



TSTA NEWS

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TSTA files grievance over unsafe COVID-19 policies, practices in Killeen ISD

The Texas State Teachers Association today filed a grievance with Killeen ISD on behalf of its affiliate, the Killeen Educators Association, whose teacher and paraprofessional members have been forced to work in unsafe conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Being forced to work in an unsafe environment violates the Texas Education Code as well as Killeen ISD board policy, the grievance states, adding that the district has proposed ideas and put procedures in place without effectively carrying them out.

“The safety of the students, the staff and the KISD community must come first,” Killeen Educators Association President Rick Beaulé said. “This isn’t about whether we want to work. We desperately want to teach our students to be the best they can be. This just can’t happen as we stand right now. Student cases have already begun to rise.”

The district administration, he added, has ignored the educators’ concerns.

The complaint notes:

- Requests for more effective air filters have been denied.
- Employees who have the most interaction with children are not provided with face shields.
- Some employees are provided with cleaning supplies, and some are not.
- Social distancing and safety measures reportedly are not being enforced effectively in cafeterias and P.E. classes.

“Our members do not feel safe,” the grievance states. “Our members are being unfairly penalized because the school district has failed to prepare accordingly for the virtual learning of all its students during the 2020-2021 school year.”

The conditions, the educators note, may pose “an unacceptable risk” of teachers being exposed to COVID-19 with possible long-lasting effects on the health of school employees and the public.

Among other requests, the educators ask that the school district provide personal protection equipment for every employee at their campuses; the district suspend on-campus instruction and switch to virtual learning and students be provided with the necessary equipment; and members who express concerns about school safety to the administration not be retaliated against.

In a statewide survey on school safety conducted by TSTA among its members, the Killeen Educators Association had one of the biggest responses. Forty-six members reported more than 350 district violations of a dozen COVID-19 safety

standards, including inadequate social distancing and ventilation, violations of the mask mandate, inadequate safety and sanitation supplies and an inadequate sick leave policy that encourages employees who may be infected with the virus to go to work for fear of losing pay.

If the grievance issues are not resolved at the district level, the TSTA affiliate can file an appeal to the state education commissioner.