All individuals in Ohio have been ordered to stay home except as necessary to engage in essential activities, and all non-essential businesses and operations have been ordered to cease, beginning at 11:59 p.m. Monday, March 23, 2020, under the Ohio Department of Health Director’s Stay at Home Order issued on March 22, 2020.

The Stay at Home Order applies to all “for-profit, non-profit, or educational entities,” but allows essential governmental functions and essential businesses and operations to continue. Accordingly, school boards and other governmental entities may continue to provide any services that are necessary either “to ensure the[ir] continuing operation” or “to provide for or support the health, safety and welfare of the public.” School boards and other public employers must now determine their essential governmental functions and identify employees and/or contractors necessary to perform them.

All K-12 school buildings remain closed to students but not to administrators, teachers, staff, vendors, or contractors, whose appropriate level of access is determined by school administration, per the March 14, 2020 Director’s Order. The
Stay at Home Order is meant to be consistent with, and not to amend or supersede, the March 14, 2020 Order.

Under the Stay at Home Order, school districts may continue to do the following:

- Facilitate distance learning, perform “critical research,” and perform other “essential functions.”
- The minimum necessary to maintain the school buildings, ensure their security, process payroll and employee benefits, and perform related functions.
- The minimum necessary to enable employees to work from home.
- Provide food services typically provided to students or members of the public. Schools providing meals [onsite] must do so “on a pick-up and takeaway basis only,” and the food cannot be “eaten at the site where it is provided, or at any other gathering site.” Schools delivering meals to students’ homes may continue to do so.

While providing these services, schools must take the following social-distancing measures (to the extent possible):

- Maintain a six-foot distance between individuals, and use signage, tape, or other tools to help facilitate this.
- Have hand sanitizer and sanitizing products readily available for employees and others.
- Implement separate operating hours for elderly or otherwise vulnerable individuals who must visit.
- Provide services by phone or remotely, and post online whether facilities providing essential services are open and how best to reach the facilities.

The Stay at Home Order further directs schools and other public employers to take the following steps:

- Allow as many employees as possible to work from home, including by implementing teleworking or videoconferencing policies.
- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home until (1) they have not had a fever for three full days; (2) their symptoms have improved for at least three full days; and (3) at least seven days have passed since their symptoms first began. Do not require a doctor's note.
- Ensure that sick-leave policies are current, flexible, and non-punitive, and that the policies allow employees to stay home due to their own illness or to care for children or other family members.
- Send any employees who have symptoms home immediately, keep them separated from other employees, and allow them to return to the workplace only once they have recovered.
- Reinforce the need for employees to stay home when sick, follow cough and sneeze etiquette, and practice proper hand hygiene. Post these messages where employees will see them.
- Provide employees with supplies like soap and water, hand sanitizer, tissues, and no-touch garbage cans.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces, such as workstations, countertops, railings, door handles, and doorknobs more often than usual, and provide disposable wipes so that employees may wipe down commonly used surfaces before each
use.

- Be prepared to modify operations to continue providing essential services in the event of unanticipated change.

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