



Tanque Verde District News & Views

Special Edition - Reflections on Teaching Through Coronavirus

Editor's note - In this special edition of the Tanque Verde News & Views, we describe the process of preparing and responding to school closures due to the coronavirus pandemic, and share reflections from Tanque Verde Elementary School teachers and Superintendent Hagerman. In future editions, we plan to continue to celebrate and tell the stories of other school staff members, reflections from the Superintendent, and acknowledgements of our school community.
~ Claire Place, Director of Communications

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. The resulting measures taken by Arizona and other states, to constrain the virus, included initial statewide school closures, followed by the extension of school closures through the end of the school year.

Teacher-Student Tech Support

One of the first, most challenging areas for schools across the state, was ensuring students had equal access to the new, remote "educational opportunities." Did students and families have the technology and access to internet service that would be needed? Did teachers have the skill set for remote, online, or video teaching, or the equipment and platforms to provide lessons to their students? What safety precautions would have to be taken to keep all students learning in a safe online environment?

Our schools called all of our students' families to determine who needed technology devices. Device pick-up dates were scheduled, and ChromeBooks were distributed where needed.

Schools began planning for distance learning, awaiting further specifications and direction from the Arizona Dept. of Education.

The Vision

Dr. Hagerman envisioned developing a simple, approachable way for teachers, students and families to tackle the new reality of remote learning. On March 24, 2020, with Dr. Hagerman's extensive research and thoughtful guidance, TVUSD administrators began planning for Student Learning Opportunities. Dr. Hagerman proposed that we start with these basic questions: what do we expect our students to learn; and how will we know they are learning?

Essentials - Extensions - Enrichment

Teachers were asked to go back to their teams' essential standards as the initial framework. To the maximum extent possible, they were asked to collaborate and share the load with their teams. Finally, they should focus on developing three levels of participation for students: Essential Learning, Extended Learning, and Enrichment.

The Preparation - Grade Level and Subject Area Teams Work Collaboratively

Teachers throughout the district quickly answered the call to create new opportunities for learning, in varied methods of delivery, for all students, in every grade level, and all subject matters. It was no small task. However, Dr. Hagerman advised starting simply, with small, defined tasks, meant to maintain connections with students, and above all, to be approachable for parents and families, who would just be adjusting to their new normal, and who would have numerous and challenging situations to deal with.

Early in the school closure period, a bright idea was proposed to record our elementary school principals reading from favorite books for young readers. This idea became a reality, with the development of a YouTube channel, T.V. Learns, which quickly became a way for students to connect with our school leaders and counselors. It has grown to include a wide cast of teachers and specialists sharing stories, science experiments, art activities, music, and outdoor explorations that students can do at home. "Wacky Wednesdays" have also become a popular way to lift the weight of social isolation, bringing favorite jokes and stories to students at home.

A Technology Support Team was identified, and highly skilled, tech-savvy teachers were asked to provide support and guidance to help those in need of skills or tools to engage their students remotely. As a Google-based district, the team developed a Google 101 Tutorial which was provided to all teachers, covering the basics of Google's suite of applications. Teachers at the secondary level were already incorporating Google Classroom.

Building Frameworks and Identifying Resources

Our school administrators worked with their Grade Level and Subject Area teams to guide the development of weekly learning frameworks, which would be the foundation for the three levels of learning opportunities. Students would access the frameworks online, and printed packets were made available for students who did not have internet access or preferred to have a paper copy.

Teacher Self-Care, Student Self-Care

Realizing that teachers would have to practice self-care to be able to be present for their students and their own families, the Admin Team put together some articles and resources to put a focus on self-care. The resources focused on building the immune system, resources for COVID-19 related questions, and actions to promote happiness.

In a public health crisis, we place a high priority on the wellness of our students and their families. Included in that is mental health. Our school counselors are engaging with students, and have posted on TV Learns, with the following episode by Elementary School Counselor, Dawn Starkey, about self-care for students.

Self Care with School Counselor, Dawn Starkey, on T.V. Learns



Wacky Wednesday with T.V. Learns



Thinking about Clouds with Mr. Gaines, on T.V. Learns



Reflections from the Tanque Verde Elementary School Campus

(More to come from our other schools!)

What have we learned from this?

Mindi Hust, M.Ed. - *In thinking about teaching remotely through Coronavirus at this present time, two words come to mind: "grace" and "collaboration". Now more than ever, as an American, wife, mother, and educator, I realize I must focus on grace and collaboration. I need to offer myself, my students, my family, and my colleagues - grace. We all need to keep grace in mind and forgive mistakes and be understanding. I am so grateful to work in TVUSD, as I see our leadership offering grace to all teachers at this time. TVUSD leadership is cognizant of all families' unique experiences and needs, as we move forward through uncharted waters. A huge success in this time of uncertainty is my colleagues' collaboration. TVUSD has been focused on our PLC culture and now more than ever my colleagues are collaborating in earnest. I believe we are able to collaborate in this manner because of our established PLC culture while walking in grace. We can accomplish so much by coming together and collaborating in grace.*

[class photo]

Mindi Hust, M.Ed.

Fifth Grade Teacher

Tanque Verde Elementary School



Ashley Whittier, M.Ed. - *Not feeling like we are doing enough is a common theme I have heard from team members, colleagues, and even from teacher friends in other districts. We teachers are used to being on-the-go all day, and suddenly things look different. We are definitely still busy, but 'different' can often feel inadequate.*

While these feelings are common, the reality is, we are all doing what we can, with what we have. Students are not in their typical learning environments. Teachers and staff are also not in theirs. While students are trying to do school work at home with siblings of all ages, many parents are still trying to work from home and some have been laid off or furloughed. Many of us are grieving the loss of "normal."

But while I am grieving the loss of normal, I can also take note of small celebrations. I can celebrate the fact that we have come together as teams. I have an incredible class team which

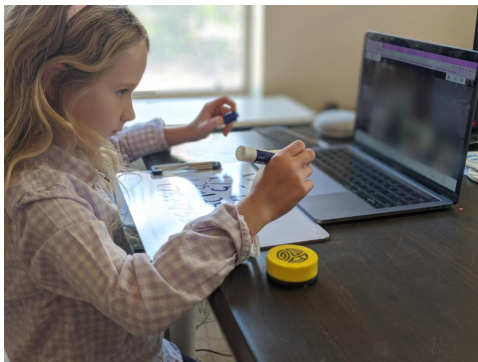
consists of my amazing first graders and their families. They have been patient, kind, and supportive. In our virtual meetings we have laughed together at jokes and cried together when we talked about how we would not be going back to school this year. There is also our grade level team which has been the most amazing group to share creative ideas with and talk through rough moments.

I have also experienced the most amazing school team at TVES, hearing positive support from one another during a recent virtual staff meeting and the most appreciated encouragement and excitement as we put together a staff project. I wasn't sure what our new normal would look like; it's nothing like the old. But right now in this time, we truly are doing what we can, with what we have.

Ashley Whittier, M.Ed.

1st Grade Teacher

Tanque Verde Elementary School



Ashley's daughter learning from home TVES First Grade Team meeting remotely while Ashley teaches from home



What can we do to make our new reality more positive?

Haley Wilson, B.A. - Sometimes chaos is exactly the opportunity creativity needs to blossom. Although I am devastated to not finish out the school year with my students and for all the hardships that so many families are going through, I also see the potential for it to be an unprecedented chance to rethink how we do school.

Suddenly all the typical "rules" of how school operates have gone out the window. No grades, no tests, no missing assignments - it helps me ask so many important questions. What would school look like if these never came back? How can we better emphasize the process of learning instead of the product? How can we focus on intrinsic motivation to help students see the value of school outside of good grades or test scores? What could school become if we focused on student growth instead of student outcome? This may seem wild and unthinkable but so was the situation we are in

now. It has led me to refocus on what school is really about, the things that, as much as we try, we cannot deliver through a screen: The connection, the relationships, the sense of wonder we can create in our classrooms.

I have been so incredibly impressed by how quickly teachers, students and parents have adapted to this new situation. What if we kept that openness, that imagination, that resourcefulness, that collaboration and curiosity when we go back in the fall? My hope is that we do not go back to business as usual when in-class school resumes. That instead, we reimagine what business as usual should be and, more importantly, what it can be.

Ms. Haley Wilson

4th grade teacher

Tanque Verde Elementary School



Ms. Wilson with her class before school closures



*'Thankful for the video calls. He loved it!'
TVCP parent*



What can we take from this into future classrooms, learning & instruction?

Kristen Kvaran, M.Ed. - There aren't many times in life when educators are granted the opportunity to slow down and really reflect on the many roles we play in the lives of children and families. While the coronavirus pandemic will likely negatively impact each and every one of us in some way, I'm hopeful that we as educators, as well as the families we serve, will come out of this situation with stronger communities, more resilience, and new beliefs about the purpose of early childhood education.

Our preschool model is one that relies heavily on relationships – and we are particularly proud of the strong relationships we've developed with families even in our first year, as that foundation has already paid dividends in keeping us connected to children. More than ever before, we are working as school-parent teams to address specific concerns, differentiate instruction for individual students, and provide customized resources for families. This much parent involvement is what teacher dreams are made of!

School closure has caused us to reflect on our image of the child, just as we did before we started the school year. What has stayed the same? What has changed since then? We still believe that children are competent and capable and deserve to be protagonists in their learning. We still believe that children have at least a hundred "languages" through which they demonstrate their understanding of the world, like clay, movement, and storytelling. What does that look like now that we are not together? How does our role accommodate this new digital landscape? How do we use the tools we have available to help develop and encourage new "languages" in children? These big questions will continue to guide our professional conversations for months to come.

Some thoughts on our YouTube channel – TVCP Learns

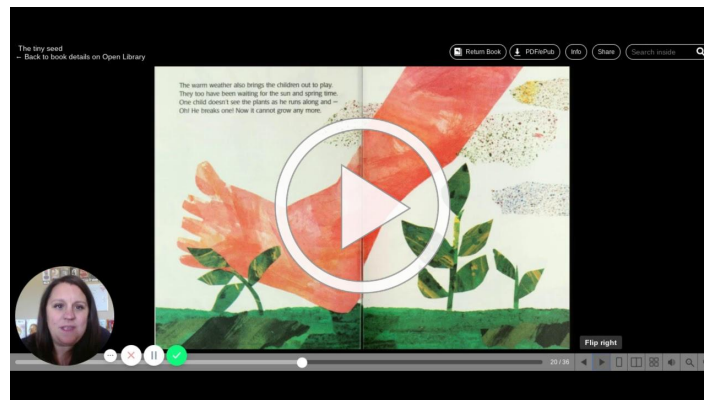
(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuZ3iJoHNLnqAJRfWFpD4LQ/>):

As a staff, we loved the idea behind T.V. Learns, and we realized that our preschoolers could benefit from seeing familiar faces with age-appropriate content. In less than three weeks, we have uploaded almost two dozen videos with many more in the works! They range from read-alouds to mindful breathing and yoga to parent resources on supporting big emotions in preschoolers to videos that address meeting academic goals for children with disabilities. Our

families have said they appreciate the flexibility in deciding when their children can watch them, and our staff has learned many skills along the way. Looking forward, we're already planning how to use video programs like Loom in the classroom next year to make movies with children, thereby giving them another "language" through which to share their thinking.

Nothing without joy,
Kristen Kvaran, M.Ed
Director
Tanque Verde Community Preschool

Week 3 - The Tiny Seed Read Aloud TVCP Learns



Weekly Reflections from our Superintendent, beginning with school closures ~ Editor

Scott Hagerman, Ed.D. - March 30, 2020 - As we start this week, there are three things to think about to help our students engage in learning successfully. They are: reconnecting with your students, finding ways to engage with them in this new framework and developing ways to provide support.

As you determine what's most useful for you and your team, as well as what's working well, please share-out. Together, we can build deeper knowledge and understanding of our Remote Learning experience.

April 6, 2020 - Some people have asked why students would choose to participate in optional remote learning. There is a body of research that gives us insight into why. The research is called teacher credibility. In John Hattie's meta-analysis on student achievement, teacher credibility gets a .90 effect size.

The research states that there are four components to teacher credibility: trust, competence, dynamism, and immediacy. Last week, I mentioned a focus on Relationships. This week, we'll look at the connection between trust and positive relationships. It is not teachers' perception of themselves that matters. Rather, it is a student's perception that is important.

April 13, 2020 - As amazing as the district has always been, I truly believe the work we are doing now is making us more compassionate, more focused and just better. Patrick Lencioni is an author whose writing I have liked in the past. He posted the following on Twitter last week.

No organization is going to emerge from this crisis unchanged - I don't mean financially. During a time like this, we'll either get better as a result of what we choose to do as teams

and organizations, or we'll be diminished for what we fail to do. Will we get better, or worse?
Patrick Lencioni @patricklencioni · Apr 6

There are so many meaningful things happening throughout our school community. I would like to acknowledge a few of them here. There are many more individual actions, too many to list, which are providing us the strength and resilience to make the best of a very challenging situation ~

- *Thanks to our teachers, students and families for being resilient during times of hardship and uncertainty.*
- *Thanks to our community for providing support and reassurance at our time of need.*
- *Thanks to our administrators for being diligent and unfaltering while providing thoughtful leadership in the face of a school crisis of historic measure.*
- *Thanks to our Special Ed and Intervention team for the work they are doing to help all students access our learning opportunities.*
- *Thanks to the custodial, maintenance and ground staff that come every day and are working to make our schools safer.*
- *Thanks to everyone who has shared their love of learning on TV Learns.*

Scott Hagerman, Ed.D
Superintendent
Tanque Verde Unified School District

Thank you for your interest in the Tanque Verde Unified School District. In future editions of the News & Views, we will share reflections on "Teaching Through Coronavirus" from teachers from each of our TVUSD schools. - Editor

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