

# PERSONAL INJURY POST

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## School: To Go or Not to Go?

IT'S FAR MORE  
DIFFICULT THAN THAT



*"This is a big  
decision, and we  
are running out  
of time."*

National Mountain Climbing Day is a holiday celebrated on August 1, and I cannot think of a time where we have all had such an enormous mountain to climb. COVID-19 has drastically impacted all of our lives and will keep doing so for many more weeks, months, and possibly years. As a school board member, one of the biggest uphill battles I have faced since March is deciding whether kids are, or will be, safe to attend school this fall. It is the hot topic.

I have been a school board member for over seven years now, and there have always been challenges we have had to face, but nothing remotely close to what we are currently facing. As of now, there is no consensus amongst us, apart from the fact that we all want our kids to be safe and healthy. Regardless, it has been an enormous challenge to decide what the next step should be for the absolute best interest of our children.

To help prepare in the best way we know how, my fellow board members and I have set up committees with medical providers, such as pediatricians, family medicine and infectious disease physicians. However, even amongst them, it has been difficult to come to an agreement on what is best. Some medical providers say that kids need to go back to school for their own health, mental and nutritional well-being. Others believe that sending our kids to school will continue to spread the virus at alarming rates. As of the time this newsletter is being released, we are learning of more children becoming ill and even dying from this virus.

And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Not only do we worry about kids getting sick, but we are also concerned for the

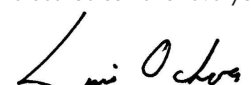
teachers who run just as high a risk as their students. These teachers are there for our kids, putting their lives at risk to provide education. Things become even more complicated as the possibility of student testing comes into play. Does the school district set up policies to test students and school staff at the door, not only for a fever, but also to check for any symptoms related to COVID-19? Then we are faced with the question of when are they allowed to go back?

The greatest concern about children returning to school revolves around the lack of scientific studies dealing with the transmission between children and adults. While some believe that children do not transmit the virus easily to other children or adults, the fact remains that when adults contract this virus they can get a much more severe case and potentially overwhelm our hospitals which are at capacity now. Further, if they are living with an immunocompromised family member or an elderly grandparent, the risk of their loved ones contracting the virus — and it showing more severe or fatal symptoms — is high. This factor makes decisions for the school board even more complicated.

Unfortunately, at this time there is no national plan to give us some form of criteria to build on. It would help to have a plan in place — that has been medically and scientifically approved — which each local school organization could use to make this decision for the benefit of their schools. However, not only is there no national standard, but it is difficult to form any plan as medical recommendations are changing day by day and week to week.

This is a big decision, and we are running out of time. Since March, we have expected that this would be a potential issue, and yet, we still do not have a decision. It's not for a lack of trying though. The board could not have already made a decision because of the constant influx of information. It is our responsibility to look out for the safety of everyone within the school.

I do not think you can find a much bigger uphill battle than this; it has no easy answer. But, while things may seem bleak, what we can do is stay as up-to-date on information as possible. As the saying goes, knowledge is power, and the more we know — and are aware of — the closer we get to deciding on the best outcome for everyone.

  
Lino Ochoa

# SKIP THE STUDENT DEBT

## 3 Ways to Pay for College That Aren't Loans

We all know how expensive college can be. The bills can pile up fast, and in many cases, paying that debt off can take years, if not decades, especially if private loans are involved. That said, if you have kids who are getting ready to graduate high school, then don't let the cost of higher education scare you away. If you can't pay out of pocket, you can help your child apply for loans, but if you're looking to mitigate debt, or eliminate it entirely, here are some other popular options.

### GRANTS

Grants are similar to scholarships in that they don't need to be repaid. Many colleges, states, and other organizations award grants based on a number of factors, like academic standing and the income of one or both parents as reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, better known as FAFSA. A great starting point for parents who are helping their kids look for grants is the Federal Student Aid website: [StudentAid.gov/understand-aid/types/grants](http://StudentAid.gov/understand-aid/types/grants).

### WORK-STUDY

Depending on your child's financial need, their college or university may be able to set them up with a part-time position with an hourly rate on campus. Work-study positions are often community-service oriented and/or matched with the student's field of study, and the jobs in these programs may be on or off campus. Alternatively, students can also look for other on-campus jobs that aren't part of a work-study program. Before the school year starts, many schools post job openings for positions like computer lab assistants or event caterers.



### PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS

There is no shortage of private scholarships. The challenge is finding and applying for them. This can take time, but it's often worth the effort. If you can't find any scholarships your child is eligible for online, then try using an app like Scholly. It's designed to help students and parents find and apply for scholarships without having to search all over the internet. Another great resource is your student's high school guidance counselor. They often have resources about local and regional scholarships that may be worth looking into.

# A Failure to Comply *We Won't Stand for No*

When summer comes around, the first thing many people want to do is head to the nearest swimming pool to have fun and cool down. However, when that pool is improperly maintained, it leads to disastrous circumstances.

**CASE FACTS:** During the summer of last year, our clients had planned to take their 4-year-old son to a local neighborhood pool for the day. However, during their stay, their son slipped into the pool and drowned. This untimely death was caused by the negligence and lack of adequate maintenance by owners of the pool (the defense). These deficiencies included:

- Inadequate safety measures
- Improper markings
- Improper signage
- Lack of safety devices in and around the pool

It was through these deficiencies that the defense failed to meet local, state, and federal codes, regulations, and other public pool standards and requirements. This included violations of the National Swimming Pool Foundation Pool and Spa Operator Handbook requirements as well as several sections within the Texas Health and Safety Code (341.0645).

## OVEREXPOSURE TO THE SUN

*Construction  
Workers Are  
at High-Risk  
for Heat  
Strain*



Even as the weather gets unbearably hot, construction workers are still out on the job. These workers are not only working in extreme-heat environments but are often fully exposed to the sun for long periods of time. This prolonged exposure can lead to injuries and heat-related illnesses (HRIs) but also places them at high-risk for these issues due to the nature of their profession.



# y with Safety Regulations negligence

## THE OUTCOME:

The devastating circumstances of this case led to an outcry for justice. As owners of a public pool, the defense knew that these regulations were in place, yet did not take the necessary steps to ensure they were followed. Thus, they knowingly placed their guests in a high-risk environment.



Our attorneys leaped into action, gathering information to provide a solid case to ensure our clients received the compensation they were entitled to for the pain and mental anguish of their son's premature death. While we cannot restore this loss, we can offer some form of closure by giving our clients a voice that they can depend on.

If you have suffered the loss of a family member or loved one, you don't have to face it alone. Call our office at 956-587-5833 to speak to an attorney today.

## What is heat strain?

Heat strain, as defined by the CDC, is "the combination of worker's exposure to heat from physical activity, environmental factors, and their clothing, which results in an increase in the body's heat storage, known as the net heat load." When the body starts overheating, it sweats to try and stabilize body temperature to its properly functioning, normal temperature of 98.6 degrees F. There are many factors that contribute to heat strain, including:

- Humidity
- Skin temperature
- Air temperature
- Clothing type and amount
- Hydration
- The speed and temperature of air moving over the body
- Radiant temperature (direct sunlight)

## What does heat strain do?

When a person experiences heat strain, it takes a severe toll on the body. Many symptoms of HRIs include fainting, heat cramps, heat rash, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke. Heatstroke, which is the most severe form of HRIs, can take two different forms: exertional and classic. The CDC states that both are similar in that they occur in hot environments. However, exertional heatstroke can occur in the absence of a hot environment, such as wearing heavy, protective clothing in the middle of winter coupled with extensive physical labor. Additionally, sweating will be absent in classic heatstroke.

Other than staying hydrated, there are a few ways to prevent heat strain and heat-related illnesses. One of the most important preventers is to assess and measure heat strain before it can significantly impact a worker. While an employee must keep an eye on their health, their employer must also provide adequate work practice controls, training, and acclimatization. If a construction company puts their workers at risk, the victim of heat strain may be entitled to compensation.

## PROTEIN-PACKED BREAKFAST BURRITOS

Inspired by [TheToastyKitchen.com](http://TheToastyKitchen.com)

You can make these easy freezer breakfast burritos in under an hour! They're healthy, delicious, and perfect for mornings on the go!

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 bell pepper, diced
- 16 oz ground chicken
- 16 oz sausage
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1/2 tsp paprika
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 6 eggs
- 12 8-inch tortillas
- 12 slices cheddar cheese

## DIRECTIONS

1. In a skillet, heat 1 tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and bell pepper and sauté. Remove from pan and set aside.
2. In the same pan over medium heat, add chicken, sausage, salt, pepper, paprika, and garlic powder. Cook for 3–4 minutes before stirring to get a brown crust on the bottom. Then, stir and continue cooking until meat is cooked through.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs together.
4. In another skillet over medium heat, add 1 tbsp olive oil. Pour in eggs and scramble them, cooking until no liquid remains. Set aside.
5. Lay out the tortillas with one slice of cheddar cheese on each.
6. Place an even amount of vegetables, meat, and eggs on every tortilla. Wrap each burrito and enjoy immediately or wrap in foil and freeze for another morning!



## BE INSPIRED

*"The way I see it,  
if you want the  
rainbow, you  
gotta put up with  
the rain."*

—DOLLY PARTON—

Parade

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## The Most Famous Art Heist You've Never Heard Of

### *Meet the Man Who Stole the 'Mona Lisa'*

One hundred and nine years ago this month, one man — or was it three? — fled from the Louvre Museum in Paris, carrying what would quickly become the world's most famous painting: Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa."

Historical accounts of the theft agree only on who was the ringleader: 30-year-old Louvre handyman Vincenzo Peruggia. He was a house painter, an immigrant, the bearer of a glorious Monopoly Man mustache, and a vehement Italian patriot. At some point on the morning of Aug. 21, 1911, Peruggia lifted the glass case he himself had constructed to house the "Mona Lisa" and smuggled the painting from the building.

Some versions of the story say Peruggia was assisted by two brothers, fellow Italian handymen Vincenzo and Michele Lancelotti. NPR reports the trio spent the night preceding the theft huddled in one of the Louvre's supply closets, lying in wait to steal the portrait. In his documentary about the theft, director Joe Medeiros claims Peruggia acted alone, driven by an obsession with the work and a dream of returning the painting to Italy.

Either way, we know that Peruggia successfully spirited the painting back to his one-bedroom apartment. There it lay concealed in a false-bottomed trunk for more than two years. This period of mysterious absence (during which police grilled and dismissed Peruggia as a suspect in favor of J.P. Morgan, Pablo Picasso, and playwright Guillaume Apollinaire) is what made the "Mona Lisa" world famous.

Peruggia was eventually caught attempting to sell the painting in Italy. He pleaded guilty and spent eight months in jail. After his release, he enlisted in the Italian army to fight in World War I, surviving the war only to die of a heart attack on his 44th birthday.

Though Peruggia married after the war, some suspect that the true love of his life was the "Mona Lisa" herself. In a CNN article, author and art history professor Noah Charney speculates that over his two years with her, Peruggia developed romantic feelings for the portrait. Perhaps he fell victim to a kind of "reverse Stockholm syndrome," Charney suggests, the captor falling in love with his hostage. "In this case," he says, "the hostage was a work of art."