In a recent reunion with long-missed friends, we rehashed the past 2 years of COVID struggle with a sense of awe from all the positive outcomes of pandemic isolation.

We spoke fondly of new pets adopted, hobbies we reembraced or tried for the first time, the remodeled spaces in our homes, and recipes adapted out of the necessity of barer-than-usual store shelves. We marveled at how our habits had changed as we learned to adapt to new circumstances like masks and Zoom meetings and wondered aloud how we would take these fresh skills into the “after times.”

Rose-colored glasses firmly in place, we counted the merits of difficult times, and applauded our own flexibility — and not just with the living room yoga we finally had time to try. It’s no surprise to members of the Reading Recovery Community that flexibility is a virtue. This community has always embraced the concept of doing whatever it takes to serve our students’ needs no matter how insurmountable the challenge. I’m in constant awe of the lengths that educators go to—even in the best of times—to reach their kiddos. And even amidst the struggles of COVID times, teachers continued to “level-up” by turning their porches into makeshift virtual classrooms and using a system of soup cans to prop up books to their webcam (two real-life scenarios from our own Community heroes).

Teachers provide everything from a well-needed high five, to nourishment, to financial support out of their own pockets, and that’s all on top of the subject matter expertise outlined in the job description! In short, they do what Reading Recovery teachers have always done: Whatever it takes.

Flexibility isn’t just a virtue; nor is it simply a necessity of the job; it’s a privilege … and it’s one that is threatened.

As every Reading Recovery professional knows, every child is different, and their needs vary. We meet the child where they are and give them whatever it takes to help them catch up. And we know that forcing one method when we know another will work better for the individual child’s needs is always the wrong path to take.

Yet, legislations that restrict teacher choice and undermine teacher expertise continue to pop up with the persistence and stubbornness of weeds on the lawn. Proposed legislations under the guise of accountability and fiscal responsibility have the potential to hamper teachers’ ability to do whatever it takes, whether by enforcing restrictive mandates or prescribing the use of a particular program.

It is becoming increasingly important to stay on top of the legislative issues in your state so you don’t miss upcoming legislation that may hamper your ability to choose flexibility tomorrow. Visit https://readingrecovery.org/act-now/ to stay informed of some of the most pressing issues, and take a few moments using our advocacy tools to voice your concerns and share your literacy expertise with your local legislators. Or better yet, proactively and regularly invite legislators to a behind-the-glass lesson so they can see the power of Reading Recovery in action, so they are on your side when it comes time to vote for your right to do whatever it takes on behalf of your students.