

Why Bother?

At eight weeks into the school year, it is always good to stop, catch your breath, and reflect on the start of the year. This year is no different in that aspect. What is different are the many orders, rules, and recommendations that have made this year like no other. Spring, summer, and now fall have been filled with time spent planning, implementing, learning, changing, and changing again.

As a district, we have created our Responsible Restart Plan and plans for all of our athletic venues and auditorium. All of these were developed with the Tuscarawas County Health Department and are used to guide our daily work. Schedules for our band and athletic teams have been adjusted to follow these guidelines, with the goal of providing as many opportunities for our children as possible. All buildings are marked for social distancing and our elementary playgrounds are now zoned for individual classes. An online learning option was added for parents who wanted their children to learn from home this year. For the first time in our district, 11 staff members are teaching almost 500 students online each day.

In looking at this body of work, one might ask, “Why bother?” Why invest the time and energy into designing and providing all of these options for students and families. Our choice to do the work and put these opportunities in place was for one reason. Our children are worth it. Dover educators are committed to doing their best for our students for many reasons. Let me share some of them with you.

Children are valuable. A well-worn quote on my desk from Stacia Tauscher says, “We worry what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today.” Children give us energy, wonder, humor, and a fresh perspective on life. Children get us up in the morning, off the couch, and out in the sunshine. Making the best of this school year is important to our students. Meeting our students’ needs today, wherever they are in their development, is vital.

Children need us. A Dover student once shared, “My teacher made a positive impact on my high school experience by the way she treated me and the rest of my class. No matter what was happening, she was always positive towards her class and created a safe and pleasant environment. Her encouraging words and confidence inspired me to always do my best work to reflect the amazing work she did educating us.” Educators provide stability, acceptance, and love. Whether online or face-to-face, our teachers connect with their students and encourage them to always do their best no matter what the situation may be. We all need some normalcy in our lives. The interactions between teachers and students provide that for all of us.

Children affect the future. The children in our classrooms or online today are the community members of tomorrow. I find great joy in watching former students and other Dover graduates living as adults in our community. It is great to see them return to Dover to raise their children. As community members and leaders, our response to current challenges model how we want our children to meet the challenges they will face in their lifetimes.

We are going to make it through this time in history. Who we are when this is over is the focus of learning and growing in Dover Schools.