A Short Message from the Executive Director, Dr. Maria Armstrong

Dear member,

I wanted to provide you a quick update. These past few weeks have been taxing at best for all of you and I applaud the incredible heavy lifting you all are doing to ensure you are providing a multitude of services to the many students, parents, and staff you serve, all while attending to your own families.

When the Stafford Act was invoked on Friday, March 13th, 2020 many of you were already in the throes of school closures and Stay-At-Home Orders within your communities. I myself was in the midst of moving to Washington, DC but, like many, I live in a California community with a Stay-At-Home Order which has postponed my move. Working remotely has not hampered my ability to provide a national service to our members.

I immediately put on my teacher/counselor/administrator/superintendent hat to try to determine how ALAS could be of service to you. I thought of how inundated you all must be with the outpouring of support from well-intentioned partners. Although we are grateful for the opportunities they provide, sifting through the emails, phone calls and texts can create a strain on you and your staff.

This sparked an idea about how ALAS can become a repository of vetted services where our State Affiliates and members can extract exactly what they need by category. Conversations with our partners so far has led to a $1 million grant and free resources in print and digital form, in Spanish (for most and some are still working on translation) and English, ease of use with minimal login obstacles via direct links by grade, content and language. There is also an area for YOU, our members, to submit and view by State Shared Solutions during School Closures.

Being able to seek out what you need and then having information on how to reach out to the resource partner will hopefully provide a mutual experience of progress and ease. You can go to this URL for information: https://www.alasedu.org/covid-19-resource/.

Lastly, I have been working with organizations in Washington, DC such as the Center for American Progress, who are championing policies where needed during this time of challenge. For example, policies with regard to SES, Special Education, English Language Learners and Post-Secondary Education to name a few. I welcome any and all of your ideas to convey them to other organizations.

Moving forward together,

Dr. Maria Armstrong

Your ALAS Executive Director