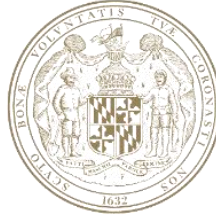


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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**Agenda**

**Wednesday, October 21, 2020**

**1:00 p.m.**

**Bringing Coherence to the Return of In-Person Instruction in Schools and Recovery for Student Learning Loss Due to Covid-19**

**Panel I: Local Superintendents**

*Dr. Sonja Santelises, CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools*

*Dr. Jack Smith, Superintendent, Montgomery County Public Schools*

*Dr. Monica Goldson, CEO, Prince George's County Public Schools*

*Dr. Sean Bulson, Superintendent, Harford County Public Schools*

**Panel II: Health and Facilities Metrics**

*Dr. Travis Gayles, MD, PhD*

*County Health Officer, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services*

*David Lever, AIA D.Arch*

*Educational Facilities Planning LLC*

**Panel III: Teachers, School Staff, and Parents**

*Cheryl Bost, President, Maryland State Education Association*

*Denise Riley, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, AFT–Maryland*

*Krystle Blomquist, Parent, Citizens Advisory Council, Cecil County Public Schools*



**Denise Riley**

Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs



## Federation Affiliate Unions

- Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU)  
Baltimore City Public Schools
- Maryland Classified Employees Association (MCEA)  
Higher Education
- Maryland Public Employees Union (MPEC)  
Teachers in state correctional facilities
- Maryland School for the Deaf Faculty and Staff  
Association (MSDFSA)  
Teachers and staff

## AFT “Plan to Safely Reopen America’s Schools and Communities”

Five pillars based on the science, educator and healthcare expertise.

- Maintain virtual learning until the number of new cases declines for at least 14 consecutive days on a community-by-community basis.
- Infrastructure and resources to test, trace and isolate new cases.
- Deploy the public health tools that prevent the virus’ spread and align them with education strategies that meet the needs of students.
- Involving workers, unions, parents, and communities in all planning. They must be engaged, educated and empowered.
- Invest in the recovery. Reopening will require more—not less—investments in public health and in our schools.



*A Union of Professionals*  
**AFT-Maryland**

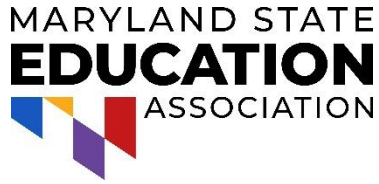
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**Baltimore Teachers Union**

Working for the betterment of teachers, paraprofessionals, and school related personnel in Baltimore, Maryland.



**HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR BUILDINGS AND WORKSPACES**

The purpose of this checklist is to ensure that health and safety requirements are being followed in school district buildings. This checklist could be utilized by a building level health and safety team and/or building representatives. Any items that are not being followed and/or for which there is not a procedure or protocol in place should be brought to the attention of the building health and safety team and the local association. Any issues unresolved at the building level should be brought to the county level health and safety team.

**YOUR NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**YOUR ROLE** \_\_\_\_\_

**BUILDING** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NOTES
A building level health and safety team that includes association representation from each bargaining unit, teachers, support staff, and administration has been established. (UD, SD, MD)				
A workplace hazard assessment has been conducted for the building/workplace and specific jobs/positions in the building. (OS, CDC)				

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT - BUILDINGS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NOTES
The following items are provided in the building: (CDC)				
• Soap (in all restrooms and in all rooms with sinks)				
• Hand sanitizer (throughout the building)				
• No-touch soap dispensers *				
• No-touch hand sanitizers *				
• Paper towels				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tissues (facial)</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning and disinfection supplies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In classrooms</li> <li>○ For custodial/janitorial staff</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disposable food service items (utensils, plates, napkins, etc.)</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply of cloth face coverings on hand for those who forget, lose, or misplace mask. *</li> </ul>				
<p>There is a schedule in place to check the above supplies and replenish as needed throughout the day while the school building/workplace is occupied. *</p>				
<p>There is a schedule in place for increased routine cleaning and disinfection in areas such as the following: (CDC)</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequently touched surfaces (desks, door handles, railings, copiers, etc.)</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared objects (gym equipment, playground equipment, art supplies, computers, keyboards, games, manipulatives, etc.)</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom cleaning depending on the class schedule</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communal spaces (restrooms)</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other _____</li> </ul>				
<p>Communal spaces are closed or there is a plan for staggered use and cleaning and disinfecting (cafeteria, gym, classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, front office, library, auditoriums, conference rooms, faculty lounge, etc.). (MD, SD)</p>				
<p>There are physical guides, such as tape on floors and signs/posters on walls, to: (CDC)</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote social distancing</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate traffic flow (one-way use of hallways, etc.)</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide reminders about proper health and safety measures (wearing masks, social distancing, washing hands, etc.)</li> </ul>				
<p>Physical barriers such as sneeze guards and partitions are in areas where it is difficult for individuals to maintain at least 6 feet of distancing: (MD, SD)</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offices</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reception desks/areas</li> </ul>				



• Guidance counselor suites				
• Classrooms				
• Bathrooms (at sinks, urinals)				
The building HVAC systems have been tested to ensure the systems are working properly. (CDC)				
• Any necessary repairs have been fixed				
• Tests indicate adequate air flow and air quality based upon the occupancy of the space				
• Local exhaust ventilation in areas such as restrooms, kitchen have been inspected				
o If necessary, repairs have been made				
There is an annual maintenance program in place for the HVAC systems. (CDC)				
The HVAC air recirculation function is eliminated. (CDC)				
Steps have been taken to improve central air filtration (upgraded filters, etc.). (CDC)				
Fans are provided to increase circulation of outdoor air (air is not directed to blow from one person onto another). (CDC)				
All windows open. (CDC)				
The HVAC system is run at maximum outside airflow for 2 hours before and after school is occupied. (CDC)				
Portable high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems are used to enhance air cleaning. (CDC)				

<b>HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT - CLASSROOMS</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
The following items are provided in each classroom/room: (CDC)				
• Soap				
• Hand sanitizer				
• No-touch soap dispensers *				
• No-touch hand sanitizers *				
• Paper towels				
• Tissues (facial)				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanitizing wipes</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning and disinfection supplies</li> </ul>				
There is a plan for how rooms will be cleaned in between different groups of students, if switching classrooms during the day. (CDC)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is clear who will clean surfaces</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is clear how cleaning will be done in between classes (more time in between classes, what supplies are needed, etc.)</li> </ul>				
There is a plan for how classrooms will be cleaned in between different groups of students, if eating lunch in classrooms. (CDC)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is clear who will clean surfaces</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is clear how cleaning will be done in between classes (more time in between classes, what supplies are needed, etc.)</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is clear who will be monitoring students during lunch time</li> </ul>				
Adjust the physical layout of classrooms and other areas to ensure: (MD, SD)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seating is at least 6 feet apart</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desks are turned to face in the same direction</li> </ul>				

<b>MITIGATION STRATEGIES (<i>Cloth face coverings, handwashing, distancing, etc.</i>)</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
PPE has been provided to staff as appropriate based on the workplace hazard assessment, including for nurses, paraprofessionals, special educators, and other direct service providers (masks, gowns, face masks/shields, eye protection, disposable gloves, etc.). (CDC)				
Cloth face coverings are required in the building, on school grounds and on school transportation for the following, when not contraindicated due to a medical condition, developmental immaturity, disability, or other health or safety concerns as indicated by the CDC: (MD, SD)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students age 5 and above</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other adults, such parents/guardians, other visitors, or vendors</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus/school transportation drivers and aides</li> </ul>				

Cloth face coverings are <u>recommended</u> for pre-Kindergarten students below age 5 years of age on the school bus, in the school building, and on school grounds when not contraindicated due to a medical condition, developmental immaturity, disability, or other health or safety concerns as indicated by the CDC. (MD, SD)				
There is a plan for notification and enforcement of wearing cloth face coverings. (MD,SD)				
Consequences for students not wearing cloth face coverings have been determined and communicated to students, parents/guardians and staff. *				
Social distancing of 6 feet is communicated regularly to everyone in the school building and enforced. (MD, SD)				
Students are taught proper handwashing technique (with soap and water for at least 20 seconds) and reminders are posted near sinks. (CDC)				
Students are taught to use a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes, to throw away the tissue, and wash hands or use hand sanitizer. (CDC)				
Sharing of all materials/equipment is discouraged. (CDC)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In CTE or magnet programs or similar subjects where not sharing materials/equipment might not be possible, there is a schedule for cleaning shared materials/materials</li> </ul>				
Space is provided for students to keep their personal belongings separate from others' belongings. (CDC)				
Student class schedules are designed to reduce movement of students and staff including arrival, dismissal, lunch, etc. (MD, SD)				
Locker assignments are clustered near the classroom to limit hallway movement, or locker use is eliminated. (MD, SD)				
The volume of materials to be carried by students has been reduced in order to limit the need for locker visits/use. (MD, SD)				
The school is utilizing a staggered arrival and departure schedule for students in groups in order to achieve social distancing and limit congregating. (MD, SD)				
Parents/guardians and other visitors are prohibited from entering the building unless necessary. (MD, SD)				

Large areas are repurposed to become classrooms (to allow for social distancing), when possible, but not to eliminate fine arts and physical education instruction. (MD, SD)				
Outdoor spaces are utilized for classes, when possible. (MD, SD)				
There are plans in place for movement between classes/classrooms, if necessary. (MD, SD)				

<b>SCREENING PROTOCOL</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
A screening protocol is in place for the following groups prior to entry into the school building: (MD, SD)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other adults, such as parents/guardians, other visitors, or vendors</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus/school transportation drivers</li> </ul>				
The screening protocol includes: (MD, SD)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperature checks for everyone prior to the start of the school day (either on site or at home)</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-check to identify any coronavirus-like symptoms</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of close contacts/potential exposure to someone diagnosed with coronavirus</li> </ul>				
The screening protocol has been communicated to all students, parents/guardians, staff, other adults such as parents/guardians, other visitors or vendors, and bus/school transportation drivers and aides.				
There are frequent reminders about the screening protocol to students, staff, and all others regarding the screening protocols.				

<b>PRESENCE OF SYMPTOMS</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Individuals who have coronavirus symptoms are told to remain at home and not permitted to enter the building. (MD, SD)				
An isolation room or area to separate anyone who has coronavirus-like symptoms or who has tested positive but does not have symptoms is available. (MD, SD)				
Procedures are in place for transporting anyone who is sick. (MD, SD)				
The area where the sick person was located before being isolated is closed off and not used until fully cleaned and disinfected. (CDC)				
Anyone who was in close contact with the sick individual is identified and sent home to monitor for symptoms. (MD, SD)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FFCRA or administrative leave is explained to the staff member if it has been negotiated *</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The policy and provision for leave is made clear to all employees *</li> </ul>				
Staff responsible for cleaning and disinfecting will be communicated with immediately regarding the areas where a person with symptoms had been. (MDH)				
Staff have a point of contact in administration to self-report: (MD, SD)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any personal illness</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coronavirus-like symptoms</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnosis of coronavirus</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If they are waiting for test results</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If they were exposed to someone with coronavirus within the last 14 days</li> </ul>				

<b>PROTOCOLS - CONFIRMED CORONAVIRUS</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
The building leaders are following the <a href="#">Decision Aid</a> from the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland State Department of Education to address cases of coronavirus in a school building or setting (buses, etc.). (MD, SD)				

The following protocols have been communicated to all staff, students, and parents/guardians: (MD, SD)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An employee or student who has a laboratory confirmed coronavirus diagnosis may return to work/school after: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset, AND</li> <li>At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications, AND</li> <li>Other symptoms have improved.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An employee or student with laboratory confirmed coronavirus who has never had symptoms may return to work or school buildings when at least 10 days have passed since the date of the person's first positive coronavirus diagnostic test</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An employee or student with a negative test result or other alternative diagnosis may return to work/school once fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication or symptoms have improved</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close contacts of anyone with laboratory confirmed coronavirus, regardless of symptoms, are directed to stay home for 14 days from the date of last exposure</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close contacts of anyone with coronavirus-like symptoms are directed to quarantine per <a href="#">CDC guidelines</a></li> </ul>				

<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY ON BUSES/SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
A health and safety team specific to school bus/school transportation that includes association representation from each bargaining unit for bus drivers and bus aides, bus drivers, bus aides, supervisors and school level administration has been established. *				
Cloth face coverings are required on school buses/school transportation for the following, when not contraindicated due to a medical condition, developmental immaturity, disability, or other health or safety concerns as indicated by the CDC: (MD, SD, CDC)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students age 5 and above</li> </ul>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other adults, such as visitors or vendors</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus/school transportation drivers and aides</li> </ul>				
Additional cloth face coverings are available on buses/school transportation. (MD, SD)				
Hand sanitizer is available on the bus. *				
Physical distancing on buses is achieved through the following measures: (MD, SD)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one child is seated per seat per row; household members may sit together in the same row</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students sit in alternate rows</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are staggered pick up and drop off times in place</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional bus routes are implemented</li> </ul>				
Windows are opened to increase air circulation. (MD, SD)				
Vents are used to bring in fresh outside air. (MD, SD)				
The recirculated air option is not used. (MD, SD)				
There are physical guides on the aisle floor and walls, to: (MD, SD)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote social distancing</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide reminders about proper health and safety measures (wearing masks, social distancing, washing hands, etc.)</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind students of seating arrangements when boarding and disembarking the bus</li> </ul>				
Plexiglass partitions are installed around the driver's seat. (MD, SD)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus drivers and aides are provided with appropriate PPE (due to proximity during boarding and disembarking of students on the bus) in accordance with the hazard risk assessment</li> </ul>				
There is a schedule in place for cleaning and disinfecting all surfaces before a new driver, aide, or group of students is permitted to enter the bus. (MD, SD, CDC)				
There is a procedure for how the students will sit as they board and for disembarking the bus. (MD, SD)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The procedure is communicated to students and parents/guardians</li> </ul>				

Protocols have been established and communicated regarding failure of a student to wear a mask on the bus/school transportation. *				
Protocols have been established and communicated regarding students who exhibit coronavirus-like symptoms upon boarding a bus/school transportation. (CDC)				

<b>SOURCE KEY</b>	<b>Links to documents- note some items are repetitive in protocols</b>
MD	<a href="#">Maryland Department of Health</a>
SD	<a href="#">Maryland State Department of Education</a>
CDC	<a href="#">Centers for Disease Control</a>
OS	<a href="#">Occupational Safety and Health Administration</a>
UD	<a href="#">United States Department of Education - Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools</a>
*	Added by educators





# Return to In-Person Instruction and Recovery of Student Learning Loss

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
October 21, 2020

# HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKLIST



## Standards Set by:

- Maryland Dept. of Health
- Maryland State Dept. of Education
- Centers for Disease Control
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- U.S. Dept. of Education

## Checklist Categories:

- Healthy Buildings and Classrooms
- Mitigation Strategies
- Protocols for Screenings
- Presence of Symptoms
- Protocols for Confirmed Coronavirus
- Buses and School Transportation



**Baltimore Teachers Union**  
Working for the betterment of teachers, paraprofessionals, and school related personnel in Baltimore, Maryland.



### HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR BUILDINGS AND WORKSPACES

The purpose of this checklist is to ensure that health and safety requirements are being followed in school district buildings. This checklist could be utilized by a building level health and safety team and/or building representatives. Any items that are not being followed and/or for which there is not a procedure or protocol in place should be brought to the attention of the building health and safety team and the local association. Any issues unresolved at the building level should be brought to the county level health and safety team.

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_ YOUR ROLE \_\_\_\_\_  
BUILDING \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NOTES
A building level health and safety team that includes association representation from each bargaining unit, teachers, support staff, and administration has been established. (UD, SD, MD)				
A workplace hazard assessment has been conducted for the building/workplace and specific jobs/positions in the building. (OS, CDC)				

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT - BUILDINGS	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NOTES
The following items are provided in the building: (CDC)				
• Soap (in all restrooms and in all rooms with sinks)				
• Hand sanitizer (throughout the building)				
• No-touch soap dispensers *				
• No-touch hand sanitizers *				
• Paper towels				



# COMMITTEE QUESTION:

*Are your members prepared to return to school buildings? Under what safe circumstances/conditions?*

- **ESTABLISH MOU:** Districts need to negotiate healthy and safe teaching and learning conditions as part of an MOU with exclusive bargaining representatives.
- **COMPLETE CHECKLIST:** Principals must meet with a building level health and safety team to complete the checklist.

# COMMITTEE QUESTION:

*What leave policy is appropriate for employees who may be compromised by coronavirus?*

- **BEFORE RETURN:** Fair consideration of accommodations.
- **SHORT-TERM:** Paid administrative leave provided for a school employee required to quarantine because of coronavirus.
- **WITH LEGISLATIVE ACTION:** Create a health presumption to allow for worker's compensation to cover leave.



# COMMITTEE QUESTION:

*What information regarding outbreaks should be made public by individual schools or for the school system?*

- **TRANSPARENCY IS KEY:** Schools and health departments should publicly report and track all data, like the data tracking in place for nursing homes.
- **PROTECT PRIVACY:** Medical data should be protected for individual students and employees.

# OTHER PRIORITY ISSUES

- **DIGITAL INEQUITIES PERSIST:** Many districts still lack 1:1 devices and reliable internet for all students and educators.
- **EDUCATOR WORKLOADS:** Managing synchronous, asynchronous, concurrent, and hybrid learning are creating 12+ hour workdays and is not sustainable.
- **FUNDING CONCERNS:** Ongoing push for federal stimulus plus need to implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future to protect and enhance state and local school funding.



# QUESTIONS?

**CHERYL BOST**, PRESIDENT

[CBOST@MSEANEA.ORG](mailto:CBOST@MSEANEA.ORG)

## **Protect Our Members: A Safe Reopening of Schools Testimony before the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee October 21, 2020**

Chair Pinsky and members of the Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee, the American Federation of Teachers – Maryland (AFT-Maryland), is a federation of unions representing over 20,000 members statewide. We thank you for holding this important hearing on reopening schools. We have developed a comprehensive plan that we have provided to our members, school leadership, and elected officials. You can read the full plan online:

[https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/covid19\\_reopen-america-schools.pdf](https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/covid19_reopen-america-schools.pdf)

Coronavirus has impacted our home and work lives in previously unimaginable ways. While we understand that virtual learning is the best solution during these unforeseen times, it will never replace synchronous/face-to-face instruction. However, rushing to reopen schools could produce adverse or devastating effects if we do not consider all that must be in place to protect everyone's health.

To safely reopen schools, all stakeholders must have a seat at the table. This includes educators, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, students, and parents. Administration and school boards cannot make these difficult decisions without input from those who will be directly affected.

Communication is the number one complaint among our members. Varying messages from the administration have created distrust, confusion, and anxiety. Our members have resorted to social networks and support teams to understand and figure out processes that are differentiated from school-to-school and facility-to-facility.

As a federation that represents a broad cross-section of classroom instructors and a range of educators across the state, we are uniquely equipped to offer the perspective of how school reopening will affect traditional and less traditional learning environments.

Among the concerns our members have is availability of adequate personal protective equipment (PPE). School districts may not be able to ensure that every staff member and student has access to PPE on a daily basis.

With many schools being closed since March, our members are concerned about the status of the building HVAC systems. Are the ventilation systems cleaned and will they be maintained? This has not been true in the past and Baltimore city unfortunately has



woefully outdated buildings by and large with ineffective HVAC systems under normal circumstances.

Many childcare centers have started to reopen; what accommodations are being proposed to help staff if child care centers are closed down due to an outbreak? Additionally, many of our members live in school districts that continue to have virtual learning. They cannot leave small children at home alone.

Members are concerned about the availability and capacity of medical personnel on-site. Nurses in schools and facilities are under an extraordinary burden generally but again, these challenges are exponentially greater on account of the ongoing global pandemic.

Public transportation is another concern. Many workers and students must use it and Baltimore city students rely primarily on the state's public transit system to get to school. This creates another level of exposure to the virus.

In addition, labor and management need to work together to deal with leave. Currently, there is still federal aid to temporarily cover employees if they contract the virus or need to stay home due to high risk to themselves or family members. However, these funds will end December 31<sup>st</sup>. If workers must use personal or unpaid leave, they may choose to report to work even though sick or test positive for the virus, because they don't have enough leave time or can't afford to live without a paycheck.

AFT recommends labor/management workgroups consisting of leadership, workers, and management directly involved in decision making, meeting on a regular basis to deal with issues of reopening, maintaining, and sustaining safety and worker issues. Decisions made can be reported directly to members to keep them informed and to get feedback.

The reopening of schools and classrooms is a complicated process involving numerous issues on many levels. However, all stakeholders working together, maintaining communications, and not rushing forward will help to not only keep everyone safe and healthy, but to alleviate fear, anxiety, and backlash to reopening plans across the state.

Thank you!

Marietta English  
President, AFT-Maryland