

Learning In New Places

On March 12, Governor DeWine's declaration that K-12 public schools would be closed for an extended time turned everyone's world upside down. In a matter of days, local districts needed to ensure students were able and ready to learn from home, communicate this plan to parents, and work with teachers to develop a plan for this to happen. If you consider learning in its broadest sense, we are all learning.

Let's look at some of the lessons learned. Flexibility has been a skill that has been tried and tested during the closure. If you didn't have it when this whole situation started, you certainly have developed it. If it seems directives are changing by the day, they are. Administrators, teachers, and other school staff have had to adjust even the best of plans. We appreciate our parents and their patience with us as we work through these new situations.

As this time of isolation continues, we have all had to endure the disappointment and frustration of not being able to gather socially with our friends and loved ones. This has taught us the power of human relationships. Educators focus on building relationships with students and families. The primary way they connect is through face-to-face interactions. The COVID-19 crisis has forced us to connect in old and new ways. From phone calls between teachers and students to Zoom or Google meetings for groups, we have learned to stay connected. The message is clear from all parties. We are still here and we still care!

That there is always more than one way to accomplish a task is quickly becoming evident in all of our homes. Many of us are cooking more than we ever did. I see social media posts of families cooking together or children making lunch for their parents. These, along with many other family activities, are real-life lessons that our children will remember long after the "stay home" order is lifted.

Another lesson our children are learning first hand is the importance of sacrificing for the "greater good." Our students attend school each day and enjoy the many opportunities available. Most are involved in extracurricular activities or clubs that extend these experiences far beyond the school day. It has been difficult for our students to just stop doing all of these things. The importance of staying healthy and "flattening the curve" is a life-lesson in how the choices one makes affects others.

There are still many questions surrounding when and how this will all end. Students are anxious to get back to their activities and friends. Teachers miss their students and the joy they bring to the classroom. This is not normal and none of us want it to be our normal. No matter what the future holds, we are thankful for the support of our community during this time. Thank you to our parents for helping to bring the focus to learning and connections inside your homes. Thank you to the Dover staff for changing the way we support and instruct our children with a moment's notice. We are truly blessed.