

LEADING A SCHOOL COMMUNITY THROUGH A PANDEMIC

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Wednesdays @ 2 pm MDT (Saskatchewan)
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Episode 8 - Lesson Learned to Plan for the Fall - May 20, 2020

The world has been moving fast since our world was shook by this pandemic and it is important that we now take a collective breath and look at where we are, how we got here, and how we will move forwards.

What have we been through and learned over the past eight weeks?

- With an unprecedented shutdown of schools, hundreds of millions of school children no longer had a physical place to attend school
 - Perhaps the most important lesson we have learned is the need for social connection between and among students, teachers, and their respective families and communities
 - Need to think of this time as physical distancing rather than social distancing
- Understanding what it really means to be “all-in” when it comes to teaching and learning from a distance
 - While this unimaginable transition for all school levels has been largely successful, we need to be aware that it has come with a heavy toll and labour on educators
 - Research has shown that working from home can be exhausting and brings about new challenges that weren't there when working at an office or school was possible
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 - As universities prepare for fall semesters with continued remote learning, we need to understand just how much work that will require
- The notion that students who finish out those students who are finishing out the current school year with remote learning are not fully prepared for the next school year
 - We are seeing that this generation of students are better prepared to face these challenges and changes than we originally thought
 - There may be some units of content that may not be lost, but this does not mean the students didn't learn what they need to succeed
- Looking at aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and what role it had on students and teachers

- Understanding the notion of displacement in terms of schools
 - The impact this displacement from schools has on students and how hard that can be when it is time for students to re-enter schools
- What Hurricane Katrina also pointed to is the toll that massive catastrophes can have on educators
 - Research has shown that the changes that came with adapting to a whole new dynamic of teaching and learning caused teachers to exit the profession
- The impact that teaching and learning from a distance has had on indigenous and other racially minoritized student communities and their families
 - There are a number of things we need to be aware of when we begin to reopen in September
 - Need to prepare and scaffold opportunities for these marginalized students to reenter the system

What continued plans to return to school will look like?

- Research from the Learning Policy Institute looks at a select number of countries that have already reopened or in some cases never closed
- Some of the things that those countries who never closed schools can give a good indication of what our schools could look like
 - Maintaining a sense of vigilance on students who present symptoms ended up being part of the context of how schools operated
 - Temperature checks and class suspension upon a student showing symptoms have been a part of these countries protocols
- One thing we have to wrap our heads around is the possibility of intermittent opening and closing of schools if waves of the virus peak
 - How do instructors prepare to flip between face to face and online learning?
- Group sizing of students has varied in different schools and countries based on available space and the number of educators
 - It is possible that we see split or alternating schedules among students to reduce the traffic in schools at one time
 - Some universities in the United States that are returning to face to face learning are looking at condensed schedules
- Such things as arrival and pickup procedures will drastically change, limiting the contact and access that parents and care-givers will have to the physical school
 - Negative impact on those schools that have built themselves as a central community hub
- Meal times, phys-ed, and recess could be drastically altered
 - Physical education and the arts must be paid particular attention to as they may be limited or cut out entirely