I hope you are finding some happiness and peace in the dwindling days before the start of this unprecedented school year.

For those who work twelve month contracts, particularly essential workers in our communities: food service staff, custodians, school nurses, secretaries, and administrators, we both honor and thank you for your continued service to students and families. It's imperative educators know their rights, including: the right to a safe work environment; the right to ask for an American with Disabilities Act Accommodation (ADA) [we have asked for a uniform-simplified process from the PED]; and the right to keep yourself and those that you live with safe.

Register for our next webinar

Know Your Rights: School Reentry in a Time of COVID

In these unprecedented times, educators and school staff are wrestling with grave questions around returning work, particularly at brick and mortar school sites. The Public Education Department (PED) has offered a framework for safe re-opening to be interpreted and implemented by school districts. Join us for this informative conversation about the framework and your rights as an employee, including key topics such as: job duties, ADA accommodations and Leave of Absence Requests.
As most members know, the NM PED’s comprehensive guidance was released last month and many, many important questions and concerns are being raised around the state. With the new school year rapidly approaching, it is an unprecedented time and NEA-NM is continuing to advocate on behalf of all our education employees and the students they serve.

Safety is paramount for all stakeholders and keeping that as a primary focus is critical in working with our education partners to address the ongoing issues related to COVID-19.

Please take some time to fill out our survey so that we can hear from those that are most affected. Your voice needs to be heard and we value your feedback!

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Member’s Voice: NEA-NM Survey on School Reentry

Safety was the common thread in the results of a recent NEA-NM survey when members were asked; How can NEA-NM support/help you when you return to school? Many members expressed concerns around safety measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Members requested that NEA-NM work with the PED and Governor to help develop and implement policies and regulations around Personal Protective Equipment (PPE’s) especially the use of face masks, gloves and rigorous maintenance and cleaning protocols at schools.

Below is a sample of the responses:

“Ensure the safety of teachers. I understand that kids need to be in school but not at the expense of anyone’s health. If health and safety can’t be guaranteed, we have no business returning to the classroom”.

“Be our voice and advocate for a safe learning environment above all else. Monitor medical press releases and ensure that it is safe for students and staff to return to school on a normal and/or modified schedule (if needed). I support distance learning and am willing to learn more about online teaching/learning platforms in the best interest of our students and our entire learning community”.

“Back up teachers and regulations regarding mask wearing. I'm not seeing people wear masks in stores, is this lack of resources or does our community think it is a hoax. If the community thinks it isn't true then our students will not follow the rules either”.

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For information regarding paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19 from the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (or FFCRA) please click here. The provisions apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

STAY TUNED: NEA-NM Virtual Orientations

Nothing about this year’s return to school is normal, however we want to make sure all new and returning educators have an opportunity to learn about their professional association and are invited to join to strengthen education in NM. These orientations will be offered in partnership with your Local Affiliate of NEA, in some cases with your school district, and will have important information about Local wins and opportunities to engage, trainings, benefits, and important updates about school reentry. Above all, we are inviting participants to join and help grow our union. The time to exercise collective strength to advocate for safety, security, and voice could not be more pressing. Not a member or do you know someone ready to join? Visit nea-nm.org today!

Putting Kids First • Promoting Professional Excellence • Improving the Well-Being of School Employees