staff Who Don't Want to Work

3-18-20 Robyn Vosberg-Torgerson, Milaca

What are you doing for staff who say that they don't want to or can't get into work? This could be for anxiety over COVID-19 or for other personal reasons'; We are asking that they submit sick or personal leave for their time off. Put in notes so that we can make changes and/or updates later.

3-18-20 John Carlson, Rochester

Sick time, personal leave, vacation leave, or unpaid time off. May change this and reverse the time-off used later if we get further direction from the Governor or MDE.

3-18-20 Julie Cink, Prior Lake-Savage

During the 8 days, we are requiring staff to enter time off, either sick, personal or vacation time.

3-18-20 John Morstad, Orono

We are asking staff to follow the current leave procedures and enter any leave in Frontline (sick, personal, vacation) We will revisit at the end of the school year.

3-25-20 Amy Burns, GFW Schools

We are requiring staff that have not provided a Dr.'s note to report to work. If they refuse to report or when they do report and they refuse to do a certain job. They will not be paid. As of 2/24/20 We have gone to a schedule so that our hourly staff don't need to report everyday. They are "taking turns".

3/30/20 Aliza Lundin, Kelliher ISD #36

For those employees that have 0 sick/PTO banks left to use and aren't wanting to return to work, and have children - do they qualify for the 2 weeks paid sick to care for children then beginning April 1?

Staff Not Able to Return to Work

03-19-20 Amy Hafemann, Jordan

We have a couple of employees that are not able to work due to their immune system. If they do not have any sick time remaining, do we continue paying them, or direct them to apply for unemployment?

03-19-20 Kelsie Herzog, cmERDC

First, I would see if there's anything that the employee(s) can do remotely. If there's absolutely nothing for them to do, then I would see if their healthcare provider is advising them to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19. This came from guidance on the new Families First Coronavirus Act. If they are advised to self-quarantine, then you'd follow the Act for next steps on this situation.

3-25-20 Amy Burns, GFW Schools

They are to provide us a note from their Dr. that requires them to be away from work due to their health impact, etc that the virus may have on them or someone in their family. We are paying them in full and having them stay home.

3-26-20 Ashley Olson, MCW School

We have a para that started employment at the end of February. I have received a note from a doctor that she is not to work for the remainder of the school year, the note does not indicate COVID. She doesn't have many sick days available to her, nor would she be eligible for FMLA. What are your thoughts on how to handle this situation?

Spring Sports and Activities

3-18-20 Christopher Onyango-Robshaw, ISD 196

How are you handling payments for coaches for spring activities?

- ISD 196 is currently paying for the contractual agreements in place. We understand the spring sports have not begun, however the coaches may have already spent some time in preparation for the season.

3-18-20 John Carlson, Rochester

Paying $\frac{1}{3}$ of the money on 3/31/20. Will talk about the other $\frac{2}{3}$ in April when we know more.

3-18-20 John Morstad, Orono

We are paying the first half of their stipends on 3/30, per our usual calendar. Will make a decision on the second half later.

3-19-20 Michelle Sander, Glencoe-Silver Lake. At this point, we are planning to pay the full amount of their contract. We are looking at other possible duties that they can help with in addition to distance coaching. Cleaning locker rooms, painting some locker rooms, equipment and uniform inventories.

3-19-20 Sandy Linn New Prague Schools. This question was asked of the commissioner on yesterday's afternoon phone call and they said guidance was forthcoming.

3-25-20 Amy Burns, GFW Schools.

We are currently waiting for direction on this item. We don't pay our coaching contracts until the season is over. Once we have further guidance we will proceed at that point. As of right now, we discussed that it will be pro-rated based on how much time they have put in unless it comes back that we will be fully funded for their contracts.

3-27-20 - Pam Jensen, Eastern Carver County Schools - we are also hoping for more guidance on this, but in the meantime we are paying our spring coaches. Our coaching contracts are all set up for equal increments to be paid over the season. I'm hoping we will have definite guidance soon before we get too far in the season. In speaking with our attorney, a wait and see approach was probably the most prudent, noting that we would owe them something anyway because of the pre-planning of the season aspect of their job.

4-2-20 - Joe Prom, Sartell-St. Stephen Schools

Our plan right now is to pay Varsity Head Coaches 100%. We are giving them a list of expectations (connecting with players, sending workouts & drills athletes can do on their own, inventory equipment, etc.) and also want to acknowledge the work they do year-round to plan for a season. We're paying assistant coaches and junior high coaches 50%. Varsity coaches can assign them some of their responsibilities if they choose, but mainly we know people were expecting this money and we want them to do it again next year. We're paying in 1/3 increments so if guidance from MDE comes out in the next couple of weeks, we can adjust our plan.

Special ed & Federal program purchases

3-18-20 Christopher Onyango-Robshaw, ISD 196

How are districts handling the requirements on multiple quotes for purchases when using federal funds?

3-27-20 Kris Blackburn, South Washington County Schools

This guidance might help; in particular Question 18. It pertains to Title, but Federal programs are guided by the same Uniform Guidance, so would think you could apply it to Fed SpEd too.

[MDE - Title & COVID-19 FAQ](#)

Special Education service time and para coding

3-19-20 Sue Clemen, Albany

In the commissioner's call last night it was mentioned that we do not need to be concerned about the para time being coded differently because they are not providing service time. If they are reassigned to non-special education positions (cleaning, etc), time will still qualify for Spec Ed reimbursement.

3-22-20 Phan Tu, St. Anthony

Is this only allowed until March 27th? What if we continue to close, will their "non-sped" time still qualify for Sped reimbursement?

3-24-20 Randy Erdman, Southwest West Central Service Cooperative

SWWC is following the guidance posted on the MDE website at the link below:

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/spedcovid19/MDE032085>

You can find the Sped vs. Gen Ed para time and coding guidance in item 10.

3-26-2020 Jennifer Rose, River Bend Education District, New Ulm

For special education coding purposes are districts leaving special education paraprofessionals in an obj. 162 (1:1 Special Education Paraprofessional) or should they be switched to an obj. code of 161 (Special Education Paraprofessional)?

Community Education - funding

03-23-2020 Amy Hafemann, Jordan

My Community Education Director is worried about funding and what to do at this point with no fees/income really coming into the district. Our Community Education does not have a huge fund balance. How do we continue to fund these employees, such as our front desk administrative assistant and also our community ed coordinator; as well as our kids co workers?

3/26/20 - Kristin Kelly, La Crescent-Hokah

This appears to be answered in Gov. Walz's Executive Order 20-19, numbers 21 & 22: [EO 20-19](#)

3/27/20 - Brian Schultz, ISD 197

We have a similar concern. Do we know that districts will get the full state aid and levy funds for Comm. Ed programs? What are other districts doing with staffing after 3/27/20 for fee based Comm. Ed programs? Will you continue to pay them? Will you furlough some/all until back to somewhat normal and can start charging fees again? Other things districts might do?

Charter School Located in District

3-23-20 Sunday Klonecz, Cambridge-Isanti Schools

We have a Charter School in our district that we provide transportation for. As we navigate a plan for meal drop off and daycare transportation for our district, the Charter School is asking us to accommodate their students/families in these areas as well. What are our "requirements"? Does anyone have a similar situation?

Emergency Paid Leave Act & FMLA Leave

3-23-20 Jenetta Weems, Bagley School District

I have seen several different versions of what is interpreted by this new leave act. Can someone clarify to me what they are interpreting the Emergency Paid Leave Act & FMLA leave extension? Resources would be wonderful!

3-24-20 Jennifer Smith, Region 2 Arrowhead Regional Computing Consortium

This news release from the IRS provides helpful information regarding relief that was approved last week. <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/treasury-irs-and-labor-announce-plan-to-implement-coronavirus-related-paid-leave-for-workers-and-tax-credits-for-small-and-midsize-businesses-to-swiftly-recover-the-cost-of-providing-coronavirus>

3-25-20 MASBO is providing a webinar on this on Friday, 3/27 at 10m. More information can be found here: <https://www.mnasbo.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1357398>

3-26-20 Jennifer Burg, Hastings School District

How are districts implementing the Emergency Paid Leave/FMLA Leave? Are you having staff complete a form marking the reason and returning to their supervisor with a doctor's note/supporting documentation?

Also: For non-contract employees who do not typically accrue leave – is it your understanding that these employees would also get emergency paid sick leave?

SFSP - Summer Food Program

3-24-2020 Tina Burkholder, Monticello School District

Just trying to gather what I know so far on the SFSP program -

- Meals are free to students/kids of the District
- You have to have an MOU with a contracted bus company if you are delivering meals to families

3-24-2020 Tina Burkholder, Monticello School District

- Do bus drivers need to complete the individual confidential disclosure form if we have the MOU?
- We are supposed to separate out paid status meals that are delivered. What if meals delivered are residents where they don't attend our schools? (charter, montessori, headstart, etc)?
- SFSP says 18 and under, what about 18-21 special ed kids? Are they eligible? Is there a minimum age?
 - (from MDE) Thank you for sending us this question. Yes, in general, children age 18 and under may receive meals through SFSP. Anyone age 19 and older is considered an adult and not eligible to receive a meal. However, a person 19 years of age and over who has a mental or physical disability (as determined by a State or local educational agency) and who participates during the school year in a public or private non-profit school program (established for the mentally or physically disabled) is also eligible to receive meals. We are working to update our current Q and A to include this language. Thank you for this clarification.
 - (from MDE) All guidance from USDA for the SFSP states "children ages 18 and under", not specifying a minimum age. However, if you are serving those under 1 year of age, then you must use the infant meal pattern, and you need to indicate this on your site application in CLICS.
- Do students really need to be present for pick-up and delivery of meals? How is this bending the curve when there could be families of 10?
 - (from MDE) Minnesota is waiting on further USDA guidance. Best practice is for students to pick up meals to ensure that meals are for the student's consumption.
 - (from MDE) We understand that there will be times when it is not in the best interest of the health and safety of students to be present at the meal distribution site. These situations could include when students are ill or immunocompromised, have special needs that make it difficult for them to travel, are assisting with the care of younger siblings and other situations. In an effort to provide some leniency for these situations parents/caregivers may pick up meals without the student being present.

4/1/20 Sunday Klonecz, Cambridge-Isanti Schools. Is anyone transporting meals to **homeless students** residing out of district? We cannot get clear guidance on this from MDE

Answer we received from MDE : *You are not required to provide meals, but you should ensure that the students living outside of your district borders are aware of the nearest SFSP meal site. In our messaging, we have been encouraging districts/schools to serve students that reside within their boundaries regardless of whether or not they are enrolled in their districts. Proper nutrition is vital for students to learn, especially during a time like this.*

Amanda Middaugh, MS, RDN
Child Nutrition Specialist

Payment to food service contractors

3/25/20 There has been quite a bit of discussion around transportation contracts, what about food service management contracts. Are districts paying for all of their employees to continue working even if not all are needed?

3/25/20 Kim Sandry - MACCRAY We are paying all of our food service workers for their regular hours. They are making the meals for the students to pick up.

Sort of a related question -

3/27/20 - Pam Jensen-Eastern Carver County Schools - for the nutrition service workers that are going in to prepare and distribute the meals is anyone paying them extra (like 1.5 time)? Are you rotating nutrition services staff to accomplish this or do you have a smaller team?

Fund 2 and Fund 4 Employees

3-25-20 Marci Lord, Brainerd

During March 18-27, we paid Fund 2 and 4 employees their contracted hours following the governor's order. Starting March 30, is your district going to continue to pay Fund 2 employees that are not being used to serve meals or Fund 4 employees not doing distance learning since these funds do not have revenue coming in?

3-25-20 Amy Skaalerud, St. Cloud

We are going to continue to pay all employees as long as there is no reduction in state or federal aids.

3-26-2020 Patricia Magnuson, St. Louis Park

We are gathering budget capacity that will go unused in the general fund; i.e. subs, utilities, etc. If we need to do a fund transfer to fund 4 or 2, we will do so.

3-26-20 Sherry Haugen, Maple River

I am concerned that we will not be generating enough funding in Fund 02 with the grab and go lunches to cover the cost of all of our food service staff. How are other schools going to cover the deficit in Fund 02 if you continue to pay all of the staff. Currently not all of our food service staff are having to work. We have set up three teams so while one team is working the other two are not.

[Executive Order 20-19](#) - refer to numbers 21 & 22, Board approved fund transfers.

Also with Fund 04, we don't have any paying families coming in for childcare or wanting preschool. We have enough fund 1 paras to take care of the emergency family's children so that is being covered. But what do we do with the Fund 04 staff that were paid with the fees that came from paying families?

3-26-20 Lynn Lindquist, Bertha-Hewitt

We will continue to pay employees as long as there is no reduction in funding

04-01-2020 - Amy Hafemann, Jordan Public Schools

If this continues and school districts do not come back in May, if we have to lay-off some of our kids co workers, I am wondering how that will work. If we only have enough work for them to work part time, are these employees able to take unemployment for their remaining time?

Giving away District supplies

3-26-20 Patricia Magnuson, St. Louis Park

Today I learned that a principal was gathering wipes, etc and planning to give it away to police/fire/etc. I put a stop to it under the "we have no statutory authority to give away district supplies". Even if it was a parent donation at one point. My thinking is; we still have students in childcare and food service staff working. In addition, it appears that we may be back to school in May. We should make sure our oxygen masks are on before we help others...it would not be wise for the school district to become short supplied. Thoughts?

Authorized Transfer of Funds

3-26-20 Doug Hasler, Chisago Lakes

Will there be any guidance forthcoming from MDE concerning the authorization to transfer operating funds to provide child care, and pay for additional transportation costs? Any idea why this was not extended to include Food Service which will experience a revenue shortfall as a result of fewer meals, and loss of ala carte income?

3-26-20 Phan Tu, St. Anthony

Page 6 of MDE 3.25.20 Distance Learning Implementation Guidance: MDE will provide guidance

Collection of materials during distance learning

3-27-20 Andi Johnson, Sauk Rapids-Rice

Are any districts collecting materials (manipulatives, worksheets, etc.) during distance learning? We are delivering these items to students in a limited number of cases and unsure of whether we want to collect them when completed or no longer needed by the student. If other districts are collecting items - what protocols are you using for the collection? Any disinfecting measures?

3/30/20 Aliza Lundin, Kelliher ISD#36 - we decided to not collect any school work, only deliver. Teachers are contacting students to go over material or getting pictures of completed worksheets if the work isn't assigned/collected electronically.

4-1-20 Mae Hawkins, Intermediate District 287

As we have many students who are not able to access learning digitally, we have set up the following weekly process to pick up items from students' homes using buses. There is a ticketing process in place for staff to request a delivery or pick up.

"Families should be waiting for the bus to arrive 5 minutes before their scheduled drop off/pickup time. Once the bus pulls up, a family member should step out of their door and wave to signal the driver that they see them.

For Pick-ups: The driver will place a tote outside the bus door and get back in the bus and close the door. The family should then come out and put the items in the tote and go back to their door. The driver will then get the tote. The totes will be sanitized prior to be placed outside the bus.

Please inform the families that the drivers are unable to ring the doorbell or approach the door. Drivers will wait for 3 minutes past scheduled drop off time and will leave if families are not present."

Letter Of Agreement Providing Additional Compensation for Certain Essential School Employees

04/02/20 Tami Hermanson, Mora ISD #332 - Are there any districts out there working on a letter of agreement to provide additional compensation to hourly employees that are reporting to work in which work can only be performed onsite (no telework)? If so are you using a percentage pay differential or an hourly rate increase? Also, what time period would you apply it to?

There are other area businesses that are providing temporary pay increases for essential workers during this "peacetime emergency", which has prompted questions from our employees if our district is going to do this as well.

Covid Related Building Closure

4/11/20 Cathy Erickson, Duluth, ISD #709

Has anyone had a building closure due to a confirmed case in your District? We have the CDC guidance on how to clean, but wondering what protocol anyone used regarding a closure if you were notified by MDH of a confirmed case. And if you did a building cleaning, did your district staff do that or was it contracted out? Thank You.

Unemployment Filings

4/28/20 - Megan Galarneau, Hancock Public School, ISD#768

I sent out the following email to the active mailing list on 4/14. I am reaching out to individuals in HR. I've reviewed the MASBO COVID-19 document and didn't see anything specific to this listed. We have received notices from MN UI for substitute teachers who are filing for benefits because of the closure. I've never had a substitute teacher file for unemployment.

Determination of Eligibility letters have come through and found them eligible to receive benefits. What are other districts doing? Have any of you filed an appeal for this? If so, have you won the appeal process? Any feedback is greatly appreciated, thank you!

In response to my email that went out, an overwhelming majority of districts (27) who responded had the same question. I have reached out to the 2 districts who had some luck and have been able to get the request denied previously (prior to COVID) to see if they'd post their response on this document.

Here is a response from Wendy Dieker, ISD#2835

Senator Julie Rosen held a conference call for schools in her district last week (or the week before? I lost track), and that question was asked of her. Here is the reply she was able to dig up: *From the Dept. of Education: MDE has not provided guidance on unemployment. Unemployment eligibility questions have been directed to DEED. From Carlon Doyle Fontaine, nonpartisan counsel to Jobs: I believe substitute teachers are eligible for unemployment benefits. There is a provision in Minn. Stat. [268.085](#) specific to teachers and eligibility to collect unemployment (subd. 7) and also for "services for school contractors" (subd. 8), which I believe applies to substitute teachers. There is also paragraph (h) in subd. 7 that discusses "on call employment." I'm not sure if that is referencing substitute teachers as well. In general, the provisions provide that school employees and contractors cannot collect unemployment "during the period between two successive years," but if there is a teacher layoff (not summer break), the circumstances would be different. Each individual applicant would need to apply and a determination would be made, for example, based on whether the individual has enough wage credits and meets other eligibility criteria. I've only had 2 subs come across my list. One had asked not to work in our district until further notice due to family situation, so I "Raised an Issue" on her and put in the dates that she contacted us and asked not to get calls. I have not seen her Determination yet. The other I just let go through. When I clicked "Raise an Issue," none of the preset reasons fit at all. I have not seen her Determination yet either. Since then, we got that note from Sen. Rosen's follow-up, so I feel like I took the right steps, and we will see what happens when it comes back.*

Sr. Class Trip Funds

5/8/2020 - Megan Galarneau, Hancock Public School, ISD#768.

I have read the MDE Q&A on the cancelled Sr. Class Trip Funds due to COVID-19. Our Sr. Class does not want to put the remaining funds into a scholarship foundation or purchase something for the district on their behalf. What are other districts having their Sr. Class do with their funds?