



ETA Update

March 29, 2020

1:00 PM

I want to start with it has been amazing to see so many members working so hard to get ready for distance learning. The shift of teaching is now changing from being in classrooms, where teachers and students meet face to face, to virtual classrooms. This is a new and challenging experience for many. To see our teachers embrace this new way of education and make it happen so quickly shows the ingenuity and passion teachers have for student learning. This is not how many of you were planning your Spring Break, yet teachers who were available, chose to take the time to get ready for this week.

It is in the spirit of helping our communities, I am pleased to share with you that The Elgin Teachers Association Board of Directors approved a donation of \$1500 to the U-46 Foundation United for Covid Relief Fund. The United for Covid Relief Fund supports our U-46 family. Money from this campaign will go towards foods and other necessities for U-46 families during this time of crisis.

I am asking you, as an ETA member, to donate and be part of the ETA team as we raise funds for our community. No contribution is too small. The below link will take you to a donation page, where you can join our team and make a donation.

[ETA U-46 Foundation Team Page](#)

ETA/U-46 Update

On Monday, March 30, Professional Development is being offered. As stated in the message from Josh Carpenter, complete listings and sign ups for the various options can be found on [Wisdomwhere](#). Although no one PD session is mandatory for all, all members are expected to be engaged in preparation for the implementation of distance learning. For many this will include self-selected online PD and training sessions, district-wide program offerings, online peer workgroups, and individual planning and preparation to best prepare them for March 31st and beyond.

One of the questions that continues to come up is, “What learning management system (Classroom, Canvas, etc.) do I have to use during distance learning?” Last evening an email was sent to the U-46 Community addressing this question:

“Beginning Tuesday, [March 31, 2020](#) students may access online learning platforms such as but not limited to: Google Classroom, Google Meets, Canvas, Zoom, Screencastify, Flipgrid, Kami, Go To Meeting. Use of these platforms may include video and audio of your student, other students, support staff, and teachers. The Illinois State Board of Education has approved these resources for Distance Learning. If parents do not want their child(ren) to use these online learning platforms, they must inform the School District by completing and submitting this form no later than 9:00 a.m on April 1, 2020: <https://forms.gle/vfWTvhG64n6ngk7n8>.”

The ETA is in conversation with administration about what parents and students opting out means for teachers. After April 1, we will have a more clear picture of the number of parents and students that have made this decision and the impact it will have.

The next few weeks will be a tremendous challenge for teachers as well as students. Remember, distance learning, as it pertains to students, is not a continuation of the classroom from a few weeks ago. Allow yourself, students, and parents the opportunity to adjust to this new style of education. This is not just about summative assessments and final grades, but is about:

- Encouraging student engagement
- Providing students an opportunity to learn
- Continuing to move the curriculum forward
- Adjusting to meet the needs of students

Additional Information

ISBE also met with the Illinois Education Association, Illinois Federation of Teachers, Illinois Association of School Administrators, and Illinois Principals Association to update our joint guidance regarding pay and work, and other issues related to the closure of schools and distance learning. The document was released on Friday, March 27 and provides guidance for moving forward with the closing of schools. These documents can be found on the [ETA Covid-19 website](#).

As stated in the [remote learning recommendations document](#), we all need to keep the following frame of reference;

“As educators work to implement these recommendations, we call upon everyone to assume flexibility and grace for all. At this moment, we will all need to model resilience, critical and creative thinking, thoughtful responsiveness, and empathy to ensure that students continue to grow personally, academically, and linguistically.”

Additionally, Governor JB Pritzker’s Executive Order 2020-15, recently issued, suspends state assessments for spring 2020, including the Constitution exam. This action officially ends assessment activity statewide for the Illinois Assessment of Readiness, Illinois Science Assessment, SAT, and Dynamic Learning Maps-Alternate Assessment for the 2019-20 school year.

IEA has held statewide webinars for staff and a number of tele-town halls for local presidents to update decisions regarding the closure of schools. Both Jack Janezic, our UniServ Director, and myself have attended these various meetings to ensure we have the most current information.

Please know that your ETA Leadership is in constant discussion with District Administration on the decisions being made as it relates to distance learning and all other aspects of the Elgin Agreement.

Teacher Appraisal Plan

The TAP Oversight Committee held distance meetings over Spring Break. The Committee continues to process options to resolve questions pertaining to all things TAP: SLOs, observations, conferences, and timelines. The Committee anticipated updated guidance from ISBE but as of our last meeting the updated guidance document had not been released. The committee will meet again this week to review the impact of the ISBE guiding documents, [released the evening of March 27] which still contain unresolved questions, with the intent of finalizing district-wide guidance specific to our appraisal plan.

TRS Scams

Earlier this week Lori Nommenson sent an email regarding potential TRS scams. ETA members should not reply to any emails from a company stating they work for Teachers Pension. They are not associated with the TRS pension or our 403(b)/457(b) plan. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to reach out to Lori Nommenson at lorinommensen@u-46.org.

Transfer Reassignment Continues

The Transfer Reassignment timeline is still in place. Make sure to apply on Applitrack and contact the building administrator if interested in a position. The deadline to apply for an open position is **Wednesday, April 1, at midnight**.

The Transfer Reassignment timeline can be found [here](#).

Transcripts

Human Resources continues to finish the transcript review process with a limited number of personnel available. We know that some of you are finding potential discrepancies in your review and we encourage you to email [Human Resources](#) with questions.

Lastly, Superintendent Tony Sanders wanted me to convey to members how much the work you are doing is appreciated. He recognizes that many of you worked over Spring Break and during these “Act of God” days to prepare for distance learning. Your dedication to our students is recognized and appreciated.

As you work through distance learning this week, should you have any questions feel free to reach out. Stay safe.

Barbara Bettis
ETA President