



5 Ways to Support Teachers Working Remotely During the Coronavirus Pandemic

By Educator Barnes – April 27, 2020

Although school buildings are closed, the school year has not ended. Teachers are working at home to support and teach their students. Yes, teachers should be grateful to be employed and getting paid during this time especially knowing that millions of Americans had to file unemployment. However, some teachers are finding this new work at home environment

stressful. It does not have to be this way. Here are five ways school administrators and district leaders can support teachers during this time.

Check on your teachers' wellbeing.

This should be the first action item on all school leaders' list. A teacher who is struggling or is not well will not be good for students. There has been a lot of focus on worrying about our students' social-emotional health, but what about our teachers? Some of them are working, teaching their children, and supporting parents and other relatives at the same time. Not all teachers have internet access or have a handle on how to use technology. Trying to teach when there are personal issues can be hard and this includes working at home. Let's not forget the phone calls teachers have to make. They might not have a cellular plan (since many people have ditched landlines) to accommodate the volume of calls they are required to make to check in on students' learning. Administrators may not be able to solve and fix all of their staff members' problems, but they should reach out so they can be aware. Administrators can't help or connect teachers to resources if they don't know what the issues are.

Keep learning at home plans simple.

The first line of help is our teachers. If plans are difficult for parents and students to understand and navigate, the first person that will be contacted for help is the teacher. I think about my sons' plan. So far, they have turned assignments via text submission on Canvas, video, taking a picture of an assignment and sending it by uploading an attachment through email, and sharing a Google document. Not only have my children had to learn various ways to turn in assignments, but they have also submitted responses through Flipgrid, Canvas, Google Drive, ClassDojo, and email. This means teachers are teaching and troubleshooting technology. Some of these platforms teachers chose and some were mandated. School leaders can minimize the number of platforms students use which will alleviate the amount teachers have to manage.

Coordinate family contact.

Parent and teacher relationships are key. It is even more important during this time. Families with multiple children are being bombarded with school communication. Some teachers find themselves checking in with parents, asking the questions the principal asked them to ask, and being told by families they have already answered these questions before from another

teacher in the school. This is exhausting for families and wastes teachers' time. Schools can coordinate a teacher, with permission from the families, to be a point person for families with multiple students so information is only collected once and parents aren't overwhelmed.

Be flexible with meetings.

In some cases, schools are having more meetings than before school buildings closed. Everyone is not in a situation where being on multiple phone conferences or Zoom video meetings is easy. Their kids may need help with their work or a spouse might be having meetings too. I have told my team they do not need to be visually present. This allows people to use a picture of themselves or just display their names. This might seem like a small gesture, but it can help. A recent article by BBC [outlined](#) why Zoom meetings feel more draining than meeting in person.

Show grace.

Overall, people are doing the best they can. If a teacher misses a deadline, find a way to help the teacher instead of coming down hard on the teacher. If there is any time that teachers should really know the administration cares about them, it should be right now during this pandemic.

Right now, the future is not clear. Until there is more clarity about returning to teaching inside of school buildings, teachers should not be feeling stressed while teaching at home.