Dear VASSP Member:

As school divisions prepare to return to some form of direct instruction, there have been a number of questions around the issue of liability of school officials – namely the principal – if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in a school setting. In the article [linked below], VASSP is providing information on several issues related to liability in a COVID environment. At present, VASSP is not aware of any lawsuits against school principals for conduct arising during a pandemic. Hopefully, this pandemic will not lead to the first, but as many have noted, the current environment is unchartered territory. We want to thank former VASSP President Dr. Roger Jones, our association’s long time legal editor and director of the VFEL-VASSP Center for Educational Leadership at the University of Lynchburg, for his research on this publication.

Some Thoughts on Liability in a COVID Environment

Since there appear to have been no pandemic lawsuits, VASSP can only project what might be issues that arise if such a case is litigated. The Association does not include a complete description of all legal principles that may apply.

A tort, as defined by VASSP, is a civil wrong for which damages can be awarded. Tort law is a very complex issue and is often very fact-specific and often unique to each situation.

Thank you for the work you are doing to support Virginia’s students and teachers. These highly challenging times are yet another example of the importance of school principals. VASSP will continue to advocate on your behalf and represent you statewide as we deal with this unprecedented era. It there is anything we can do to assist you, please feel free to reach out to us.

Timothy L. Healey, Ed.D.
VASSP President
Principal, Colgan High School, Prince William Division

Randy D. Barrack, Ed.D., Ph.D.
VASSP Executive Director

Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, Incorporated
4909 Cutshaw Avenue, Richmond, VA 23230
www.vassp.org
Phone: 804.355.2777
Fax: 804.355.4262