Dear OEA Member:

Tonight, Colt Gill, the Director of the Oregon Department of Education, provided K-12 superintendents with additional guidance on the current long-term school closure, and steps they should take in order to abide by Governor Brown’s executive orders during this time.

The guidance informed superintendents that in accordance with Governor Brown’s “Stay Home, Save Lives” executive order, that K-12 schools must adjust to providing essential services including childcare for first responders, nutritional services for students, and supplemental education for students, by:

- Facilitating 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. This is clearly not possible for meal preparation and delivery or for the provision of childcare. However, in some districts this will be possible for delivery of supplementary education and learning supports and related professional development to support teachers in this new way of delivering education.
- When telework and work-at-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.
- Childcare must be carried out in maximum stable groups of 10 or fewer children (“stable” means the same 10 or fewer children are in the same group each day), and in a classroom that cannot be accessed by children outside the stable group.
- Schools must prioritize the childcare needs of first responders, emergency workers and health care professionals, followed by critical operations staff and essential personnel, consistent with guidance provided by the Oregon Department of Education, Early Learning Division.
- Employees in at-risk categories or who have an at-risk member of their household should not be required to physically report to a worksite. They may be assigned duties through tele-work or work-at-home.

In addition to the direction on how districts should adhere to the “Stay Home, Save Lives” executive order, the new guidance also addressed ODE’s statewide assessment and accountability waiver. That waiver includes the following provisions:
• ODE will suspend implementation of the statewide summative assessments in English language arts and math in grades 3 through 8 & 11 and science in grades 5, 8, & 11 for the 2019-20 school year (pending any required changes to ORSs and OARs).
• ODE will suspend the Essential Skills Requirement for the Oregon Diploma for the 2019-20 school year (pending any required changes to ORSs and OARs). Additional information on Pathways to Graduation for the class of 2020 is forthcoming.
• If schools reopen on April 29 and secure test environments can be provided, the summative English language proficiency assessment (ELPA) will be available for students who are Emergent Bilinguals/English Learners. Detailed ELPA guidance is forthcoming.
• ODE will not identify new schools for targeted supports based on data from the 2019-20 school year. Schools that were previously identified will continue to receive supports in 2020-21.
• ODE will not produce Accountability Details reports based on 2019-20 data. ODE is reviewing the effects that school closures and this waiver have on data collections and validations for this spring and summer.

I also wanted our educators who work at institutions of higher education that the federal coronavirus spending bill that is making its way through Congress this week includes $14.2 billion in higher education emergency relief. This funding is meant to help institutions of higher education deal with the rapidly mounting financial toll of the coronavirus. OEA will also continue to push our state leaders to allocate emergency funding for Oregon’s community colleges as they struggle to handle the financial fallout of this national crisis.

We will continue to fight for each of you as this crisis continues to unfold, and we will continue to advocate for all of Oregon’s students as our elected leaders make plans for the prolonged closure of our public schools. Please continue to reach out to me with your questions and concerns.

Thank you,

John Larson
OEA President