



The New York State Office of Religious and Independent Schools PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE CENTER (PDRC)

The Upstate PDRC - All NYS Regions North of NYC

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E – Newsletter

Issue 5



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Back to School 2020:

Preparation and Priorities for the First 30 Days

“Drinking from a firehose.” It’s a phrase we heard often from teachers when describing their efforts to pivot to online learning when school buildings closed in March in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. The shift was fast and furious and exhausting. And in a blink of an eye, we stand at the threshold of the 2020 school year with all of its uncertainties and opportunities. It may still feel that we are drinking from the firehose but we’ve learned a few things about planning and prioritizing-and letting go-that will help us control the flow. Here are three practices to help you start the school year strong, culled from teacher feedback and the *Distance Learning Playbook* by Fisher, Frey & Hattie (2020).

1. Self-Care

“Before we engage in distance learning we need to take care of ourselves.” (p.10)

It’s overused-and yet so clear: There’s a sound reason why airlines insist that you put on your own oxygen mask first. You can only help others if you are physically and mentally strong. Self-care is not a luxury for teachers or students. It must be intentionally planned and protected. Doing so will help you build your own immunity and resilience while providing a healthy antidote to compassion fatigue.

2. Moderation

“Technology use is the means and starting point, not the core of teaching.” (p.6)

You don’t need a million apps, you don’t have to have a bitmoji, and you don’t need NATO-level meeting norms to deliver an effective online or hybrid education. If you think you’re overwhelmed by the number and diversity of educational technologies-

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imagine how your students' families feel! Select platforms that can support multiple functions and provide 'one stop shopping.' Focus on your students' learning needs, what they have access to (hardware and software), and what their families can realistically support. As you and your students master a few platforms, you can add variety and options. The same applies to classroom protocols. Vigorous health safeguards are non-negotiable, but beyond that, you can keep your rules of engagement simple and mutually negotiated with students. It will take some time to build community and establish routines. Offer technologies and procedures that are easy to follow, clearly explained and consistent.

3. Partnerships

"...collaborate with one another, talk about learning more than teaching, and invest in relationships with children and adults in order to be an agent of change." (p.3)

Even though you're entering remote or hybrid teaching with more experience than you had in March, there are still a lot of things that are different. It's likely that you have a new group of students and that many of them are managing significant stress in the face of uncertainty. There is a clear expectation that you'll be delivering a fully accessible educational experience with engaging content and a somewhat predictable schedule. You can't do this alone. Build partnerships with families, other teachers, your administrators. Create a network of trusted colleagues with whom you can share your successes and challenges (this is also part of self-care). Look to your students as learning partners too. Build trusting relationships. When students know their input is safe and valued, they will help you figure out what's working, what's not, and how to improve the design of distance learning experiences.

Want to learn more?

Check out this discussion with John Hattie and Nancy Frey sharing their insights about what we have learned about distance learning. [Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey on Developing and Delivering High Quality Distance Learning](#)

Or read:

The Distance Learning Playbook Grades K-12: Teaching for Impact and Engagement in Any Setting. Fisher, D, Frey, N, Hattie, J (2020). Thousand Oaks: CA. Corwin.

Throughout this newsletter you will find resources to help you prepare for the first month of school. Whether you're offering face to face, fully remote or hybrid instruction, this school year will present unique challenges and triumphs. Please reach out to us at upstatepdrc@gmail.com and let us know how we can support you.



Upcoming Events

NEW :

Show off your students' artwork!
Now accepting submissions for
Virtual Student Art Exhibit at
RISE

View and download the flyer at:
<https://www.nysed-soris-upstate-pdrc.org/rise-student-art-show>



Upcoming Live Webinar:

September 16 at 4pm
Preparing for the "New Normal":
[Supporting English Language Learners for Success](#)

[Click Here for Quick Guides!](#)

Topics include:

- A Continuum of Options for offering Content in Virtual Settings (New!)
- Looping
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Outdoor Learning
- Project-Based Learning
- Morning Meetings

SAVE THE DATE:

RISE (Religious and Independent School Educators) Annual Conference,
Nov. 8-12, 2020
(online live and recorded sessions)

[Click here for more information](#)

More information coming soon
www.nysed-soris-upstate-pdrc.org/





Practitioner Spotlight:

Meet Karen Simon, Director of Curricular and Professional Initiatives at Yeshiva Har Torah in Queens, NY.

What does reopening look like for you?

“As of today, we are prepared to open live on September 8. We are fortunate enough to have large classrooms, and our more than 700 students are grouped in pods. Over the summer, we brought in an infectious disease expert to educate the whole community. We did a huge amount of work to prepare for the fall: the staff and students are being tested, classrooms have been equipped with clear shields, materials have been individualized, and we worked through the logistics of repurposing learning areas and directing hallway traffic. Everyone worked tirelessly for a live opening...but we have also prepared ourselves to go remote if needed.”

What was your biggest takeaway from the spring, and what will look different in your work this year?

“My main take-away was that teachers are incredibly resilient! We put design-thinking into practice by learning how to “fail forward” and keep learning from experience. Last spring, our teachers rose to the occasion and figured it out very quickly. Our administration and tech people were there to support the switch to Zoom, and in

the end we didn’t miss any days of school. Teachers are problem-solvers, and every day they simply solved a different problem. What we learned from the spring was to create schedules that keep our students logged-in (with breaks) and working independently. We learned that tech training must be embedded in the curriculum and we have taken the necessary steps to make sure each student has their own device. We learned to be prepared -- our website is now pre-populated with the information and logistics for a possible switch to remote learning, and every student has a home materials box ready to go.”

What priorities have risen to the top for your school in the first 30 days of school?

“Our top priority is to maintain a collaborative and warm learning environment within the reality of social distancing. Social distancing is the opposite of what we did before as a school. Upholding the culture of our school while taking very important health and safety measures is a priority we are addressing through embedding Social-Emotional Learning in everything we do, across all areas of the curriculum.”

Find us at: <https://www.nysed-soris-upstate-pdrc.org/>








THE FIRST 20 DAYS OF
Virtual Learning








WEEK 0: PREPARING FOR VIRTUAL LEARNING

| Gather Data + Start Communicating | Establish Expectations | Prep Teachers | Leverage Community Partnerships | Simulate the Process |
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| Clarify roles within teams for things like tech support and teacher capacity. Establish expectations for the quantity and pacing of virtual lessons. Knowing that families will all have different situations, consider an asynchronous learning model with established times for everyone to sync (group chat, video, office hours). | Clarify roles within teams for things like tech support and teacher capacity. Establish expectations for the quantity and pacing of virtual lessons. Knowing that families will all have different situations, consider an asynchronous learning model with established times for everyone to sync (group chat, video, office hours). | Leverage coaches, PLC time, and planning periods to help teachers plan the resources they'll need for digital lessons. If resources allow, consider paper options so students with no or limited access can continue learning. Give teachers time to prepare for the changes to come. | Our schools provide more than just learning for students. Connect with community partners to make plans to address the whole child — consider shifting your summer meal plan to an emergency plan during virtual learning, pack backpacks with hygiene products, and work with providers to help families gain internet access. | Set the stage for what's about to come, so students can feel prepared. Facilitate a sample lesson in class, and answer any questions. This is also a great time to walk through simple steps for logging in to various applications, and to make sure all students have the login information they need. |
| RESOURCES | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stakeholder Engagement Guide• NSR Rule 5: Harness the Flow and Let Info Go• Using Social Media as a School District | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• [Example] LA Guidance for Schools• [Example] Plans for Schools• NSR Rule 3: Define the Work Before You Define the People• [Infographic] Do This, Not That | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning for Virtual Lessons• Four Ways to Facilitate Virtual Learning• A Guide to Getting Started with Distance Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internet Essentials• Day Care through Boys and Girls Clubs• NSR Workout: Plan for Change, Not Perfection | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital Expectations & Login Support: Photo examples• Sample Technology Contract• Common Sense K-12 Digital Citizenship Curriculum• Digital Citizenship article |






WEEK 1: BUILDING SAFETY + SKILLS

| Students First | Sharing Content | Connecting Students | Submitting First Assignment | Office Hours |
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| Everyone is feeling a little unsure about how virtual learning will work -- start small with a check-in question that has students reflect, respond, and refresh the skills they will use as they engage in learning through this new format. Build in extra time to model how to use the software, and be sure any tips/tricks resources are shared again.  | Add a video lesson to your virtual platform, or text a link to a YouTube video. Keep the video portion no longer than 10 minutes, and consider covering content that isn't brand new to students. This might be a great time to create a how-to lesson that reminds students (and parents) how to navigate through the process and resources in the upcoming days/weeks.  | Introduce a way for students to collaborate and engage with content through discussion boards and recorded responses. We suggest making this an easy win for students at first so that as the questions become more rigorous, they are focused on the content and not the collaboration process. Remember to share clear expectations for what and how to post.  | Students have shared, learned, and collaborated. Now it's time for them to demonstrate learning. Use email, LMS, blog, or Google Classroom for students to show their work. Another idea: have students take a picture and share with SeeSaw/Class Dojo/Email/Remind Text.  | Set aside time to be online so families and students can connect virtually. Use this time to answer questions, chat, and gain feedback on the process so far. If needed, model for students how to use software features. Consider recording and sharing your office hour for those who can't join live.  |
| RESOURCES | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• List of Check-in Questions• 35 Questions for Student Reflection | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tips + Tricks for Recording Lessons• Best Apps + Websites for the Flipped Classroom• EdPuzzle• Screencast-o-matic | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best Student-Collaboration Tools• Flipgrid• SeeSaw• Padlet• RISE protocol for peer collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submitting Assignments on Google Classroom• Class Dojo• Remind• SeeSaw | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducting an Effective Virtual Meeting• How to Use Zoom for Online Learning• [Example] Virtual Learning Feedback Survey |

WEEK 2: DEEPENING ENGAGEMENT + MASTERY

| Formative Data | Leverage Digital Content | Create a Digital Data Tracker | 1:1 Feedback Sessions | Personalize Instructional Resources |
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| Offer an entry or an exit ticket as part of the virtual lesson so students have a clear understanding of the standards/skills they have already mastered versus those they will be focused on during upcoming virtual lessons. Use student data to update the resources you share.  | Many online platforms have content aligned to grade-level standards. Leverage existing digital resources to help students dive deeper into their learning while not physically in school. When choosing materials, organize and share with suggested times so students and families have a more clear idea of the pace at which you expect them to progress.  | Work with students to begin to develop progress trackers. These will allow them to track & reflect on the progress of their work over time. A simple data tracker could include the list of standards to be mastered in a unit, a column for noting mastery, and a column for the evidence students used to indicate mastery. Consider using an ID number to add anonymity.  | Connecting with students one-on-one to discuss progress and performance can be helpful feedback as they continue to get comfortable with this learning process. Helping students understand what they are doing well and where they need to focus more attention will help them make informed decisions regarding their learning choices.  | Based on what you've learned about students' mastery of the content, tailor resources to the needs of different groups. Label resources in your digital platform so students have access to content that's appropriately challenging for them, or if your learning management system allows, assign different resources and assignments to specific students and groups.  |
| RESOURCES | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fantastic Fast Formative Assessments• Digital Tools Anecdotes Example• NWEA strategy group planning sheet | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education Companies Offering Free Subscriptions due to School Closures• Remote Learning with Khan Academy• PreK Schedule• Remote Learning Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ST Math data tracker examples• Achieve3000 Reflection• iXL Skills Spreadsheet | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher-led conferencing• How-To-Guide for Student Conferencing• Conferencing artifacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playlist Building 101• Math Examples• History Example• ELA Examples• The Personalized Learning Playbook |

WEEK 3: CHOICE + CELEBRATIONS

| Virtual Circle | Introduce Student Choice | Choice in Demonstration | Gather Data + Plan Differentiated Stations | Peer Affirmations + Virtual Celebration |
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| Pause for a virtual circle that includes a way for students to respond to a check-in question, so you can continue to build your virtual community. We also suggest holding office hours for students that want to connect in real time.  | As students continue virtual lessons, set aside time to review expectations for how students will demonstrate learning by choosing an activity and completing the tasks. Be sure to answer any questions students have and clarify your expectations for their work.  | Offer students 3 (or more) different ways to show what they've learned with an intentional focus on rigor and equity of choices. Consider having a single rubric for all options. Be mindful of the technology and resources options offer, keeping equity at the forefront of your planning.  | We know all students have different experiences during virtual learning. Use time to ensure you have the data you need to start planning for differentiated stations when you return, so you can best meet the various needs of your learners.  | Have students create affirmations about their classmates. This will help foster a positive learning environment, whether virtual or back in the classroom. Take time to celebrate the work everyone did during this virtual time, and set expectations for your first few days back together to alleviate any stress students might feel.  |
| RESOURCES | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toolbox: Check-In Check-Out• Using Circles in School | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measuring What Matters• Interest Based Learning• Choice Boards and Playlists• Learning Menus | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment tic-tac-toe• Assessment, Choice, and the Learning Brain• Using Games for Assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tips for trying small groups for the first time• Know, Understand, Do chart to plan differentiated stations• Flexible Grouping | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affirmations Article + Examples• The Compliments Project |