THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL TAKE 2

Spring is fast approaching and by far my favorite season of the four. Spring symbolizes a new beginning, an awakening, a fresh start. The flowers are blooming, trees are filling in, sun is a little stronger, and we all gain a bit of a pep in our step. Thus, it is fitting that we begin our in-person learning on the first day of March, almost a year to date from the start of the worldwide pandemic. From reading all the district emails from administrators, teachers, counselors and support staff, it is clear we want our students back in the classroom where they belong. While this is an exciting time, there is no doubt much apprehension and anxiety among staff, students and their families. Our administration has put great thought and care into our reopening taking into consideration all of your concerns. Our schools are second homes to our children, and I know you will be welcoming them with open arms...or elbow bumps. Stay safe BT's and Mentors. You got this, and mother nature has your back.

KEY DATES:
March 1-K-5 Students return to the classroom
March 8-6-12 Students return to the classroom (Plan B)
March 14-Daylight Savings Begins-Spring Forward
March 17-Happy St. Patrick's Day
March 19-BTSP PD-2:00p.m.-Grants for Educators
March 20-First Day of Spring

Upcoming: ***New***April 16th-final PD session for BTSP -Scaffolding in the Classroom with Mr. Valverde at 2:00 p.m.
AND Mentor AND Peer Observations are due by April 30th.
“Continue to be the Light” by Maggie Murphy

2020 Burroughs Wellcome Fund Northwest Region Teacher of the Year

“For there is always light, if only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we’re brave enough to be it.” -Amanda Gorman

The world is abuzz with Amanda Gorman and her inspirational voice. She so beautifully and eloquently creates art with her words. As I listen to her, I am absolutely entranced by her words and wisdom. As she spoke about the light, we each must see and be, I couldn’t help but think about this amazing career to which we have all been called. My great-great-grandfather was the first lighthouse keeper at Cape Hatteras, and the light metaphor is one that resonates with me on a deep, almost inherent level. Something about his experience and that passion for “being the light” has passed down to me, and I hold it so dear.

As teachers, every single day we have the opportunity to be that light. We get to shine our light for students, for parents, for colleagues, and, yes, if we are brave enough, even for our communities. We all know that if there was ever a year that calls for bravery, it is this one, and so I challenge you to be courageous enough to shine your light wherever it needs to be shown.

Teaching in 2020-2021 has been both rewarding and challenging for everyone. I am SO proud of you for the work you have done this year as new teachers. I know it has not been easy, but I do hope that you have seen the joy in your students’ eyes when they see you each day, whether it is on a screen or in real life. You are truly illuminating the darkness.

As teachers, we know it is our job to not only teach the curriculum, but also, to shine a light so bright that our students see us as a beacon of hope in their darkest times. This year, we have seen some of those darker times. However, I still see you shining! I see the light coming from your schools, districts, and regions, and it is a BRIGHT light. I see your home visits and material drop offs, your new socially distanced air hugs, weekly meal deliveries, all the virtual classroom parties, and many other innovative ways you are reaching out with all your light to students and their families.
There have been and will always be days when you feel less than luminous. On those days when you are struggling, reach out. Find the most positive teachers in your school, and let their sunshine light your way! Teaching is not a career that is meant to be experienced in isolation. That is one of the greatest difficulties that virtual teachers are facing. Teachers need support. We need others to lift us up when we are struggling. We need someone to light our path for us so we can go forward just as my great-great-grandfather did for many years in the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. Teaching has never been an easy calling, but it is worth it, and teacher mentors and friends make the career even more amazing.

Know that you have already made a difference. Please continue this important, light-shining work. Please love your students first, and teach them second. Be brave enough to create needed and lasting change. Be brave enough to make an impact and change the world through your work in this amazing career you’ve chosen! We all want what is best for students, please don’t be silent about that!

Brené Brown shares this wisdom with us: “Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of our light.”

Beginning Teachers, be brave and continue to be the light!

Spice up a Lesson with Teacher Time on PBS!

The Public Broadcasting Station (PBS) of North Carolina offers at-home learning resources for students from early learners through grade 12. They provide standards-aligned programming and curriculum-based lessons on their broadcast channels and through online streaming. To explore supplemental resources for educators and students, click here!

While you are on the site, check out a series of short-form STEM activities for early learners presented by North Carolina teachers on Teacher Time. These fun and informative videos premiered in February 2021 and are made possible by the support of Burroughs Wellcome Fund. Teachers of the Year like Maggie Murphy, lead learners through hands-on learning activities, of which 50% will be STEM-related.

Lessons air on Rootle, PBS NC and online.

Registration for the 2021 Virtual North Carolina Beginning Teacher Summit June 16th & 17th begins in April!
1. What drew you to the teaching profession?
What drew me to the teaching profession is my love of working with students. I truly enjoy working with the students and seeing that joy on their face when they learn something new.

2. What is the greatest challenge we face as educators?
The greatest challenge we face as an educator at this time is technology and not being able to have that relationship with your students that you have when you are teaching face to face. Being a Virtual teacher has really been a challenge creating those relationships.

3. What is the best thing about teaching 5th grade?
The best thing about teaching 5th grade is that I will be able to prepare them for the real world. I will be able to prepare them for the next level of their education.

4. If I was to interview a student about Ms. Hamilton, what would she say about you?
If you interviewed a student about me she would say that I am strict, but I am also caring. She would also would also say that I push them to always do their best at all times.

5. How do you plan to welcome your students back when school resumes?
My plans for welcoming my students back to school may not happen until the 2021-22 school year because I only teach Virtual for this school year. However, if I was welcoming the students back I would hope that it would be with a big hug, but with Covid it would be with an elbow bump.

6. What do you love about SWE?
I have been at SWE since 2007, I even completed my student teaching there. Since being there I have worked with some wonderful teachers that I can call Friends. I’m still there because I still care about the people who work there and to me it is home.

7. If you were not a teacher, what would you be?
If I was not a teacher I would be a substitute teacher or reading tutor. These are both jobs I have held in the school system at one point or another in my adult life. It satisfies my desire to work with children and be an example for others.

8. What is your favorite flower?
My favorite flower is the Lily. I love the different colors (pink, orange, yellow, red, etc) that they can be.

9. If you had to recommend a place to take a walk and enjoy the spring weather, where would it be?
If I could recommend a place to walk and enjoy the spring weather would be to park at the library on South Main Street and walk through downtown Lexington. I love doing this because I can window shop and enjoy the downtown sites. I walk all the way to Lexington Middle school and go back down through main street to the library. This is a total of four miles or more, but I also enjoy going to Grimes Park which has an awesome walking trail. Enjoy either one!!

10. What about March is a highlight for you?
March is a long month and the highlight of the month most definitely will be the change of time. Longer days and hopefully warmer days.

11. What advice do you have for our BT 1’s?
Advice to the BT-1 would be to stay focused and keep the mindset that you are there for the students not the paycheck, learn all you can about teaching, accept and receive all advice that is given. Then you pray, and attend important PD’s to help you grow in teaching. Finally continue to pray, You got this, Best Wishes to each and everyone of you.
Happy Birthday to our March babies...

Matthew Hogrefe from SWE who will celebrate on 3/18 and Gabrielle Martin from Charles England who will celebrate her birthday on 3/28.

Also, a big Congratulations to Mr. Hogrefe for welcoming baby Matthew into the world on January 30th.

On behalf of the BTSP staff, happy birthday to both of you and happy new baby to the Hogrefe family of Melanie and Matthew.

The official start of spring is here in just a few weeks, so why not shake up the dinner routine with easy weeknight spring recipes from Food Network...Just click on the link below to get inspired and get cooking.

Important Reminders and News

*** A new PD session with Mr. Valverde has been added: Scaffolding in the Classroom-April 16th at 2:00 p.m.-THIS IS OUR LAST BTSP PD SESSION.

BT 1's need 4 session summaries

BT 2's need 3 session summaries

BT 3's need 2 session summaries

ALSO, a Peer AND Mentor observation is due to Carolyn Johnson by April 30th. Ms. Piggott sent out the form you can use.

Finally, please consider attending the virtual BT Summit June 16th and 17th. For more details please access this link...Registration begins in April.