

#9 Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Educators and Coronavirus/COVID-19 – District Directives

My District has informed all teachers that they must report to work in their school buildings next week. The rumor is that this came from the Tennessee Department of Education. Is this true and do I have to report?

First, after consulting with the Commissioner’s Office, it has been determined that no such statement or directive to Directors of Schools has been made by the Commissioner. TEA reached out to the Commissioner’s office this weekend when we heard of these rumors.

Second, the Tennessee Commissioner of Education does not have the authority to require teachers to physically return to their school buildings in this time of crisis. See Tenn. Code Ann. §49-1-201.

The law is clear on whether certificated staff will be paid during this time of crisis. Teachers will continue to be paid pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. §49-5-716 and 49-6-3004 (g).

[As stated in previous FAQs](#), TEA maintains that a teacher should not be placed in the position of having to choose between CDC emergency guidance and a directive from their District regarding physically reporting to work.

If a few, outlying Districts choose to disregard CDC safety guidance and require teachers to report to their buildings, a teacher should consider that a directive from their District. Failure to follow a directive could result in the teacher being charged as insubordinate. Any member who refuses to follow such directive and is charged with insubordination will be zealously represented by TEA’s legal staff.

Moreover, any member who has received a directive to report should immediately contact their [UniServ Coordinator](#).