

Raleigh County Schools

FEATURE TEACHER

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What is a challenge you have faced teaching in during a pandemic in 2020?

Many students do not have wifi or access to wifi. After visiting their homes, I honestly believe that some of them are overwhelmed with trying to get wifi. Some families need basic life-survival skills coaching. The gap between the students equipped to learn and those who are not is becoming increasingly larger due to the lack of life skills that many of these families have. There is a group that is getting "left behind" as we do remote/blended learning. At the moment many of these families are focused only on getting food on their tables and heat in their homes.

How do you support building a positive and safe online learning environment for your students?

Reach out, reach out, reach out. I am persistent and I try hard not to have a "judgy" expression or tone. I try to encourage them and give them hope (over and over).

Do you have a super awesome success story from 2020?

Several of my students who I feared would not graduate last spring, graduated and are now adulting beautifully. Many students in danger of not graduating had no parental involvement and threatened regularly to drop out. Now, 6 months later, some are working full-time, providing for themselves. A few are pursuing additional education and/or training. They have found safe housing, saved some money, and even purchased vehicles. I am so very proud of them.

What do you do to encourage online classroom participation?

N/A. I do reach out to the students regularly because they are often hesitant to reach out to me. They are willing to share their needs and concerns after we have just visited for a few minutes.

Parent Communication... What's working for your families?

I call or email them. Some families do not have any type of communication. I drive over to their homes and visit. Some families are hesitant to answer when I call from my WWHS office phone because they think that they are in trouble. I will try calling from my cell phone, which almost always reaches the ones who did not answer the Woodrow phone number.

What methods have been effective in teaching during a pandemic?

Tutoring over teams, tutoring over the phone for students without wifi, the use of QR codes for students to reach out to tell me what they need (clothing, food, toiletries, tutoring, encouragement, etc.).

Share something positive about teaching in 2020.

Because students are not in the school building every day, I often go to their homes. Seeing how they live gives me a much more thorough understanding of their circumstances. It helps me to meet their specific needs better so that they can be more successful in school and in life. I love having more personal interactions with my students.