Update on eSchool (Elementary and Secondary)

Teaching and Learning in our eSchool program has steadily improved. Here is a brief update:

NUMBERS:
Currently, there are:
- 1133 students enrolled in the eSchool
- 581 students enrolled in the secondary program.
- 552 students enrolled in the elementary program.
- 94 students with IEPs currently enrolled.
- 46 teachers teaching full time in the eSchool
- 23 teachers are teaching part-time in the eSchool
- 224 elementary and secondary students on the waitlist

TECHNOLOGY AND FURNITURE
eSchool Administrators are continuing their efforts to secure necessary items for eSchool classrooms. One challenge has been the difficulty students experienced in hearing their teachers. This is related to the fact that teachers are sharing classroom spaces, and ambient sound "bleeds into" teachers' mics. We have worked to mitigate that problem by:
- Purchasing call-center mics with the hope that ambient sound spillover would be reduced
- Creating a schedule so that teachers in classrooms are able to work from home for a portion of the day on a rotating schedule.
- Ordering padded mobile dividers and bookshelves to break up and muffle sound in classrooms.

Technology, software, devices, and internet service were somewhat "rocky" in the first days of the school year. Our technology department worked hard to troubleshoot problems, support teachers, and marshall the necessary equipment so that teachers could adequately design and implement learning for their students.

Many of the challenges in the beginning weeks were related to the short turnaround time the school and district experienced in transitioning from conceptual design to full implementation that included space, staffing, equipment, and professional development.

COLLABORATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Because teachers are sharing spaces, and because the eSchool administrative team is working hard to promote collaboration, teachers and administrators have commented on the eSchool's energizing and powerful sense of cooperation among teachers in sharing ideas, developing online strategies, unpacking standards, and using the Workshop model to design learning. This is clearly a stand-out benefit of the eSchool conditions, leadership, staffing selection, and design.

FAMILY and STUDENT REFLECTIONS:
Although the eSchool staff is continuing to improve online learning, we have received a number of positive comments from family members about the experiences of their children. Emails have indicated parent satisfaction with the efforts of the staff and with student learning.

I took the morning off to spend with my daughter as she did eschool. Her teacher is working so hard! I'm so impressed with what the teacher is doing with the kids and the love that's being shared. There are high expectations and lots of social and emotional support. There's lots of collaboration and community. I was SO impressed, and I wanted you to know.

"I can already tell you that you are my favorite teacher this year!
I love how considerate you are about our stress levels involving our core class meetings/assignments. I really admire that! I can tell you are very passionate about creative writing and I also admire that you allow us to work on a different assignment if we don't like a particular topic. I was worried this year that I was going to have either a bad ELA teacher or bad teacher in general, but seeing you in the zoom meeting really reassured me that this year is going to go great! Looking forward to doing more creative assignments for you!"

Dear [Teacher]
Our daughter has you for Math and Spanish eSchool. I just have to give you a huge shout out and thank you because you are so organized and seem to be the only one of us who truly understands Schoology so well! Everything is easy to find and there is a check off list and it just makes sense to her and me."

[Child's name] feels confident in her learning and successful. I know all of us are trying so hard but I do see the benefit of Schoology when it is in place and done well. Thank you for all your work and effort. I totally appreciate all of you at the eSchool."

I was struggling at the beginning of this year, yes. But, I realized, as I studied, the math assignments all got easier. Which caused me to realize that, when you know what you're doing, even algebra can be really fun. That's why you chose to become a math teacher, so you could teach math to others, and help them to know how fun math can be.

Hello! Thank you very much for checking in on (Student). We are doing well with eSchool! It's a little hard for him to stay on track because he gets "distracted" and then starts to wiggle and/or talk over the top of the instruction on occasion (thankfully, I've always got him on mute! lol). But his teacher, (teacher name), is doing a wonderful job keeping her kids on track and interested. She calls on him often and keeps him engaged in the lesson. If you have any advice on how I can get him to pay closer attention or on how to sit still during lessons, I'd very much appreciate any insight. Otherwise, we are keeping up and doing our best to make this work! He is really liking eSchool so far and so am I. Thanks again for checking in. I hope you have a wonderful rest of your week!

VISION AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE
Although the eSchool is only in its "infancy" as a learning community, teachers and administrators are already discussing hopes for the future. The eSchool team and District administrators have discussed the fact that at the end of SY20-21, there will be a great deal of enthusiasm about continuing the school. School and District administrators predict that the school will be "right-sized" (estimates at about 300-500 students). This prediction assumes that students who are currently enrolled in the eSchool primarily for health reasons will return to their home schools.

The eSchool hopes to develop a vision for its students and teachers that includes a rigorous curriculum with project-based learning, community involvement, and place-based education--focused on the development of

Portrait of a Graduate characteristics for all students. The evolving dream is that someday the eSchool will transition from being an online school for virtual learning to a K-12 innovation school that happens to be online.

To explore, define, and develop that goal, the school hopes this year to:
- Stand up an internal visioning leadership team of eSchool teachers, students, parents, and administrators whose purpose is to develop a long-term vision, goals, and expectations for the school.
- Create an oversight team of district and school administrators, Long Range Planning members, and educators whose purpose is to explore future possibilities for a "home" for the eSchool where teachers can collaborate, students can work from both home and on site in collaborative groups, and virtual K-12 teaching and learning can occur.

IMAGES