



August 26, 2020

The Honorable Brian Kemp
Governor of Georgia
206 Washington Street
111 State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Re: Essential Worker Status Designation for Georgia Educators

Dear Gov. Kemp:

PAGE is responding to your request for input on the pending decision whether to designate Georgia educators as essential workers. While acknowledging that public schools are essential, and teachers are public servants who play a critical role in their communities, we know that protecting the health and safety of students and staff to stop the spread of COVID-19 is the most essential role of all. We respectfully request that you consider as the first priority whether allowing educators to continue to work without safeguards following a known exposure to COVID-19 is the right thing for our schools and communities as we fight to stop the spread of coronavirus. All of us would prefer that schools could open, stay open, and return to their place as a vital center of community life. However, ignoring the high probability of continued community spread through elimination of quarantine protocols ensures prolonged health and safety issues for all Georgians.

PAGE provides the attached recommendations that acknowledge many differing perspectives on how to respond to COVID-19 and opening schools. These measures would allow a more efficient re-entry to work after exposure without sacrificing all protections for those who are exposed and who then might expose others. A number of school districts have already begun operating with similar practices for quarantine, opt-out provisions, and appropriate administrative leave accommodations for staff. Your leadership in providing consistent direction to districts in support of safety for students and staff is critical.

Thank you for your consideration of these important recommendations. I welcome the opportunity to discuss with you and your staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Harper", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Craig Harper
Executive Director