Position Statement on COVID-19 and School Year 2020-2021

Being guided by the shared belief of the inherent value of all human lives as well as the importance of the role of education in a just, fair and well society, the Badass Teachers Association Quality of Work Life Team, submits the following proposal for Pre K-12 and Higher Ed Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. We acknowledge the proven fact that COVID-19 Pandemic disproportionately affects our Black and Brown students, families, and educators.

Whereas, there can be no quality of work life, if we fail to protect the lives of our teachers, students, and families;
Reaffirming the inherent value of all human lives and that human rights exist in all parts of life, including in the workplace;

Whereas, the life of each and every one of our students, teachers, family members and staff are precious and irreplaceable;

Emphasizing that COVID 19 is a deadly virus that affects people of all colors, ages, walks of life and that such virus has led to a 100 year global pandemic;

Whereas Covid-19 disproportionately affects Black and Brown communities and these schools have been traditionally under resourced and underfunded;

Recognizing that human rights must come before profits, the decisions for 2020-2021 school year must be made without regard to and or influence from corporate interests;

Recognizing that school districts and universities have the legal, ethical and moral responsibility to protect the lives and health of all members of their communities - students, staff, educators, family members and community members, and most importantly the children;

Emphasizing that ALL people have the right to protect their own well-being, EVEN A CHILD!

Recognizing that our federal government has failed to institute policies that would protect all lives from the spread of COVID 19, refusing to provide necessary funds to individual states that would enable all residents a basic standard of living, failed to provide consideration for all essential workers by refusing to furnish PPE;

Recognizing that the US Department of Education has approved the continuation of on-line education for Higher Ed, even for programs not accredited for on-line modality, through December 31, 2020.
Meanwhile the same Department of Education has decreed that all Pre K-12 students return to face to face instruction, while denying the right to altered schedules and threatening to withhold federal education funding to states;

Recognizing that the medical community does not yet have definitive answers concerning the rates of spread, contraction, and health impacts on children who are exposed to the virus or who expose others to the virus;

Whereas the CDC and WHO have both stated that they do not as of yet understand all underlying conditions that increase the risk of contracting, suffering or dying from the virus;

Recognizing that studies have found that up to 4 out of 5 young people who carry the virus are asymptomatic;

Whereas, Covid-19 related Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome and Kawasaki syndrome continue to spread amongst children in the US, including resulting in permanent disabilities, brain damage and death among infected children;

Whereas, studies have indicated that even asymptomatic children with Covid 19 can indeed spread the virus, and even become superspreaders.

Our children are being traumatized the moment they get on the bus until they arrive back home. A pandemic school is a school in crisis. Pandemic School environments for face to face instruction are antithetical to learning and is contrary to all student-centered educational principles and best practices;

In consideration that there have been no successful reopening plans. In fact in areas that have reopened the rate of spread (Rt) rates have increased exponentially;

Recognizing that re-opening has proven to fail by leading to increased spread of the virus in state after state and industry after industry, and community after community;

Whereas, time and again, attempts to re-open too early have proven to be catastrophic failures, 1918 reopening

Florida
Pennsylvania
New York
Texas
California
Arizona
As schools reopened in Canada, France, the US and other parts of the world, Covid outbreaks have already forced many to shut back down;

Recognizing, that the many and perhaps the majority of school boards and school administrators are truly attempting to develop the best possible plans for the 2020-2021 school year under the current conditions and pressures from various groups;

Having considered that many of the current return to school plans that rest on the expectation that children aged 3-22 will follow complex social distancing and PPE protocols is not based on any form of rational thought or evidence;

Yet also with the understanding that the legislators, unions, school administrators and school boards have failed to adequately address hundreds of questions submitted by teachers, faculty and concerned community members across the country;

Be it resolved that the Badass Teachers Association Quality of Work Life Team and the Badass Teachers Association Board Of Directors, and the undersigned educators, parents, and community member;

Demand the American Federation of Teachers, The National Education Association, and all other unions representing workers in any systems of education as well as their state and federal elected representatives stand for and fight for the following list of demands:

1.) Face to Face Instruction should only occur when the risks to lives posed by this 100 year pandemic have been mitigated to a documented level of no new cases within a community for 14 days as well as a reproduction rate of less than 1 for the state.

2.) Return to remote teaching and distance learning, rather than risking lives by returning face to face schools, to continue education programs without risk to the health of students, staff, families and community.

3.) All educator and staff voices must be included and considered in the design of any plan to return to face to face learning as well as enrichment of distance learning.

4.) Robust and equitable remote learning resources must be provided to students who will not be returning to face to face instruction, until such time as it is safe for all members of school communities to return to buildings/campuses,

5.) No educator, staff, student, or parent will be asked to sign a waiver of responsibility and/or liability.
6.) An adequate number of school nurses in every school building on a full-time basis.

7.) Adequate designated space for the isolation and quarantine of sick students and staff.

8.) School toilets with lidded seats to minimize the danger created by aerosols upon flushing.

9.) Provision of proper training as well as specialized equipment and resources to properly disinfect and sanitize entire school facilities, both surfaces and air spaces, to be completed frequently for high-touch surfaces and daily for entire school buildings.

10.) Portable hand washing stations in hallways to insure proper hand washing is taking place by students and staff.

11.) Adequate funds to upgrade buildings infrastructure and ventilation systems containing appropriate HEPA filters recommended by the CDC and WHO.

12.) Government agencies working in collaboration to provide resources, such as food, housing, wage support, child care and health care, to take the burdens off of schools so that schools can focus on teaching and learning.

To sign on to this statement please go to bit.ly/BATCovid