

A stylized, colorful illustration of a landscape. The background features wavy blue and white bands representing the sky. The foreground consists of rolling green hills with varying shades of green. On the left, there is a green tree with a brown trunk, a purple flower, and some orange foliage. A small red bird is flying in the sky above the tree. The overall style is simple and artistic.

# Climate and Culture

## The New Normal

Mount Prospect Elementary School  
111 Hansom Rd  
Basking Ridge, New Jersey 07920  
Phone 908-470-1600

# Journey Begins

March, 2020

The move to distance learning



# Change gears fast!

- Two half days to plan for immediate closure
- Plan what you need to take home
- Classroom closeouts - will we be back?
- Figure out how to be an educator and parent/spouse/etc. at home
- Create a 'home' office! (basement? dining room, kitchen? Kid's room?)
- Being honest with your own emotional feelings

# Change gears fast!

- Instructional teaching shift - what works in traditional classroom cannot be expected in distance learning
- Message: SEL over academic
- Focus on basic needs (Maslow's hierarchy)
  - Physiological Needs - free and reduced lunch students; financial impacts, tech needs
  - Safety Needs - are kids being taken care of? Impacted by the illness
  - Belongingness and Love - Connection! Friends, empathy, coping with anxiety/ depression/ fear

# Technology Needs/Struggles

- Supporting students without access to internet, laptop, etc.
- Making sure everyone has devices and equitable access to the information being shared
- Supporting staff in virtual learning, troubleshooting tech issues
- Navigating new platforms

# Communication Struggles

- Communicating expectations to staff
- Maintaining open communication with struggling students
- Frequency of parent-teacher communication
- Supporting parents navigate through Distance Learning Hub
- Not seeing students everyday to understand how they are feeling
- Parent expectations and follow-up while trying to manage own careers



# Other Struggles

- Stress management
- Meeting the needs of students with IEPs, 504s and ELL students
- Time
- Staying organized
- Uncertainty
- Aligning work for subgroups/ aides

# Strategies for Keeping Up Morale

## Teacher to Student

- Daily class emails
- Virtual chats as whole class, small groups, individual
- Individual emails
- Daily video lessons by teacher
- Teacher pictures and personal anecdotes
- Class Spirit Days
- K & 1 using choice boards
- Morning meetings to support SEL



# Strategies for Keeping Up Morale

## Teacher to Teacher; Admin to Teacher; Staff to Parents

- Virtual Training Sessions
- Virtual Office Hours
- Virtual walkthroughs
- Admin access to all Google Classrooms
- Zoom Team Meetings
- Lots of texting!
- Weekly grade level meetings - discuss peaks and valleys
- Phone calls to just check in on teachers
- Counselor's Corner & other online resources

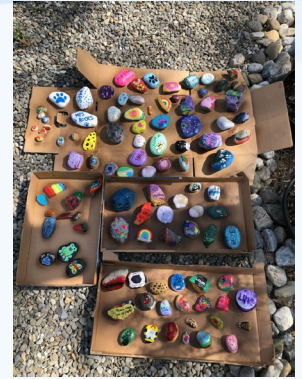
# Strategies for Keeping Up Morale

## Whole School

- Principal Challenges
  - Lego challenge
  - Paint a rock for Panther P.R.I.D.E Pathway
- Virtual School Spirit Days
- Riddles of the Day
- Scavenger Hunts around the house
- Virtual STEM Fair
- Principal Family Phone Calls to check-in

*Send pictures and create slide show or videos.*

*Send out in weekly parent newsletters*



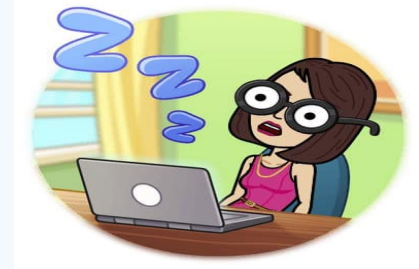
# Unintended Benefits



● Stay in Pajamas	● Save \$ in gas
● Prioritize what's important	● More family time
● Back to basics	● Deeper understanding of others
● Deeper understanding of world	● More self-care time
● Collaboration!	● Increase in teacher creativity
● Individuals stepping outside of comfort zone	● Sharing of resources
● Free resources	● Purchase requests granted quickly

# Managing the Workload

- Fast- Paced
- Juggling personal and professional
- Longer days - Increased Screen Time
- Virtual meetings - how many can happen in one day?!
- Ensuring understanding among teachers or students
- Scheduling your workday - ensure time for you!



# Future Considerations

- Grading
- Report cards
- Individual Student Interventions
- Observations/ Evaluations
- Curriculum Planning - what needs to change?
- What will the classroom of 20 - 21 look like?
- More virtual meetings in next school year to reduce travel time



# Other Ideas


- More student voice -
  - videos of students explaining what they miss most about school
  - Videos of students reciting poems they created
- Principal read-alouds
- Create a video of all staff saying Hello to students
- Daily announcements/ activity corner
- Virtual Yoga/ Meditation for teachers
- Lunch with the Principal
- School-wide pictures/ thank you posters to first responders to hang in windows
- Principal Google Classroom for Staff Communication



# Great Resource

Rick Wormlei: Assessment &  
Grading  
4/9 - 7:30 AM

@docseverns



## Wins & Wonderings

Hosted by Dr. Tracey Severns

**Why?** Connection and "Co-labor-ation" are key!

**What?** A live chat to raise questions and share successes and solutions.

**When?** 7:30am, Mon. – Fri., April 2nd – 17th

**Who?** Current and aspiring educators

**Where?** <https://zoom.us/j/912174233>

**Questions?** Email [docsev@teach4results.com](mailto:docsev@teach4results.com)

*We can do this!*

An opportunity to start our day with:

- Smiles
- Stories
- Strategies
- Strength

I hope you'll join us!

