Dear OEA Member:

As we look ahead to Monday and the implementation of digital supplemental learning I wanted to share some of our recommendations for engaging with online platforms in order to provide supplemental education for our students from a distance. To be sure, educators will experience various difficulties as we rise to the challenge of quickly transitioning from our traditional classroom setting to digital platforms. But, hopefully, our recommendations can help you think through that transition over the weekend and set you up for success on Monday.

OEA’s recommendations include:

1. **Know your employer’s rules for online engagement and follow them at all times.** Most employers have policies in place to define what is allowable on work computers and networks. In addition, many employers have policies that describe appropriate and inappropriate online interactions with students and families. Re-familiarize yourself with these policies and follow them at all times. If you are concerned that your employer does not have policies to provide you with sufficient guidance to work with technology under these evolving circumstances, please inform your OEA UniServ Consultant.

2. **Be aware of the professional online presence you project.** Whichever online learning platform you are using, give yourself time to learn it, be present at all times when you’re on it, and minimize distractions and personal interruptions. Being professional in an online learning platform means not eating, drinking, or multitasking; placing yourself in a neutral, professional space; dressing in professional clothing; minimizing all personal interruptions; and always speaking, typing and posting with the same professionalism you have in all of your interactions with students, families, and other members of the school community.

3. **Ensure student privacy.** This includes making sure that you are engaged in online instruction in a private space and also making sure that no application you use is set to ‘record’ while you are using it (many applications such as ZOOM may automatically record your session unless you specifically tell it not to record). **Do not send your students to websites or social media apps that are not approved by your employer, as unapproved websites may gather personally identifiable information about students.** Check with your employer if you have questions about maintaining student privacy or if they have a list of allowable Apps and websites that meet FERPA guidelines. If you have additional concerns, contact your OEA UniServ Consultant.

4. **Maintain your own online privacy in your interactions with students.** Make all of your private accounts private and establish professional accounts on all platforms and applications that you need for work. While ensuring that your students are not being recorded in online formats, seek the same for yourself. If your employer expects your online interactions to be recorded in ways that you believe may violate your collective bargaining agreement, contact your OEA UniServ Consultant.

www.oregoned.org
Recognize, however, that when using an employer-provided network or computer an employee does not have a right to privacy.

5. **When selecting materials to use in online instruction, adhere to all copyright laws.** Members should consider copyright issues in online instruction just as they would in face-to-face instruction. While a ‘fair use exception’ allows copyrighted materials to be used without permission in many educational circumstances, this allowance is not absolute. Good information for public school teachers, including examples of what qualifies as fair use, is available from the Library of Congress.

6. **Commit to creating a positive community online.** It is important for your students to feel connected to you and each other during this time. Stay positive about all your students and be patient with their progress. They’re learning as they go, just as you are.

7. **Communicate patience and encouragement.** Be encouraging of colleagues who have had to learn online options quickly, sometimes without a lot of tutorials. Be patient with parents who are dealing with stressors professionally and personally as well as with the added pressure of helping their students with online assignments.

8. **As much as is reasonable, focus on instruction.** Students may need reassurance from us now, and some acknowledgment of the changes that all of us are experiencing may be very valuable. However, too much conversation might upset students with anxiety disorders or students who are seeking stability during unstable times. Reach out to your administration and/or colleagues if you feel you could benefit from additional guidance on educating during a time of uncertainty. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also provides helpful tips to [communicate with children about COVID-19](https://www.mccc.edu/learning-center/coronavirus).

9. **Mandatory reporting.** Please keep in mind your mandatory child-abuse reporting obligations. You should immediately report to law enforcement or the Department of Human Services (and to your designated administrator, when appropriate) if you have reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom you come into contact with has suffered abuse or that any person with whom you come into contact with has abused a child. Your reporting obligation applies during and after regular work hours, and abuse information that you receive, for example, at home during distance-learning efforts should be reported.

I want to commend each of you for your resilience during these rapid changes in our public schools. It is an honor to be able to continue serving our students and communities, and to provide students with the stability of physical, emotional, and intellectual nourishment in a time of widespread disruption.

Thank you,

John Larson