



## Quote of the Week

“Don’t lose hope. When the sun goes down the stars come out.”  
- Unknown

**April 20, 2020**

### **QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

***Below is what I shared with parents in this week’s newsletter- but I also think it is relevant to our work together... despite the challenges, our school community grows every day through this crisis through closer collaboration and through your creative, “outside of the box” thinking about how to deepen our connections with students. Thank you for your skill, dedication and tireless work.***

As we wait to hear determinations about when we will resume our normal routines, and are considering the possible long-term implications of this public health crisis, it is easy to lapse into a place of hopelessness. We long for what we use to complain about – the early morning wake-ups, struggling to usher our children out the door at an unthinkable hour, juggling their many endless enrichment activities. In this moment, when the end of this current stalemate and interruption of our lives is unclear, I find myself naturally drawn to find the silver lining or the potential opportunities that we will miss if we are not paying attention.

In the Mann Household, we find ourselves gathering more frequently for family dinners, discussing the unique issues of the day, reaching out to friends and families who we never seem to have time to typically call because of the endless demands of our

days. While this current crisis has most certainly put undo strain on families' financial circumstances, threatened the health and well being of our loved ones and added stressors where they did not exist before, it has also brought us together, literally, in a time when social distancing also means closer family connections.

Today as I braved BJ's Wholesale Club to stock up on cleaning supplies and non-perishables, I thought back to my parents, who both lived through the Depression, and turned my childhood basement to a pantry for emergency supplies. Like their lives, ours will be altered forever by the experience of this historical crisis. And yet my parents, like so many of their generation, raised their children to appreciate what others take for granted, and to value simple routines like family dinner. Looking back on it now, this was most certainly an unforeseen silver lining from a time period of much suffering.

Each household and community is most certainly undergoing challenges that they have never faced before- challenges that can certainly trigger a sense of hopelessness without an end in sight. But as the light of hope dims, there are other shining opportunities like the connections with our families, and the renewed sense of gratitude for basic needs being met.

As in your household, the Day Middle School Community continues to face many challenges of learning new technology, rethinking how we teach, and most importantly finding a way to connect in a learning system that has the word "distance" in its name. Our faculty have logged many hours and confronted limitless stress as they work tirelessly to meet the needs of their students while balancing those of their own families. And yet within our school community there is also the glimmer of newfound sources of hope such as our renewed sense of commitment, collegiality and collaboration. In the past month, as we looked to identify the essential understandings for every content area and grade, we have strengthen our collaboration and honed our skills to focus on what is most important – the connections with our students and the understandings essential to their continued development.

So no matter what news this week brings about our return to school and our routines, what is certain is that we have all been changed by our experiences, and have new reason for hope and opportunity in the days, weeks and months ahead.

## **TEAM CONFIGURATION UPDATE**

I would like to thank you for your patience. The closure of school and the uncertainty around when we are returning has led me to rethink our approach to team configurations for the 2020-2021 school year. I am landing on a process that involves as little change as possible given the uncertainty of the times we are living in. With that said, we do have to make some changes given the enrollment variations.

I have just a few more individual conversations to have with team teachers this week and then we will shift to work to finalize special educator placement on teams. Also, we hope to finalize room assignment as well. Again, because I do not know for certain when I can get teachers back into the building, I am attempting to make only the room changes that absolutely need to take place.

I expect that we will be able to reveal the final team placements by Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>.

## **MULTI TEAM MEETINGS**

Just as a reminder, we have a meeting scheduled with arts rotation/exploratory/PE/Wellness teachers on Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. (World Language teachers who offer exploratory classes do not need to attend.)

Follow the Zoom link below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99753664548?pwd=RFdRdGhVWllzeFBBU3VnR1ZPdWZtdz09>

Meeting ID: 997 5366 4548

Password: 6hXSL3

## **TEACHING THROUGH A PANDEMIC: A MINDSET FOR THE MOMENT by Stephen Merrill:**

I am sharing with you once of the best articles I have seen about how to approach this unique moment in our careers as educators and citizens in a community. It captures the wisdom of educators in countries that experienced this public health crisis before us.

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/teaching-through-pandemic-mindset-moment>

## SCHEDULING COMMITTEE

**CHANGE TO OUR SCHEDULING COMMITTEE MEETING:** Due to the Patriot's Day Holiday, our first Scheduling Committee meeting will convene on **Monday April 27, 2020. (Not April 20<sup>th</sup>).** **I also need to move the time to 8:00 a.m. to accommodate other meetings that need to take place on Monday. My appologies for so many changes!!**

We will still use the link below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/502494279?pwd=ckorVWZEZHBhTFVHekV5UoFZTHl5QTo9>

## PAC MEETING

Our Principal Advisory Council has agreed to meet every other Monday. We will use the same meeting invite. The next meeting is Monday, April 27, 2020 . . **I need to move the meeting time to 2:00 pm. (instead of 2:45 p.m.)**

Below is the link to the Zoom Meeting:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/573834890?pwd=Sm5RczFHhE52RXVybndZbzFNeHRZZz09>

Meeting ID: 573 834 890

Password: 030006

**Below is the link to the ongoing PAC Meeting Notes and Running Agenda:**

**[PACE Meeting Notes and Agenda](#)**

## FACULTY MEETING

In our new distance learning setting, I will replace whole faculty meetings with the grade level/multi-team format. Our next series of grade level meetings will be tentatively scheduled for Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup> . I will send out the links in the next faculty update. In the interim, please save the date and time.

If the decision is made to return to school on May 4<sup>th</sup>, then we will instead hold these meetings on Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> in lieu of the PAC Meeting.

## **UPDATES TO THE MASTER SCHEDULE**

As you know, we added live sessions to our master schedule in order to accommodate the service delivery needs of students on IEPs as well as opportunities for live sessions in exploratory classes and library. See the schedule below (New Additions are in red):

[Updated Day Distance Learning Master Schedule 4-20-20](#)

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL MATTERS BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP**

I would like any interested Day Faculty Members to join parent members of our community for a discussion of *Middle School Matters* by Phyllis Fagell. Phyllis is a former Newton resident and graduate of Day Middle School. She is currently a clinician in a DC area middle school and a contributing columnist to the *Washington Post*. Her book is a realistic look at the middle school experience from the parent, student and teacher lens.

*Middle School Matters* is available on *Audible*. Please consider joining us even if you have not read the book. Our first meeting is **Monday, April 27, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.** See the Zoom Link below as well as a link to the parent and faculty discussion questions. On Monday we will be discussing the first 5 chapters. I hope you can join us.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/378647716?pwd=eTlnZW13T1dFVj3VuQoN3K29IWkFodz09>

Meeting ID: 378 647 716 Password: 9NzHgh

## **[Middle School Matters Parent and Educator Discussion Guide](#)**

## **STUDENT SCHEDULE PLANNER**

Just as a reminder, if you have a student struggling with executive functioning issues, please suggest that they use the planning templates below created by our guidance department. Also, guidance counselors are available to offer support to students in organizing time and schedules:

[Grade 8 Schedule Planner Template](#)

[Grade 7 Schedule Planner Template](#)

[Grade 6 Schedule Planner Template](#)

## **PRINCIPAL OFFICE HOURS (see Q&A document below)**

Thank you to the Day Faculty who sat in our Friday's Principal Office Hours with parents. It is a weekly opportunity for Day families to offer feedback in a discussion forum. If you have interest in attending, the schedule for Office Hours this week is below:

### **Friday, April 24, 2020:**

6<sup>th</sup> grade Parents: 12:30 – 1:00 p.m.

7<sup>th</sup> grade Parents: 1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

8<sup>th</sup> grade Parents: 1:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99352951996?pwd=b3dFdEpOV3VJWVIwbXNWK24raE4yQT09>

Meeting ID: 993 5295 1996

Password: 7MetNV

Also, I have been maintaining a Q&A Parking Lot for Family Questions in which I invite parents to ask questions and I also capture questions from the Principal Office Hours. See the link below:

[Parking Lot for Family Questions](#)

## **PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED INFORMATION**

### **PICTURES AND VIDEOS FOR MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Deb Nicolazzo is launching our morning announcements tomorrow morning. We will post them on our website, and I will share them in an email to parents and students. The predictable routine of having our students begin their day with the morning announcements should be a source of comfort to our students and also help them begin the routines of their day.

In order to support Deb, I ask that you continue to send her pictures or videos of you and colleagues as you meet on Zoom or perhaps you in your home setting engaged in your favorite distance learning activity. If you remember, take a screen shot of your GLD or team as you gather for meetings this week and send it to both me and Deb. We will post them on the morning announcements and on Twitter. Feel free to be creative and have a little fun – maybe you take a video of your team singing in Zoom or holding

us signs of well wishes for your students. PLEASE SEND THEM BOTH TO ME AND DEB.

### **EXAMPLES OF DISTANCE LEARNING**

Please continue to send me examples of you and your teams engaged in cool distance learning activities. The district is looking to put them on their website and Twitter page. I am proud of the work that you all are doing to engage students in learning in these challenging times, and I want to make sure the everyone in the community is aware of your efforts.

### **LIVE SESSIONS**

Beginning this week, Deb, Michael and I will be dropping into live sessions to support your efforts in working with students as they become familiar with the norms and expectations.

### **GLD AND TEAM MEETINGS**

Thank you for your efforts to be collaborative and inclusive in your GLD and Team Planning. As you do so, please make sure of the following:

GLD: Please invite the Building Admin overseeing your GLD, Curriculum Coordinator, grade level special educator assigned to your GLD, literacy and math interventionists.

Team Meeting: Please invite the Building Admin working with your grade, guidance counselors and special educators.

### **PARENT COMMUNICATION**

As promised, I am using the “New Day Distance Learning” Google Folder called communication with families to upload recent home/school communication.

[Communication to Families Folder](#)

### **UPDATE ON TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS**

NPS has negotiated an adjustment to our teacher evaluation process with the NTA in light of the school closure. Below are the implications of that agreement on our practice:

1. Educators with Professional Status on a 2-year Self-Directed Plan will NOT receive an evaluation this year regardless of whether school resumes or not (pending DESE sign off). Next year will be a "do-over" - those on Cycle Year 2 will be on Cycle Year 2 again and the same for those Cycle Year 1 with the following exceptions

a. Those who received a March indicating a possible overall rating of Needs Improvement letter WILL be evaluated.

b. Those on a Directed Growth Plan or Improvement Plan WILL be evaluated.

2. Non-Professional Status educators WILL be evaluated. If school does not resume, they will be evaluated based on performance through March 12, 2020. (If school resumes, educators cannot be evaluated for quality of performance during closure).

- If school resumes, admin will do a 3<sup>rd</sup> unannounced observation by the end of May. The 4<sup>th</sup> unannounced observation will be waived.
- If school does not resume, both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> unannounced observations will be waived.
- A formal conference and the presentation of the Summative Evaluation will take place by the first Friday in June whether we return to school or not.

Please email me with any questions about these modifications.

## **BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP**

In order to maintain connectedness among our parent and faculty communities, we will be launching a book discussion group on the book, ***Middle School Matters: The 10 Key Skills Kids Need to Thrive in Middle School and Beyond—and How Parents Can Help by Phyllis Fagell***. Phyllis, as I have mentioned before, is a Day graduate and a practicing school-based clinician in the Maryland area as well as a writer for the *Washington Post*.

We know middle school can be a challenging time for students and families. Ms. Fagell's insight and expertise, coupled with her engaging delivery, will provide you with helpful information to support your student (and your family!)

The first meeting of the book discussion group will be Monday, April 20, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. **(Note new time)** We will plan on discussing Chapters 1-5, "Values and Integrity". Day Parents and Faculty are welcome to join. Follow the link below: **(Notice the new link for the Book Group)**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/378647716?pwd=eTlncW13T1dFV3VuQoN3K29lWkFodz09>

## **STRUGGLING STUDENTS**

When school is in session, our most vulnerable students are more visible to us than they are now. We often learn about student struggles from their peers, who since the school closure and with social distancing, are less connected with each other. As a result, we need to be even more vigilant about noticing the signs of distress in students and families. Do not hesitate to contact guidance or admin with any concerns. We will begin tracking struggling students in our team meetings through use of the form below. That said please let us know immediately of any concerns of an urgent nature.

### [Monitoring Struggling Students](#)

## **GLD MEETINGS**

GLD Meetings begin this week based upon the schedule below. We are working on a central location to share invites to these virtual meetings. In the interim, please make sure you are inviting our special education, ELL, Admin and interventionist colleagues to all meetings:

|                  | <b><u>Wednesday On-team GLDs</u></b>  |
|------------------|---|
| 6th (9:00-11:30) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Math 9:00-10:00 (Jackie join at 9:00)</li><li>• ELA 10:00-11:00</li><li>• Social Studies 9:00-10:00 (Jackie join at 9:30)</li><li>• Science 10:00-11:00</li></ul> |
| 7th (10:30-1:00) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Math 11:00-12:00</li><li>• ELA 11:00-12:00</li><li>• Social Studies 12:00-1:00</li><li>• Science 12:00-1:00</li></ul>   |
| 8th (12:00-2:30) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Math 12:30-1:30</li><li>• ELA 12:30-1:30</li><li>• Social Studies 1:30-2:30</li><li>• Science 1:30-2:30</li></ul>   |

## **TEAM MEETINGS**

Team meetings are taking place on Thursday this week due to the holiday but will typically be on Friday. Again, until we agree on a central location for sharing meeting invites, please make sure to include guidance counselors, special educators and Admin to your team meetings based upon the schedule below:

## **Friday Team Meetings** (Counselors for first half hour)

- Cobalt 9:00-10:00
- Sky 9:30-10:30
- Indigo 10:00-11:00
- Ocean: 10:30-11:30

- Ruby: 10:30-11:30
- Phoenix: 11:00-12:00
- Fire: 11:30-12:30
- Cardinal: 12:00-1:00

- Mint: 12:00-1:00
- Evergreen: 12:30-1:30
- IV: 1:00-2:00
- Emerald: 1:30-2:30

**\*\*\* Note: For both GLD and Team meetings it is easiest to create one Zoom or Google Meet for the reoccurring meeting so that participants can use the same link weekly for meetings.**

### **PARENT ACCESS TO SCHOOLOGY COURSES**

In this morning's parent coffee, a parent asked how parents can access Schoology. While the best way is always through their child's account, Brenda informed parents that they can email you for the parent access code, so you may be getting a few emails. Here is the information that Brenda sent out earlier in the school year that may help:

Below, you will find how to Team Teachers can obtain parent access codes for Schoology and directions for parents to use when signing up for a Schoology account.

For Team Teachers:

<https://support.schoology.com/hc/en-us/articles/201825083-Where-are-parent-access-codes-> How to get individual parent access codes

For Parents:

[https://support.schoology.com/hc/en-us/articles/201000823-Sign-Up-as-a-Parent -](https://support.schoology.com/hc/en-us/articles/201000823-Sign-Up-as-a-Parent-) How to set up a parent account in Schoology

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY**

Today I met with Team IV student, Alexander Elvin, who is sponsoring an amazing community service project that I hope you will support. Alexander's family works in the medical field, and he is asking that our Day students and faculty write cards and encouraging words to the health care workers and their patients hospitalized with

COVID19 and unable to see family or friends. Here is the information from Alexander that I will also be sharing with Day parents:

Hello students, faculty and parents of our community, my name is Alexander. Our doctors in Cambridge Health Alliance are working hard to get rid of this virus one step at a time, during this hard journey our doctors and the patients in these annex wards would appreciate a card or a craft that could bring them joy, confidence, and hope. We only ask if you would like to send cards to the doctors and to the sick. We remind you that this is not something that you must do but if you could make someone happy or hopeful by sending a card. Would you?

If so, write a card and drop it off at 125 Beaumont Ave Newton, MA. A

Thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of the children on Day.

Be well and take care,

Jackie