Dear Educator,

We know that uncertain times can leave us feeling anxious. We want you to know that we continue to work on your behalf during these times.

We have been in regular communication with PPS to make sure we can complete the demands of the Governor's executive order, and give our students the best we can, with reasonable expectations from ourselves—knowing that our new “working conditions” vary greatly, as do our virtual proficiencies. As always, our primary concern is not only our students, but also your health and safety.

To that end, we have insisted that any plans provide flexibility for educators, and opportunities for us to capitalize on our strengths while we grow some new skills. No one believes that online learning is an adequate substitution for what we do in our schools with our students. We also understand that we must figure out ways to connect with our students. We believe that the plan for the first week back, which gives educators an opportunity to familiarize themselves with online platforms, is an appropriate first step.

To reiterate what PPS sent out earlier today, the expectation is that the first week back, beginning Monday, March 30, all PAT members who are able to, will work remotely, engaging in online learning and collaboration. The work expected will be flexible and at your own pace.

- You can expect to complete your daily assignments in about 2.5-3 hours, plus any additional planning that you might choose to do.
PPS sent this **suggested schedule** in the email that went out today.

- This work is geared toward classroom teachers, including special education and ESL teachers. The District has told us that educators in different roles may receive different instructions in the next few days. If you are unsure of your expectations for next week, please reach out to your principal or program supervisor.

- For the small number of educators who do not have internet access at home, the District can provide you with a hotspot. Please fill out this form that PPS provided to let them know you need one.

If you are anxious about your abilities to work from home, we ask that you give it a try. We believe that PPS is absolutely interested in supporting everyone so that they can be successful. We will work together to make this work. Of course this is hard- but we are saving lives by staying home, so we must persist.

We also encourage you to reach out to your students, if you haven’t already, because we know these are trying times for all and our most important job is building and sustaining relationships with those we serve.

As always, this only begins to scratch the surface of the questions that keep arising. Thank you for your patience as we continue to adapt to our changing circumstances.

**We also have some sunshine to share, and hope you will share your efforts with us.**

Because our PAT budget had funds earmarked for events that have been cancelled, we have been able to contribute funds to: The Oregon Food Bank, Meals on Wheels, No Kid Hungry, The United Way, PPS Coronavirus Relief Fund, and the Oregon Education Association Foundation.
The OEA Foundation provides micro-grants for PPS students and their families. You know your families the best, so if you are aware of a PPS student who is in need, apply for a micro-grant through the OEA Foundation by using this weblink. These $100 grants can be used to purchase grocery store gift cards, rent, or utilities for a PPS student’s family.

The PPS Fund has created a Coronavirus Relief Fund. Dollars raised will provide $100 in groceries to PPS families who qualify for free and reduced lunch.

PPS has also been putting some extra supplies to good use during this crisis. PPS is working with Multnomah County to donate materials-on-hand, like several thousand N95 masks that will be redistributed to hospitals, in addition to deploying PPS high school 3D printers to make face masks for medical personnel.

Finally, we know that many of you are volunteering your time in your communities. Please send us brief stories and photos of you in the community working at a food bank, dropping off groceries to a neighbor in need (porch-to-porch drop offs), or walking dogs at your animal shelter.

In these unprecedented times we are asking things of ourselves we’ve never imagined. We are digging deep into our bag of tricks to rise to the challenge to teach creatively and inspire lifelong learning. We are professional educators who have always made things work under less than perfect circumstances, and we know we can do it again- because we are helping our world heal.

Portland Association of Teachers

http://www.pdxteachers.org/