

RSU #10 Staff Updates, Tips, & Resources



November 22, 2021

Dear Staff,

We had such high hopes for School Year 2021-22. I don't know about you but I had random thoughts this past summer that went something like -- I can't wait to get back to something more "normal."

Well, here we are. And I hate to share this, but it's only been twelve weeks. It feels like more -- like way more. I've been filling in at two schools and working closely with another building, and I see and know that many of you are exhausted, like March/May exhausted.

At the administrative level we've all noticed and seen this. Here are some things we've talked about --

- Teachers have an incredible sense of urgency to help students learn new material, master standards, and achieve.
- Teachers also have a keen awareness of all the other needs students come to school with that must be met before learning can begin.

Let me be among those to agree with you in saying that some children simply are not ready to learn right now, so we must acknowledge that some of the incredible work of teaching in this pandemic is to provide the love, stability, and support students need to become ready to learn. But let us all admit that this, too, is an exhausting endeavor.

That isn't to say that standards and academic learning aren't important or that we are forgetting them. We encourage teachers to be laser focused on what *to teach*. I want to remind you that we have agreed upon essential learnings found here -- [K- Gr 9 Essential Skills](#). All teachers in PK through grade nine worked to create these in June 2020. We will review the reading, writing, and math essential skills and knowledge to align to the revised MDOE standards. You will be informed about this work as we continue.

So what can carry us forward? I am choosing to focus on the fact that many of our students are back in school full time where all basic supports are in place for them -- like food, warm shelter, caring adults, peers, and friendships. We have additional support people in place -- SEL ed techs, additional classroom teachers for smaller classrooms, and more social workers. And most importantly we have you. A teacher's greatest strength and purpose is to rebuild and form strong relationships with our students. This is the key.

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Also, the caring is not your burden alone to carry. It extends to our bus drivers and custodians, to our School Resource Officers, our kitchen staff, our ed techs -- to anyone who comes into contact with students. We are all fighting the good fight each day.

So, while we are all struggling now; hang in there, it will get better. Our kids need us, they might not be ready for learning just yet, but they do need our hearts, our support, and our love.

Also, hear me say that you have done an amazing job teaching during this unbelievably hard time. You have persevered and grown in so many ways. You have been there for your students even when you were falling apart. We know this. We see you.

After the Thanksgiving break, we are forming a small task force to look at how to address students who are physically aggressive. There are changes we can make and strategies to try. Hold onto your hope and keep your eyes focused on our students, teaching, and learning.

Take time to rejuvenate over the next four days. Return on Monday ready to offer love and acceptance, reteach, and smile.

Thank you,
Leanne