

Press Release

for immediate release

November 19, 2020

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Kansas NEA President Mark Farr's statement in support of Gov. Laura Kelly's Executive Order No. 20-68, establishing a face coverings protocol

TOPEKA - Kansas NEA supports Governor Laura Kelly's efforts to establish proven measures, including a face-covering protocol and education campaign to ensure all Kansas educators and students' safety, health, and well-being. Evidence from medical experts overwhelmingly supports the use of face-coverings as one of the most effective tools to combat the spread of COVID-19. Implementing a bi-partisan, flexible protocol for expanding the use of face-coverings as COVID-19 has begun a new and alarming wave of transmission helps to keep our schools and businesses open. In turn, these efforts keep the families of our students working. Equally important is the Governor's allocation of a portion of federal CARES Act money to be used in a statewide education campaign. We support the effort to inform citizens on simple, convenient, and effective ways for all Kansas citizens, including patrons, students, and educators in our schools, to do their part during this time of crisis.

For decades, Kansas NEA has operated within its core values which include equal opportunity, a just society, democracy, professionalism, partnership, and collective action. "While we can't control every aspect of COVID-19, our collective responsibility as citizens is to do everything we can to ensure that all Kansans are safe as they go to work, operate their business, and certainly as we prepare our kids for their future. Governor Kelly's new protocols express her commitment to safety while leveraging partnerships among community leaders to offer the flexibility needed at the local level to combat this pandemic," said Mark Farr, Kansas NEA President.

Educators throughout Kansas have expressed concerns for their students, their families, and their own well-being as they navigate through what has been for most, the most challenging period of their careers. "I ask Kansans to remember that what our educators want most is to be in their classrooms with their students. Slowing the spread of this virus through the use of proven safety measures is the best way to keep us safe, keep schools open, teachers teaching, and students learning. Schools can become a hub for transmission when we lay down our guard and cease doing the basics like temperature checks, social distancing, masking, and practicing good hygiene, which are the very measures proven to bring transmission rates down," Farr continued.

"I encourage our members and every Kansan to do their part. Reach out to your county commissioners and urge those elected officials to do their civic duty to support Governor Kelly's protocols. Our front-line workers during this pandemic, including our educators, have shown extraordinary resolve and commitment. As workers in many fields - including education - risk exposure every day, we honor their dedication and show appreciation for their sacrifices by simply wearing a mask. Even where infection rates are low, wearing a mask has an impact because it is an expression of solidarity that we are- in fact- in this fight together."

