Every community in the country is impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. In each of these communities America’s educators are facing unprecedented circumstances and challenges as they continue their vital role while attempting to navigate uncharted waters alongside the rest of their communities.

The Association of American Educators has organized the following response on behalf of America’s educators who understand that we must work together, support one another, and put our students first:

We care deeply about your kids. You know this but it is also easy to forget, especially in times of increased stress, fear, and anxiety. We see your kids as “our kids.” We are worried about the academic progress of your children, as well as their nutrition, safety, and health. We can’t not care about how this is impacting your children. They are our priority.

We are parents, too. Many educators are parents of school-aged children and we, too, are trying to figure out child care, doctor’s appointments, prescriptions, and more. We feel the same way that you do because we’re experiencing this as parents and as educators. Many of us also care for elderly parents, have spouses serving in critical fields like health care and public safety, and are finding empty shelves at the supermarket. In other words, we’re in this together. We’re on the same team.

Educators and parents have always been on the same team. This is true all of the time but especially when one or all of our students are dealing with a crisis. We need to work together to advocate for our students and to help one another. One of the best ways to help right now is to take care of your children and help them navigate this new learning environment. We know you are tired, confused, and anxious, but the extra effort you are putting in to ensure your kids are following instructions, engaging with lessons, completing assignments, and being respectful and patient is the best way to support your children.

We cannot let children with special needs fall further behind their peers. Issues of inequity are only exacerbated during a crisis. Decisions will be made in less-than-ideal circumstances that may lead to inadequate service for portions of our education community. We cannot ignore this impact. We must commit to remedying the unintended consequences of decisions hurting those who can least afford to fall behind.
This is unprecedented for us, too.

We are all dealing with frustration. It is tempting to vent to someone—anyone, everyone—about the myriad frustrations you are encountering right now. Talk to us, but please don’t vent. What we want most is to help our kids get through this with the least negative impact. We are all adapting as quickly as we can to new policies and technologies. We want to get information to you as soon as we have it. We all need more kindness, patience, and empathy to get through this.

We are helping and supporting one another.

We turn to the same things you do to help us through stress: music, yoga, memes, impromptu workouts, a lot of caffeine, and prayer. We also turn to our fellow educators for support. We are coming together in teams (safely!) throughout the country to encourage one another, solve problems, share resources, and address areas of immediate concern. We are turning to our professional associations for guidance on legal rights, advice on managing stress, and materials to best support our students.

We have many opinions about what is happening and might happen in the future.

We are watching the news just like you and we have a lot to say about the developments nationwide. For the most part we are responding to these decisions, not making them. These are surely difficult decisions made by people who genuinely care about the well-being of students and educators. There will be a time to debate closure decisions—although we also may never know if they were the right decisions. For now we are committed to providing a safe, effective education for your children. Division, partisanship, and negativity will only make accomplishing that goal more difficult.

Heroic things are happening right now.

Educators are responding swiftly and selflessly to these new demands put on them by the Coronavirus pandemic. Teachers, administrators, and school staff are working to ensure students are fed, safe, and learning. We have challenges ahead, unanswered questions, and students who need urgent attention. Creativity and perseverance are crowding out uncertainty and discouragement. We face down challenges every day and we will tackle this one, too. Our kids need us.

The Association of American Educators has the utmost confidence in the women and men who serve our nation’s students and trusts that their professionalism and dedication will shine. Let this unprecedented situation drive positive and productive conversations and relationships in the weeks and months ahead. Commit with AAE and America’s educators to prioritize the well-being of all of our children as we work through these disruptions together.

Please feel free to share these sentiments as we work together to harness the positivity, perseverance, and passion of America’s educators to see us through.

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