

GOOD QUESTIONS LEAD TO GREAT CONVERSATIONS

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This time of year, people are busy preparing for the school year, participating in an online meeting or webinar, or perhaps putting together some last-minute details on a 4-H project; others may be planning for DKG chapter activities or even just relaxing on the front porch with a cold beverage. To add to your relaxing moments, a new group of OSO leaders have begun planning activities to engage and connect members during his crazy and difficult time.

On Tuesday, August 18, members had the opportunity to open the “Conversation Card Jar” to discuss current topics educators are faced with. The Conversation Jar activity is a means to connect with other members across the state and just have open discussion to share ideas, knowledge, and experiences.

As you plan for future meetings, this may be a Zoom activity that could work. Below are the questions used for the OSO Conversation Jar activity. Feel free to use for your own chapter -- including adding, deleting, editing, etc.

- What is your district planning to do for opening the school year?
- What types of professional development have districts provided to help teachers if schools will be using distance learning for the academic year?
- Are there any webinars, websites, articles that would be valuable for current educators to have in their toolbox?
- If you have a child (or grandchild) who is school age, are you confident in sending them to school in the fall?
- What method(s) or platforms are you using as a classroom teacher to ‘teach’ your students? Is this a district decision?
- Are there any suggestions to offer which support the shift to digital learning?
- Have there been any discussions regarding digital citizenship? Is this an area schools should focus?
- What type of policy does your district have with regard to devices for student use?
- Does your district offer any type of intervention opportunities for students who fall behind in assignments?
- What is the policy for students who do not complete the work?
- Does your district have an adjusted grading scale for distance learning? What does it look like?
- What advantages are evident with distance learning?
- Have there been any opportunities provided to assist parents in the movement to distance learning?

- How do you personally feel about returning to school in the fall?
- As an educator, how do you feel about the following statement: I am being forced to choose between my (and my family's) health and my students.
- How does distance learning open the door to make positive changes to the profession of education?
- How have you advocated for educators during this time of deciding and planning how the academic year will look?
- What plan(s) are in place for students who do not have access to the internet?
- Has your district made any provisions for staff who are “at risk” with regard to safe working options?

For those who participated, thank you for the engaging conversation. Whether you are working or retired, it doesn't matter. Everyone's voice is welcome. More activities are being planned, so be on the lookout!