

ALBUQUERQUE — American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, American Federation of Teachers New Mexico President Stephanie Ly and Executive Vice President Kathy Chavez released the following statement Sept. 9:

On Aug. 19, AFT President Randi Weingarten and AFT New Mexico President Stephanie Ly alerted Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham that many Pre-K-12 school re-openings around the state have not met the standard set by her administration for safety and consistency. As a union of educators, public employees, and healthcare workers, we outlined the following conditions necessary for a safe return to in-person instruction:

1. Low infection rates and adequate testing in any region where in-school learning is being considered.

2. A public health infrastructure to provide support to school districts to implement effective disease surveillance, testing, tracing and isolation protocols in schools.

3. Public health safeguards in schools. This includes:

Physical distancing of a minimum of 6 feet

Face coverings required for all, and additional personal protective equipment equivalent to healthcare professionals is provided when close contact is unavoidable

Proper and well-maintained ventilation system

Fully stocked hand washing facilities and availability of hand sanitizer

COVID-19 Response Toolkit gets thumbs up

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 18 September 2020 03:26

Proper sanitation and cleaning protocols

Reasonable accommodations for those at increased risk

On Sept. 3, the New Mexico Public Education Department issued its COVID-19 Response Toolkit for opening New Mexico Public Schools. AFT New Mexico applauds the difficult work necessary to complete this task and appreciates the rigorous science-based approach taken by Gov. Lujan Grisham and Secy. Ryan Stewart.

The Public Education Department continues to work collaboratively with New Mexico's educators in order to achieve a most difficult goal: to educate safely. In that respect, the PED, in consultation with AFT New Mexico and other stakeholders, were (sic) able to create a reopening model which places an emphasis on the following necessary elements to any reopening:

Initial School Opening

The sensible, science-based model requires that districts are ready with essential items, including:

Appropriate PPE for every student and educator

Hand washing stations or approved sanitizer in each classroom or workplace

Limiting to 50%, the registered students in any given classroom at any one time

Inventory of CDC-approved cleaning and sanitation supplies

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Sufficient custodial resources to insure completion of CDC cleaning and sanitation standards

Ventilation systems and procedures designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 with a deadline of Sept. 28, for necessary air filtration (MERV 13 or equivalent) for all spaces where students or staff are present

Positive Test Reporting and Response

Immediate reporting and consultation with the PED for confirmed cases

24-hour reporting to families of students and staff

Sensible and clearly identified standards for school closings and reopenings where cases are confirmed in the school

“AFT New Mexico will continue its relentless advocacy to ensure that we provide our communities with safe education so that we can all continue growing New Mexico’s most important natural resource for the future: our children.”