

Dear Members of the Great Neck Community,

The Great Neck Teachers Association has mutually agreed with the district and the Board of Education that while remote learning has many flaws, we need to continue to offer our students educational opportunities in a variety of creative ways during this extended school closure. And we are actively doing that.

Great Neck teachers are among the most dedicated and best-trained in the United States. Our teachers rank #1 in New York State alone according to Niche.com. Right now, our teachers across the district are engaging their students with lessons and materials they've sent home and online. Some teachers are video recording themselves teaching lessons to be experienced by students over the Internet, while others are offering quality instruction in real time through audio forums, webinars, and chat rooms. We're being extremely patient and compassionate with our students while also respecting that not all children learn the same way or benefit from one single form of instruction. We've agreed with the district that live, face-to-face communications are not a best practice, and even though other districts may be engaging in these interactions, we still have serious privacy concerns for students and teachers.

It is also unrealistic to think that students can move through their normal school schedules while at home. We don't believe that the healthiest option for students right now is to be sitting in front of a computer screen for seven hours a day—and even if they did, it could not possibly re-create the social, emotional, and intellectual opportunities that we produce in our schools.

There is another consideration here that makes remote learning extremely challenging for all. Just as people from all professions are attempting to work from home and balance their professional obligations with their personal needs, the same is true for teachers. We, too, have small children to care for and spouses, parents, and grandparents who need us. We have to support our loved ones as well, as we worry about where the next meal is coming from. This isn't an educational issue or a union issue—it's a human issue.

Finally, some perspective: Our greatest challenges as a community in this global health crisis are still ahead of us. And when they arrive, the most pressing ones will have nothing to do with remote learning.

Now that schools are closed and kids are home around the clock, it sounds like some people are waking up to the realization that teaching is a difficult profession.

In unity,

Jim Daszenski
President, Great Neck Teachers Association

