



Delaware Association of School Psychologists
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To whom it may concern;

My name is Brittany Zehr and I am the President of the Delaware Association of School Psychologists (DASP). I'm writing to you today, on behalf of DASP, in reference to the COVID-19 School Reopening Working Groups. The first week of meetings for each group has been completed. DASP representatives have attended all meetings. After the first week, DASP offers the following comments and considerations to all working groups:

- 1) It is essential that the working groups share information with each other. It is apparent that each group is interpreting their charges slightly differently. Each group has also indicated that other groups are responsible for concerns working group members have brought up. If each group thinks the other is handling a particular topic then valid and significant concerns may be missed, i.e. special education and equity.
- 2) The lack of understanding and discussion around special education is concerning. In multiple working groups, the answer to "what do we do about special education?" appears to be "follow the IEP" or "do what is in the IEP." While the IEP is a legal document that needs to be followed, it is still just a document. The power of an IEP is not in the document itself, but in the people and resources attached to the document. There needs to be substantial discussion related to special education service delivery, staff, and resources now. This discussion cannot be an afterthought. Special education should be something that permeates and is addressed specifically by all working groups. We would like to applaud the Operations and Services Working Group for recognizing the need to include special populations in their discussions.

3) Another topic that should permeate and be addressed by all working groups is equity. It was disheartening to listen to the silence of the working group members when other members brought up topics related to social justice and the protests that are happening in our communities. These working groups are in the process of building a new return to school structure because of a pandemic that is unlike any other in recent history. This is an opportunity to build a structure that is equitable, but only if equity is discussed in each and every working group. We cannot leave it out of the other discussions. Frankly, how does one discuss mental health without addressing equity concern? How does one discuss technology without addressing equity concerns? Equity in education, not just academics, needs to be on the mind of all working group members.

In closing, we would like to thank all of the members of the working groups for the time and energy that they are dedicating to this effort. It is not an easy endeavor. We continue to recognize that every individual and organization brings unique knowledge and skills to this challenging endeavor. In fact, our organization has been pleased with some of the comments and discussion from working group members and has led to some important discussions internally. We, once again, offer our support to you as you work to support the school communities, educators, and students in Delaware.

Sincerely,

Brittany J. Zehr

Brittany J. Zehr, Ed.S, NCSP

President

Delaware Association of School Psychologists