



Hello friends,

While we may have been the last state with a confirmed case of COVID19, West Virginia was one of the early ones to be closed by our governor. To that end, we are well into week two. What I have found most helpful is the open collaboration between heads, so I am sharing [all that we are doing](#) and opening myself up to answer any follow-up questions you have. lhofreuter@wcdsedu.com

Lessons learned so far...

- **Communicate honestly** as if a friend were sitting across from you. All of my letters are available [online](#) as are our [Head Space videos](#). Emails are overwhelming, so I limited those. We speak with one voice – mine. Teacher correspondences are focused only on academic work and schedules. I also host a weekly parent “coffee” over zoom as well as a weekly faculty meeting.
- **Zoom** is the way to go for remote synchronous learning. We are doing it for everyone – preschool through 7th in different capacities. I love its capabilities and will use it even when learning is back on campus, but I am a child of the 70’s... [WGBH ZOOM](#). Other exceptional platforms we are using include [VoiceThread](#), [Common Lit](#), and [Newsela](#).
- **Start slowly**. Embrace small victories. Day One we did nothing but check in with students (which also served as a technology test). Students needed to see us and each other. Then we used a spiral approach...focused on SEL... then core (reading and math)... then value added academics (science and specials). Each week we plan to upgrade (or downgrade) in some way.
- **Read this...** <https://teachremotely.harvard.edu/best-practices>
- **Challenge** and support your teachers to reimagine school, [then get out of their way](#).
- Be clear about **expectations** then be ready to adjust them...for everyone, especially yourself.
- **Continue connections**. Keep checking in... lunch bunch meetings, snack get togethers, advisory groups, morning meeting.

We don’t know what tomorrow looks like. We never did. We were just fooling ourselves that we had some semblance of control – some handle on the future. As school leaders, we have been waxing poetic that learning can no longer resemble the classroom of 1991. Afterall, the adult world for a five-year-old is one we can only imagine. We knew changes in education needed to be made. What we didn’t know is that by the end of March, the current world for that five-year-old would be turned on its head. We were thrust into remote learning. This challenged the status quo and gave us a new path forward. Thank goodness!

Change came at all of us in hyper speed. We only have one choice in response – we have to slow down. Take this one day at a time. With due credit to Disney’s Frozen II, “Just do the next right thing. Take a step, step again.” If it takes 21 days to form a new habit, it looks like we might just have long enough to change the habits of PS-8 education for the better without losing the best of what makes us.... Us.

Email me. Ask me questions. It extends my thinking. Stay healthy.
Liz Hofreuter