MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



CAROLINE CHANCE

My name is Caroline Chance. I am a student support teacher in Montgomery County Maryland at Takoma Park Middle School. I have been an educator for 27 years as an elementary school teacher, math resource teacher, special educator, middle school math teacher, and now a student support teacher.

My tier 2 and tier 3 students are definitely struggling with distance learning. They are students who were struggling before distance learning and now, that struggle has increased exponentially. My students are a mixture of reluctant learners, students with attention deficits, students with poor academic skills, students with emotional or behavioral challenges.

The greatest adaptation to distance learning that I have employed is flexibility. Typically, teachers are flexible, but as a distance instructor/coach my flexibility has extended to using multiple modes of communication, including text messaging, Zoom, Screencastify and FaceTime. Others include, delivering hard copies of online work to students along with availing myself to students and parents in the evenings and on weekends. Distance learning has caused issues with my students across racial and socio-economic borders. Students who were previously able to work with just the accommodation of extra time and repeated reminders, have now become executive functioning casualties.

Many of my students lack the patience and the executive functioning skills to sustain tasks that require multiple steps. I have done my best to remove unnecessary steps for students. One way I've done this is to make sure all of their assignments are located on a chart in one document. Our school district allowed teachers to use two different platforms to display student work. Toggling from one platform to another perplexes my kids leading to them dismissing certain assignments. Making this chart eliminated the need for them to go between platforms to locate work. I leave my Zoom link open for students who need more structure with time management when completing assignments. They are given small chunks of work from the chart and must check in with me after completing an hour of work on the agreed upon assignments. We continue this pattern two to three times per day. For an even smaller subset of students I created a chart with live links to the classroom platform and specific assignments they must complete. This has been particularly helpful for students who struggle with attention, organization, and reading.