



March 26, 2020

Dear Classified Staff,

This is a joint communication from Hillsboro Classified Union President Melody Hansen and Hillsboro School District Superintendent Mike Scott.

This is an unprecedented time, and as we grapple with the new reality we are all facing in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and to try to keep pace with our rapidly changing working conditions, we thought it was important to communicate together. The hope is that this situation will end in the near future, and now is the time for us to pull together as a District and do our part to confront the challenges we face while not increasing the spread of this dangerous virus.

The Governor has taken the COVID-19 crisis seriously and has issued executive orders around how school districts need to proceed during this closure. That said, the situation is continually changing and answers to questions aren't always clear. As we do our best to interpret and implement guidance from political and health authorities, please know that the information we are giving you is the best we have at the time. Thank you in advance for your understanding and flexibility as we continue to receive new information.

Following is our current understanding of what the extended school closure means for Oregon's educators, and out of respect for each of you and the position you hold - we are going to be frank. The Governor's office has made it clear that Governor Brown holds broad executive powers during this state of emergency and that during this time her office holds the right to take actions that affect or override sections of collective bargaining agreements. While this power does not eliminate unions' right to demand to bargain, it does allow districts to implement before unions are able to directly bargain over the impacts.

Additionally, it is critically important for everyone to understand that in order for our district to continue to receive funding from the state, we must meet these four requirements laid out in the Governor's executive order number 20-08:

- Provide supplementary education to students.
- Maintain nutritional services for students.
- Provide childcare for emergency personnel and first responders.
- Continue to pay all district employees.

The District has the authority to call staff back to work in order to ensure that these conditions are being fulfilled. If we are unable to fulfill these requirements, we will be at risk of losing funding. In short, if we

cannot meet the requirements laid out by the Governor, employees are at risk of losing their pay. Therefore we need to make it clear that staff will need to be flexible and available to receive work related materials electronically or via hard copy to provide essential services outlined in the Governor's order and should look for communication and direction from their supervisor by Monday, March 30, 2020.

Moreover, the Governor's executive order does not include additional funds to compensate staff over and above their regular pay - regardless of any existing collective bargaining agreements. It does, however, make it expressly clear that individuals in high-risk categories and those living with individuals in high-risk categories are not required to report in-person to their worksite. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) define high-risk as being over the age of 60, or having an underlying medical condition such as diabetes, asthma, and/or heart disease (click on the following [link](#) and go to section on high-risk conditions). Therefore, employees who fall under one of these categories will be expected to work from home and will be given further guidance from their immediate supervisor as to what that entails.

If staff are reporting to their worksite, OHA recommendations must be followed with regard to social distancing, which currently is defined as having a minimum of six feet of separation between individuals and no more than 10 people in the same room at a time. The District in conjunction with the Union is working to establish protocols to minimize risk to all HSD employees.

Lastly, during this moment of national crisis it is more important than ever that we as educators be thoughtful about the way we are communicating publicly. With more than one million people in the United States expected to lose their jobs by the end of this month, it is imperative that those of us who continue to receive pay and benefits appreciate the gravity of this situation and adjust our public communications accordingly.

We will continue to advocate for the health and safety of all District employees, but now is the time that we must reach out and work collaboratively. We need to make the human impact of these decisions clear, while also finding creative ways to meet the mandates set forth by the Governor's office if we hope to maintain funding for our school District.

We want to thank each of you for your tireless efforts in support of our students, our families, and our communities during this time of uncertainty. We will have associated repercussions to overcome in both the short and long term, but we will face those challenges together.

Thank you all for your patience and professionalism throughout this difficult time. We deeply appreciate each of you! Please reach out to your supervisor and your union with any questions or concerns you might have.

Thank you,  
Mike and Melody