



## PRESS RELEASE

### TNA, TSNO, Rep. Howard Urge Schools to Include Nurses in COVID-19 Planning

On June 18, Governor Greg Abbott announced students will be returning to classes this fall. With that in mind, the Texas Nurses Association, the Texas School Nurses Organization and Representative Donna Howard would like to take this opportunity to remind local school districts of the importance of including school nurses in the planning that needs to take place between now and the beginning of the semester.

School nurses serve on the front lines, ensuring the health and safety of students. They are able to inform local decision makers on best practices, as well as respond to any outbreaks that may occur in the student population. As school districts and local officials work to develop plans for reopening schools, school nurses must be involved.

With school nurses involved to address specific concerns within the district, we have the following general recommendations:

1. Determine universal precautions to implement in the classroom and around campuses. Train teachers and provide printed materials to help them empower students to participate in universal precautions.
  - a. Provide hand sanitizer for each classroom.
  - b. Require students to wear masks, as developmentally appropriate, and maintain physical distance from each other to the extent possible.
  - c. Keep students in their own cohorts and avoid mixing groups of students to the extent possible.
2. Create a way for individual students to report illness or exposure and shift to a virtual classroom while quarantining. Develop a process for reporting exposure to students, teachers and parents.
3. Update attendance policies in accordance with TEA guidelines to account for remote learning and asynchronous learning. Encourage students who need to isolate to use remote learning.
4. Prepare parents for the possibility of shifting quickly to virtual classrooms when needed. Provide tools and guidelines ahead of time so parents are ready to make arrangements.
5. Provide extended sick leave at full pay for teachers who have a fever or test positive for COVID-19. Teachers should wait three days after fever subsides and at least 10 days after symptoms start to return to the physical classroom.

While different school districts may choose different strategies—staggered in-class and at-home learning, virtual options for some students, or shorter semesters—these five steps can help keep teachers, school staff, students and their loved ones safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammy Eades".

Tammy Eades, DNP, RN  
President, TNA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Howard".

Donna Howard  
State Representative

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Formby".

Lisa Formby, RN  
President, TSNO