We are all in uncharted territory at the moment, so it’s important that we remain patient and flexible as new information presents itself. Please continue to check your district email, the Polk County Schools website, and social media pages for Polk County Schools and PEA for all new and updated information. Thank you for all you do and stay safe and well.

**FAQ regarding the school closure due to COVID-19:**

- **Will employees be paid during Polk’s school closure?**
  Yes. There are no changes to pay and PCPS employees will be paid during the closure. Additionally, PCPS employees, retirees, and their dependents will have uninterrupted access to healthcare.

- **What happens to staff that don’t have enough sick time in the event they must self-isolate even after we return to school?**
  - PCPS, the Polk Education Association, and AFSCME have agreed that any employee who has been diagnosed with coronavirus, or anyone who has been directed to self-isolate by a medical professional or government agency, will be put on paid administrative leave for the duration of their isolation. Documentation of the diagnosis will be required.
  - Employees choosing to self-isolate out of concern for their health or the health of others must follow normal work rules, which cover sick leave, vacation or other leave policies. Leave should be requested from their supervisor. Please note, employees in an unpaid leave status will not be disciplined.

- **Will the school year be extended because of this closure?**
  - From the DOE Memo (3/17/2020 link to memo below)- DOE guidance states for districts to prepare for an extended school year through June 30, 2020. The closure for the week of March 16-20th has already been forgiven by the Governor. It is our understanding that if districts can plan/implement online learning and/or a hybrid learning system within a reasonable time frame, then those districts will not need to extend their school year. This understanding could change as the COVID-19 situation evolves. We will keep you updated.

- **Are 3rd quarter grades due on Tuesday, March 17th?**
  - No. After discussion between principals and PEA regarding 3rd quarter grades, we have agreed that in the best interest of our students and in an effort to reduce your work load upon your return to school, **grades for the 3rd quarter should be entered into FOCUS no later than Friday, March 20 at 5:00 pm.** Please contact your principal/administrator if you have any questions or concerns.

- **What will happen to my SAO and/or evaluation for this school year?**
  - PCPS and PEA will discuss SAO deadlines and evaluations once we have some guidance from the DOE regarding evaluations for the 2019-2020 school year.
• When will schools open again?
  o Governor DeSantis has ordered that Florida Schools will remain closed at least until April 15, 2020. This is a fluid situation, which means that date could be extended depending on many different factors. PCPS employees will return to work (see next bullet point) on Monday, March 30, 2020 to start preparing for distance learning.

• How will distance learning impact my working conditions?
  o PCPS and PEA just signed an MOU agreement addressing instruction during an emergency closure. The District will be releasing details of the agreement through district email soon. Here is a piece of the agreement that will hopefully ease personnel minds. PEA will post the entire MOU on our website once Ms. Byrd signs the agreement.
    ▪ All staff will return to work on Monday, March 30, 2020 either in a “work from home” capacity or in a limited capacity at worksites for identified essential personnel. If staff are asked to report to a school site, PCPS will adhere to all Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines such as 10 or fewer people gathered. Furthermore, if an identified essential personnel person feels that they need to work from home versus working at a school site due to COVID-19 high risk factors or other issues, PCPS will allow that individual to work from home with other assigned duties that fit reasonably into their regular job description.

• What do supports for distance learning look like for ESE, ESOL, and other students with accommodations?
  o There are district teams working on this specific issue, and when plans and strategies are in place, the District and PEA will share those with you.

• Will schools be providing meals for students during the school closure?
  o Yes, at certain locations starting Tuesday, March 17th. Meals will not be served during our regularly scheduled spring break time, but students can receive extra food on Thursday, March 19th and Friday, March 20th to provide food through the break.

• Is the transfer window still open for next year?
  o Yes. PEA advises all instructional staff to click the “intent to transfer” button in staff portal to preserve their rights to transfer throughout the summer if you want.
My teaching certificate expires in June. Will the date be extended?

- From the DOE Memo (3/17/2020 link to memo below)- For the next 120 days, exam fees for teacher certification-related examinations will be waived, and test takers who were unable to take an exam due to test site locations closing will be granted an extension to meet these requirements.

- FEA isn’t sure what kind of process the DOE will put in place to waive fees. If you find yourself in this situation, we suggest you call DOE Certification at 800-445-6739 or follow the link to the DOE Certification website http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/staff-contact#tele

Link to the DOE Memo issued on Tuesday, March 17, 2020