



# TSTA NEWS

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## **Educators file grievance over North East ISD reopening**

The Texas State Teachers Association has filed a grievance with North East ISD on behalf of its affiliate, the North East Education Association, for directing teachers and support staff to return to campuses to work in the unsafe conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The grievance notes that Dr. Sean Maika, the North East superintendent, on Oct. 19 authorized all students who desire to return to their schools for in-person instruction to do so, even as Texas is experiencing a resurgence of infections from the deadly virus and the school risk factor for COVID in San Antonio is in the cautionary “yellow zone.” Previously, the number of students on campuses was limited.

The North East Education Association (NEEA) believes this decision was not made in the best interests of its educator members or of North East students and violates the Texas Education Code and North East board policy that “campuses will maintain a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning.”

“The district administration has not provided a safe environment for our members, other district educators and students and has directed us to work in unsafe conditions,” said NEEA President Adonis Schurmann, a middle school social studies teacher. “Safety for our students, school employees and their families must come first.”

Schurmann is concerned that social distancing will not be possible at many schools. She said that many students will be only two or three feet apart without plexiglass barriers and noted that many classrooms either do not have windows or have windows that cannot be opened, despite the recommendations from health care experts for adequate ventilation.

Although schools north of 1604 are newer and have better ventilation systems, schools east of Interstate 35 and south of Loop 410 (with higher numbers of Hispanic, Black and economically disadvantaged students) have old ventilation systems that do not work properly.

“COVID-19 is still NOT stable in Bexar County, and fully opening schools goes against recommendations from Bexar County Metro Health and Bexar County Executive Order,” the NEEA grievance states.

“Our members understand the challenges that the school district is currently facing in order to provide an education to the students of NEISD. However, the employees who actually help to provide this education to the students must be protected and/or provided with alternative ways in order to do so,” it adds.

Among other things, the grievance asks that class sizes be limited to 12 students to ensure social distancing of at least six feet, that social distancing be enforced throughout campuses, that the mask requirement be enforced and that all employees be provided with adequate personal protective equipment, including masks, face shields, disposable gloves and hand sanitizer.

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