



NEWS RELEASE

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ND United calls on school districts to provide paid COVID leave

BISMARCK, N.D. – In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic first started its assault on our way of life, threatening the lives and livelihoods of all North Dakotans. Workers in our state were granted leave time from their jobs, paid for by the federal government. This was the right thing to do, then and now, as it allows workers to quarantine when they get a positive test or when a family member has had to stay home because they are sick or were a close contact.

North Dakota United, the state’s largest professional association of public educators and employees, is calling on school districts to use some of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to provide this paid leave for K-12 teachers and staff.

“If we have learned anything during this pandemic, it is that teachers will do everything in their power to continue to teach their students in person,” ND United President Nick Archuleta said. “To that end, teachers have done everything right in their efforts to mitigate the effects of this insidious virus. Despite their best efforts, and because they work in environments where students are not vaccinated, teachers are at risk of contracting the Delta variant of the Coronavirus. When this happens, our teachers need paid COVID leave, just as they did last year as the pandemic raged. It is clear that school districts should step up and utilize some of the largess sent from Washington in support of their teachers.”

We are asking every district in the state to hold our educators harmless and to use ESSER dollars to provide this relief. Those districts that have already submitted plans for approval should know that those plans can be changed. Together, we can all work to stop the spread of COVID-19.

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North Dakota United is the largest professional union of educators and public employees in the state, representing 11,500 members in total, and we are loudest, strongest and most efficient champion of providing great public education and public services for all our students and communities.

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