

December 18, 2020

## #ReopenStrong Equity Spotlight: Wheatley Education Campus

### Spotlights

*Written by Busra Aydin, Pre-K Teacher*



### **What expectations or policies have you advocated for/set for your students and school to keep equity front and center during virtual learning?**

Equity is the distribution of resources based on need. I administered a needs assessment and collected feedback from families to identify their needs. Upon identifying the unique needs of every family, I created solutions for the problems I could solve independently and collaborated with my colleagues to find solutions for other barriers. I was able to serve as a liaison to my families that needed additional supports and services.

Relationship building is always a priority at Wheatley Education Campus. Communication is the key to an inclusive community. I learned the languages spoken at home upon administering the home language survey. We made sure to use the language hotline and

have translators available to communicate with families in their primary language.

Our Families Virtual Board was a space with pictures of all my families so that everyone was represented in our learning community.

### **What keeps you going during these difficult times?**

I am invested in building home-to-school connections, so receiving pictures of my students engaging in the activities I have modeled with my son gives me great satisfaction. Last week, our homework was making pancakes so we could learn how to measure. We all ate pancakes during our morning meeting. I believe that assignments like this allow families to see an alternative way of learning different from traditional learning activities. Parents and caregivers feel empowered and become risk-takers because they do not have to be teachers by trade to engage in our activities.

Cultural awareness and sensitivity during all my virtual engagements with my families keep me going during these difficult times. I operate from a place of understanding and acceptance and thank my parents and caregivers for welcoming me into their homes and joining me in my home. I listen to feedback from my families regarding the distance learning process and making adaptations as we go along to continuously improve the experience for all participants.

### **What best practices have you leveraged in your role to ensure equity for your students in the virtual space?**

As a PK3 teacher, I recognize the importance of kindergarten readiness and know why it is important for us to work towards mastery in meeting developmentally appropriate milestones. Parents are experts of their children, and this is a partnership, so I intentionally recognize my parents and their dedication.

Virtual home visits, parent-teacher conferences, standing meetings, and office hours are available to all families in the virtual space. If families have questions, they rely on me for answers. If there is ever a moment that I am in doubt, I am able to connect with my principal in a timely manner to provide the most accurate updates to my families. Virtual learning information seems to be changing by the minute. I ensure that every family has access to the same information at the same time.

#### How have you continued to create an inclusive and educational culture in the virtual space?

I think about the two things that I value the most: a sense of belonging and having a voice. I have intentionally created an inclusive and educational culture in the virtual space where every child and caregiver are welcome and have a voice.

I have a partnership with my paraprofessional. It is important for her to feel valued and supported during this process so that we can maximize our productivity for the children and families we serve.

Teaching and learning is our shared responsibility that we show up as our best selves each day and for us to do this we reflect and check in daily about our daily lessons, areas of success, and growth. We scaffold our lessons based on the diverse needs that are represented in our classroom and provide opportunities for success to every scholar just as we would in our classroom.

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