



3/15/2020

Dear Discovery Parents and Guardians,

As an Administrator that brought back two schools after Katrina, I want to share some of what I learned during that time. First let me bring a smile to your face, I reopened my New Orleans mid-city school on the Cathloic school campus across from Maine (in our own hood). A bigger smile now because Ms. Schott and Ms. McCrary were on that team. So rest assured you have a "disaster-ready" team here taking care of you and your children. Much of what I am saying was published in a book for which I was a contributing author.

The definition of a community is a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals. Our common interests are our Swamp Owls, our HEART tenets, our desire for them to learn, and our hope for well balanced kids with healthy lookouts.

Our post-Katrina team did a lot of research on trauma and how it impacts children's brains and learning. We actually developed an award winning Healing Team. From our research we know that trauma can "freeze" the brain neurologically - certainly making learning difficult if not impossible. We felt we had to get those neural synapses flowing again. How were we to do that?

We return to a sense of normalcy with daily routines, laughter, challenging mental activities, exercise, and mindfulness. Music helps feed the soul. Think of blues and gospel music about overcoming difficulties. Our young students just learned, "We Shall Overcome" - very appropriate for these times. Visual arts allow for nonverbal expression of thoughts and fears. Our schedules and activities will reflect this philosophy. It is important to remember in a natural disaster community, that staying open and healthy requires ongoing cycles of teaching, learning, healing, renewing, and celebrating as ever revolving cycles. Actually very similar to non disaster times, but it takes more direct effort, thought and planning to attend to these cycles when we are suddenly transformed to an online teaching and learning platform new to you and to our teachers.

At this time, I fully anticipate that this closure may last more than 4 weeks. We all need to be flexible. We will adjust our materials as we see what is working and what is not working as well. I ask/beg that you be patient with our teachers. They are caring for themselves, their families, and now suddenly working from home. Give us gentle feedback when needed. I will also ask them to be patient with you. Let's practice patience and care for each other.

The only accountability that I am concerned about now is keeping your children engaged and feeling healthy and connected to their school community. My last concern right now is annual testing accountability. I will work on that at the local and state level while we launch a program that includes academic and mental health daily challenges and routines.

I want to share my post-Katrina welcome back address with you although it is amended for Discovery Schools. There are a few things I would like to emphasize. If you have a concern, hear a rumor, please come straight to the administration and let us clear it up for you. Passing misinformation around will not help anyone in our community. Next, flexibility - is required from everyone right now - parents, students, and faculty. Due to changing conditions in the metropolitan city what is certain one moment may change the next. Rest assured that every decision made for KDHS by this administration is made in the interest of educating our students and helping the larger community return to some sense of normalcy.

Passion, commitment, vision, team attitude, organization, volunteers, laborers, flexibility, spirituality, faith, a sense of humor, healing professionals, and a community that has the desire to reunite and heal are the ingredients essential to a recipe for survival. As Swamp Owls, we have that! Let's succeed at this together; one day at a time.

In my closing speech to the school in May, 2006 (Post-Katrina), I said the following:

"Whew! We made it - we finally got here - to the last day of school in this most unusual of years. As far as I can recall, we have opened 2 schools, closed both, moved 1, reopened 2 schools, and now are moving 2 schools all within a 9 month period. It makes me tired just saying it. We have run the gamut of emotions - exuberance, tranquility, worry, grief, anxiety, concern, peace, excitement, thankfulness, sorrow, happiness, worry again, and celebration. I hope today we can share some moments of joy. Joyful that we have reached the end of a year in which we have learned about what we truly value in life. Joyful in the unity of our community - its strength and power that drove us collectively to accomplish great things this school year. Joyful in our celebration of our students who are so special to all of us. Joyful that our city is rebuilding and looking better with each passing day. Joyful to be home again - in our church - under our green dome."

I am fully confident that all 4 Discovery schools will experience this same joy on the day we reunite under all the roofs that we have.

#OwlUp #SwampOwlPride #HEART

With An Eternally Optimistic HEART,
Dr. Glaser