Dear OEA Member:

We are continuing to push state agencies for additional clarity on what return to work orders will look like for educators throughout the state, and are advocating for clearer guidance on how members who fall into a high risk category should continue to follow the governor’s orders by not physically reporting to work. I understand the frustrations surrounding these questions, and want to assure you we are aggressively working to get clear guidance that will protect the health and wellness of students and educators.

OEA also continues to advocate for districts to heed the recommendation in the governor’s “Stay Home, Save Lives” executive order. Governor Brown’s executive order does not prohibit local school districts from calling educators back to their school site to work, but it does strongly urge all local governments to shift as many employees as possible to working remotely.

Additionally, ODE has provided instruction to district superintendents that mirrors the guidance provided by the governor’s executive order. ODE told district superintendents to:

- Facilitate telework and work-at-home by employees, to the maximum extent possible. Work in buildings is prohibited whenever telework and work-at-home options are available, in light of position duties, availability of teleworking equipment, and network adequacy.
- When telework and work-from-home options are not available, school districts, ESDs, and charter schools must designate an employee or officer to establish, implement, and enforce social distancing policies, consistent with guidance from the Oregon Health Authority. Such policies and activities must also address how the school will maintain social distancing protocols to the greatest extent possible for essential visitors and delivery of services.

I also wanted to share a collection of volunteer opportunities that we have pulled together for folks looking for ways to help out during this crisis. If you are able to pitch in and help your community during this time of uncertainty, I would encourage you to explore this list and find a place where you can put your many talents to work.

Lastly, I wanted to make sure you were all aware that starting today, Tuesday, March 24, due to COVID 19 precautions, TSPC is closing its office and all phone call correspondence. Email inquiries at contact.tspc@oregon.gov and online licensing applications will still be operating as usual.

We will continue to advocate for each of you to our local, state and federal leaders and are continually searching for additional ways we can support Oregon’s students and educators during these uncertain times. Please continue to reach out with questions or concerns that you might have.

Thank you,

John Larson
OEA President