

Good afternoon,

Please be sure to read this entire message. There is much information included and it is important that staff are aware of these upcoming changes and procedures.

In response to the surge of COVID-19 cases in the region and state, the ESC will transition to an offsite work plan effective at the close of business on Friday, November 20, 2020. We will again be limiting access to our offices at 2080 Citygate Drive, Glenmont, and Integrity. To provide for a 14-day incubation period after the holiday season, no face-to-face meetings or professional development activities may be held through at least January 16, 2021. However, our buildings will remain open for any staff who provide an essential work function as determined by the CFO/Treasurer or the Superintendent.

Please be reminded that our work continues. Staff are expected to support districts and schools as they normally would and also review the *Expectations and Responsibilities While Off-Site* from the ESC administrative guideline (see below). It addresses confidentiality of communications, recording time worked, timely communications, and more. We have done this previously and were successful. I remain confident that we have the ability to again make this happen in an efficient and effective manner.

Employees need to continue reporting their time in the same manner they have used previously such as Frontline's Time & Attendance, Absence Management, or timesheets. We will be working with school districts in which employees are assigned to work to ensure we obtain proper approvals. Non-Teaching/Non-Administrative staff that have not been required to report time, via the aforementioned guidelines above, should maintain a daily log that documents time worked in accordance with ESC administrative guidelines.

As you prepare to work remotely, please remember the following:

- List or collect all essential items in preparation;
- Complete the proper paperwork to remove equipment from the office to remote work-site (if possible, it would be beneficial to complete this in advance);
- List items needed to work remotely, such as device, monitor, mouse, hotspot, etc.;
- Consider uploading hard copies of files into an electronic [OneDrive](#) file so that confidential items do not have to be moved offsite;
- Consider what systems you will need to access and test to ensure they are available remotely;
- Consider what you might reasonably need in terms of office supplies (folders, envelopes, etc.);
- Be sure you have access to your contacts and that they are up-to-date; and
- List or collect any hard copy items/materials you will need, such as materials for evaluations, recruitment, assessment, etc.

We will be permitting staff to schedule a restricted amount of time to visit office locations when absolutely necessary. Requests can be made through your supervisor and scheduled through Deputy Superintendent Mike Trego. Please be reminded that any visit will require [responsible protocols](#) such as face coverings, hand washing, sanitizing, staggered visits, social distancing, and continued use of [Quickscreen](#). And of course, if you are ill and/or have a fever, please stay home and take care of yourself.

All external phone calls to the ESC will be directed to the phone tree, as they are now, but callers will be asked to leave a voicemail message. The technology staff have turned on a support feature in which all voicemails are emailed to your work email address. Our technology staff also are prepared to continue

supporting you and your needs remotely. For assistance, please email help.desk@escoco.org or call 614-542-4159.

Resources such as technology assistance and tips for Zoom, HelpNet resources, and other helpful information are located [here on our website](#).

It is imperative that you check your email continuously while working offsite – to support districts and their needs and to stay up-to-date on any further developments regarding the ESC's work conditions.

While the majority of staff are working remotely consistent with agency administrative guidelines, a small number of staff members are continuing to work in ESC offices allowing for critical operations to continue such as payroll, accounts payable/receivable, human resources functions, agency leadership work, support for client school district and partner work with distance learning, and other school district and partner supports. These staff also allow the ESC to maximize its tech resources to support school district and partner needs remotely and minimize the creation of paperwork that would need to be handled by many individuals. For more on Essential Employees, [see here](#).

The fiscal office is maintaining operations to ensure that employees of the ESC and ESC-COG continue to receive their pay as scheduled and to ensure they are provided assistance with benefits questions, as needed.

These are challenging times. Despite these challenges, much is expected of us. Please continue to support your coworkers, family, friends, and communities as we move forward and please take care of yourself and your own health needs. Stay well and take extra care.

Thank you.

Tom

Expectations and Responsibilities While Off-Site (from AG1435/AG4435)

Employees who work off site are required to take all necessary steps to protect the confidentiality of their working materials. Supervisors who submit a request for an employee to work off-site should indicate in their written request how they intend to maintain the confidentiality of their work.

Employees working off-site are required to record their time worked. The ESC trusts that employees will honestly report time worked while off-site. Failure to accurately report time worked will be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination.

One drawback to off-site work is that communication with supervisors and co-workers can become more difficult. As such, employees who work off-site for more than one week are required to correspond at least weekly with their supervisor to discuss tasks completed and any other pertinent matters. Employees are also expected make themselves available for communication with other employees during all regular working hours. If an off-site employee will not be available, s/he needs to communicate the fact to his/her supervisor, including how long and why s/he will not be available. Employees are expected to make themselves available at all times for emergencies, or otherwise will be expected to use paid leave to cover the absence.

Employees who work off-site are expected to be as productive as if they were working on-site. Employees whose quality or quantity of work declines while working off-site will be required to conduct all work responsibilities at work, and may be subject to discipline.

The Superintendent (or Treasurer/CFO, in the case of fiscal employees) retains the right to direct the work of employees at all times, regardless of the location they conduct their work. The Superintendent (or Treasurer/CFO) always maintains the right to direct an employee to return to his/her regular premises to conduct work, with or without cause.