

Our Journey - through the Lens of Our Students and Staff

Kerrie Davis-Byrn – My Journey

As spring break came to a close, my husband and I had come home from a small adventure to Knott's Berry Farm, and a beach in California. In California at that time there were no masks to be seen, no lines at the grocery stores, but then we arrived home to a different situation than we had left.

Then the new reality of schools being closed settled in, and all that would be needed as an Assistant Principal to support the families in the community, I also had to begin a new appreciation for the health of my family, friends and colleagues. At first it was making sure I was on buses delivering food, checking in and getting food and supplies to my mother, and washing, washing, washing, so I did not get sick and bring any germs to my husband who has been battling severe cancer this past year.

Now each day entails many blessings and new roads for us all to travel. I get up early and instead of drinking my coffee and taking a few minutes to play a quick game, I see many, many emails from others working well into the night and the work day begins....no commute...no time to listen to the news or radio and prepare mentally for my day, it just unceremoniously begins. It is a personal challenge to see if I can get through the list of emails, color coding, responding, printing, charting and not losing track of the 53 Instructional Assistants who are looking to me for enriching and rewarding professional development opportunities. This is an unprecedented opportunity for staff to grow and learn in their use of technology, so I want to make use of every moment. As others share their frustrations with technology, I keep saying this is a gift of time to learn technology and be comfortable enough to try new things to grow our students more in the future. I feel blessed to have this time to learn and to assist others in this journey.

Every day I check on students to see who is getting onto Moby Max and reach out through Class Dojo to motivate our learners. Every Monday we prepare materials for the Tuesday hand out times. The support and appreciation from families on Tuesdays warms my heart each time. Sprinkled throughout the days are ZOOM and GOOGLE Hangout meetings to support special education students, grade levels, staff groups, and district groups. It is a joy to see people each meeting, to share their homes on the camera, to have a moment to connect outside of my house and the one or two people in the office. Often I am able to take part in educational Webinars that can be squeezed between meetings and the series by Hope Forums brings me much to ponder and a sense of urgency to be ready to support every student to succeed, no exceptions. Each day I look up, as I am now, and the sun is down and I think just a few more emails and I will be caught up, but alas another always pops up! As I close the computer for the night, I always have a moment to think about our students and their families and feel like this time away will give everyone a new appreciation for each other, and a closeness from the experience we are all living through that will make our future together bright.