Dear OEA Member:

Today, Governor Kate Brown formalized a decision that we have anticipated for some time – Oregon’s K-12 public schools will remain closed for in-person instruction for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year. While the decision to keep our public schools closed will help ensure the safety of Oregon’s students and educators, it will also exacerbate many of the fears and anxieties of our students who depended on their neighborhood public school for stability, love, and encouragement. Now more than ever, it is critical that educators reach out to our students to remind them that even though they will not be returning to their school building this year there is still a community of people who are here to support them.

In addition to extending the closure of K-12 schools, Governor Brown and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) released guidance loosening graduation requirements for Oregon’s seniors. Under the new plan, students who were on track to graduate before the K-12 school closure period began will be allowed to graduate at the end of the academic year. This decision will allow educators who work with seniors to focus their time and resources on helping those students who were not on track to graduate improve their academic standing so they can complete their high school education.

OEA is reviewing both the new graduation requirements for Oregon seniors and ODE’s distance learning plan, and is developing guidance for educators to use while they continue to provide instruction for students. We are also continuing our advocacy for educators working at institutions of higher education, urging HECC to develop recommendations for colleges and universities that would allow instructors to show compassion and understanding for their students as they continue to provide graded instruction during the COVID pandemic.

I also wanted to remind you that OEA will be hosting a telephone town hall this Thursday, April 9th at 5:00 p.m. We’ll be discussing the school closures, the Oregon Department of Education’s “Distance Learning for All” plan and answering member questions. You don’t have to RSVP to attend the town hall – OEA will call you directly before the meeting starts.

However, if you’d like to ensure the telephone number we have on file is correct, please complete this form with your current information.

Thank you again for all your work during this time,

John Larson