

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International
Ohio State Organization - DKG
Legislative Liaison Blog
By Pamela Henney
Legislative Advocate

Sadly, we are in the midst of a global crisis with COVID-19 or Coronavirus wreaking havoc throughout our daily lives. We are left wondering about the state of Ohio's decisions announced recently on student and faculty assessment, policy adjustments, and more, which are included in this blog. Yes, the virus is highly contagious and deadly to many. In fact, at the time of this writing, Governor DeWine has announced that the latest model shows the peak infection level will not be seen in Ohio until mid-May. Yes, we need to be safe, preparing for the worst and hoping for the best. This simply reminds us that we are in the midst of a crisis in which we have more options for education to take on new forms while keeping our communities safe.

At this point, the argument of whether online is the best setting or not, especially for K-12 education, does not matter. Online student instruction is a reality for all levels of educators and will likely continue through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. In fact, on March 27 the Ohio Legislature passed the bipartisan created [HB197](#) unanimously which requires all public and private schools not already e-schools to make up classes via distance learning which were closed due to Ohio's COVID-19 School Closure order. All districts are required to "continue to provide ways to keep students actively engaged in learning from March 17 through the remainder of the school year" ([HB197, March 27, 2020, p. 335](#)). Schools can amend existing F2F-to-online transition plans or adopt a new plan as needed.

Moving forward HB197 also includes provisions for the following:

Student Assessment: 3rd grade retention cannot be based solely on reading performance, and students should be promoted unless the principal and reading teacher agree the student is not reading at level and is not prepared for promotion. Likewise, Seniors on track to graduate shall be granted a diploma based on consultations among the principal, teachers, and counselors (deadline Sept. 30, 2020). Superintendents can also opt to require only minimum requirements and can waive any assessment not yet administered this year. Adult Diploma Programs may waive or extend deadlines for completion. Career-technical programs should permit use of the facilities as soon as the Dept. of Health permits even beyond the last day of instruction.

Faculty/Staff Assessment: Faculty, staff, and personnel evaluations, including value-added progress requirements, are waived for 2019-2020, including community school sponsor performance ratings. The Dept. of Education may issue 1-year provisional licenses (expiring on or before July 1, 2021) on behalf of the State Board of Education if individuals meet all requirements except passing the subject area exam, which is deferred to any time before the provisional expires.

Sunshine Law Provision: All open meetings should continue to be open in virtual settings accessible to the public and media during emergencies through Dec. 1, 2020.

Primary Voting: All voting in Ohio must be done by absentee ballot by April 28th. Visit [Ohio Secretary of State](#) for instructions on obtaining absentee ballots.