NJDOE ELL Roundtable – May 12 and 13, 2020

Questions to Presenters

Franklin Township: Julie Ochoa

- **What did Franklin Township specifically do to address the issue of lack of devices for students?**
  We offered multiple dates for Chromebook distribution at different schools throughout the township. After that, with the help of teachers and principals, we coordinated the identification of students/families who still did not have devices and/or internet. Based on these numbers, we purchased hotspots. The hotspots were phones that were configured as hotspots only since nobody seemed to have available hotspots (demand was high!). Then we delivered the hotspots and/or Chromebooks to students' homes with the help of our transportation company.

- **How can I access the NJPSA Links?**
  - NJPSA links will be embedded in the Franklin Township PPT attached.

- **In addition to devices, how did Franklin Township address issues related to internet access?**

  See my answer above. I know other districts have contracted with service providers to provide internet access throughout the entire district, like New Brunswick.

- **What's the name of the translation program being used when calls/messages go out to the parents?**
  We make phone calls via Blackboard Connect. It allows us to make "groups". Using the information of home language in Genesis, we create language groups for recipients of phone calls in another language. We have internal board approved translators who record the messages for us. Additionally, teachers use apps that have translation features embedded in them like Remind, Class Dojo and Classtag. Talking Points also provides translation of messages. Lastly, we do have a contract with a translating service called Telelanguage, located in Oregon, that allows us to provide interpreting services over the phone in many different languages, on the spot, as a call-in service. Given that we have over 65 languages spoken in our district, this is used often!

Howell Township: Jacqueline Moore

- **How much "pushing" should we be doing regarding calling/emailing parents? I have students who are zooming regularly with classroom teacher or the reading specialist but not with the ESL teacher?**
  In our district, our Leadership Team collectively agreed that all students should have at least one direct phone contact per week per student, from a teacher, coach, counselor, etc. That contact is a supplement to the "remote instruction" in which the child may be engaged, but does serve to keep the child connected, address any technical/logistic issues, and ensure the child's needs are being met. Additional contacts are based on individual needs, including social-emotional, disengagement, illness within the household, ability of parent/family to support student in learning due to employment or other. For example, we have some paraprofessionals working remotely with particular students several times per week to work on very targeted skills, under

the guidance of a teacher. For some, the paraprofessional may be checking in daily to make sure the child is participating in the learning activities. We have had circumstances in which both parents are first responders, and so we have had to individualize our response in situations such as that. For us, the determination of what our parent contact should look like was a collaborative one, based on what we identified as the best way to meet needs and provide support for our particular community, based on our existing relationships and the specific needs within the school community.

- **Do you have any advice or tips on use of audiobooks in a remote environment?**
When we began planning for our transition to the remote environment, we first agreed that our approach would subscribe to the precept that our remote design would not seek to introduce a new methodology or approach, but rather to leverage the remote tools already available to us. We only introduced new tools where they filled an identified gap. With that being said, audio books were already being used within many of our classrooms, in varying degrees based on content area, grade level, and student needs. Since we have a 1:1 digital MacBook environment, students who were not specifically familiar with Audible, were familiar with the accessibility features on the MacBook, as they were using them routinely. In a remote environment, audio books have been used for shared reads (selections), mentor texts, close reading of nonfiction/informational texts related to content, as well as a supplement for independent reading. For example, we have SE and ESL students using the audio book in tandem with the physical book, where it is beneficial for students to have audio support while reading. In some cases, students are reading along silently with the audio book. In other cases, the student is reading along orally. ELA teachers have used excerpts as introductions in Zoom or Screencast lessons, in response to which students participate in an interactive discussion related to the passage on Schoology. Science and social studies teachers have used audio excerpts similarly but tied to their content areas. For example, in social studies, teachers use excerpts to provide a glimpse into a historical event/time period.

- **In addition to devices, how did Howell Township address issues related to internet access?**

We did survey families just prior to our closing, in order to identify internet and device needs in advance. Initially, as part of our remote planning, we had prepared to have mobile hotspots dispatched on district busses, in the event that we identified "dead-zones" that prevented groups of students from engaging.   We also began negotiating with our provider, LightPath, on a plan for them to provide WiFi to all of our students who needed it, prior to Optimum declaring their WiFi as open for all to use. Once our remote plan was in action, a very small number of students across the district had a need to identify an individual hotspot to provide them access. (We have not encountered widespread dead-zones, and so have not mobilized hot spots on busses.) We have our IT team mobilized to replace devices for students, as issues have emerged. For some K-2 students, we did provide devices, if there was not one available for the child in the home.   Students in Grades 3-8 used their district-issued laptops. As we monitored the opening weeks of remote learning, we found that the greatest impact to address the drain on device resources in a household actually had more to do with strategic lesson planning. Our

coaches worked with our teachers to refine virtual lesson plans, so that the actual instruction was a brief mini lesson, followed by learning activities that engaged children in varied experiences. The impact of this was evident in a report of increased engagement of students, reduced frustration, and easing the drain on home internet signals & household devices.   For example, a primary teacher broadcast a Fundations lesson, which was followed by students being asked to find things in their yard or home that began with a particular letter sound, take a picture of them, and submit a digital collage. Our instructional coaches helped teachers a great deal with structuring meaningful learning activities at an appropriate level of rigor, which seemed to alleviate many of the concerns initially expressed. To this end, coaches are sharing their philosophy to guide teachers to approach lesson design in a way that will have the students wanting to come back for more.

- **What's the name of the translation program being used when calls/messages go out to the parents?**
  In Howell, we use School Messenger. The automated voice messaging translates the robo-call based on the language identified in Power School. It does not have an infinite number of languages but is helpful. We also have our ESL team who does a great deal of translation, such as for letters that must be sent home, at meetings/conferences, and such. Additionally, the MacBook devices and IPAD devices our students are issued have a translator tool that is part of the OS. Frequent contact has also allowed our ESL team to ensure that parents and children understand assignments and communications.

Vineland Public Schools: JoAnne Negrin

- **With half instruction days, do all teachers teach in the morning? This would be challenging for high school teachers with office hours.**
  High school teachers have generally accommodated to the hours that work for them and their students. For example, if they find it's easier to get students active at 1pm rather than 10am, they just shift their day forward.

- **What tips do you have to guiding ELLs on how to log-in, internet safety, and other online access procedures?**
  Fortunately, we have been integrating technology for a long time, and so our students were already familiar with much of what they needed to do. For those who taught newcomers, I made sure that they stopped ACCESS testing in the days prior to closure when closure appeared imminent so that they could focus on getting those students up and running. Still, getting students in now who are truly newcomers is a big challenge.

- **What tips and strategies can be shared with multilingual parents to help their children during remote learning?**
  The most important thing that parents can do is to help students strengthen their skills in their first language by reading and having higher level conversations. There are some great ideas for how to do this and links to resources in the presentation.

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Atlantic City: MaryAnn Mena

- **What is your district's grading policy for ELLs? Is it pass/fail or level-based in the student provides an oral response?**

  During remote learning we did P/F for MP3 but for the last (4th MP) we are using the standard grading system. ELL grades are modified based on limited English proficiency. Assessments are adapted and modified according to proficiency level. An ELL grading guidance document exists and has been updated to accommodate grading during remote learning.

- **How is grading applied at the high school to count toward graduation credit?**

  Bilingual and sheltered content courses count toward graduation credit the same way other required courses count toward graduation requirements. Newcomer and ESL 1-4 count as the English and WL requirements, as permitted.
  Curriculum, assignments and assessments are adapted and modified for ELL, using the WIDA ELD and content standards. Grading is modified in the sense of using alternative and parallel paths for students to demonstrate level of mastery of content

- **How do you provide different languages for Robocall?**

  We use Blackboard Connect for the calls/text messages. The primary language spoken at home as entered into the district database file for each student 'triggers' the language for the call and text messages for district communication through Blackboard.

- **How do ESL teachers meet with their students? Do they have separate meetings with students? Do they "pull them out" during the day?**

  Most ESL services are provided through a push-in model. Schools with small ELL populations provide ESL services through a combination of push-in (mainly K-2) and pull-out (mainly 3-8). All schools have some newcomer program services that are pull-out (replacement).

- **Do you have WL teachers collaborate/support ESL teachers that are not bilingual?**

  Yes, WL teachers, bilingual paraprofessionals, and other bilingual staff members such as classroom teachers, guidance counselors, CST staff, district coaches, etc. collaborate and support ESL teachers in communication with students and families as needed. We share language services between buildings as well when necessary.

- **How did you provide the newcomer packets during phase two?**

  I printed them and sent them home from the administration building.

- **Can you provide additional information on online platforms:**

  Loom is a video recording tool that creates videos teachers can share with students and/or post in Google classrooms. Loom is a Chrome extension that you access from your school Google account. Check with your tech coordinator or www.loom.com for more information

  Virtual Classrooms are a shared online space where the learners and the teacher work together simultaneously. The examples that I showed were Virtual Bitmoji Classrooms (lots of information

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available online). The virtual classrooms are created with Google slides. You can get more detailed information at www.bitmoji.com and Bitmoji extension for Chrome.

Resources and Recommendations by LEAs

- I highly recommend all supervisors to join the NJPSA ELL committee. Its a great opportunity for brainstorming with colleagues and crowd sourcing solutions to issues we all face.
- Suggestions regarding transition ELs back to school:
  - Plan like it is first day of school.
  - Teachers meet students at bus, bring them back to ESL class
  - Address social/emotional considerations first
  - Take them to regular ed teaching classes - push in to reacquaint with other students
- Recommendations of September -December afterschool programs in literacy and math to address regression and assist ELL students with academic catch up and accelaeration