

November 27, 2020

#ReopenStrong Spotlight: Stanton Elementary

Spotlights

Written by Principal A. Harold McCray (<http://stantones.org/principals-corner/>).

At Stanton Elementary School (<https://profiles.dcps.dc.gov/stanton>), our work and decision making is grounded in our R.O.A.R Matrix. We all have a collective effort to respect each other, while demonstrating outstanding actions, holding ourselves and others accountable through our responsible citizenship methods. Providing a safe and inclusive learning environment is a top priority whether in person or virtual. Each morning our students and staff are greeted with a morning video from administration followed by our daily morning meetings. In this space students and staff are able to be vulnerable while channeling their emotions and showing empathy for all.

Stanton takes pride in making sure our scholars, staff, and parents feel safe in order to return to our building. In-person learning, and our CARE classes are a priority and as a school community we have to take a collaborative approach in order to elevate and include all voices. With planning for Term 3, we have created our Reopen Community Corps Team that includes representation from each area of our building. Our parents, ECE and primary staff, intermediate, administration, community partners, and operation team members all gather to ensure we develop the most cohesive reopen strong plan. This team will bring different perspectives and allow for intentional dialogue to make sure we make the best decisions that are not only safe, but conducive for quality instruction and meeting their social and emotional needs.



Principal McCray (left) and Assistant Principal Haye (right) with a 4th Grade student at Stanton.



Culture Support Coordinator Nia Mitchell with students.



The Stanton Elementary Custodial Team (from left to right): John Agnew, Anthony Sherman, DSL, Roberta Kleekpo, Foreman Otis Davis, and Alma McNair.

Throughout the virtual learning experience, our staff members have become comfortable with stepping out of their comfort zones and utilizing new platforms to engage our scholars. There were plenty of valuable lessons learned during this experience. As we matriculated through Term One, we had to highlight the work around student-teacher relationships. These things were enhanced by adding simplistic practices such as individual student greetings by name and with a positive affirmation.

We also developed a laser-like focus on being authentic in our interactions with scholars and their families. The value of student-to-student interactions has made the virtual learning experience more enjoyable. Teachers have successfully contrived many of the small-group student learning structures that support collaboration and higher-level learning by using breakout rooms, meeting with community partners for tutoring, or getting a double dose of interventions.

As we have recently opened three CARE classes for Term 2, our students, staff, and community partner (AlphaBest) maintain a safe and supportive learning environment. The same expectations for virtual learning still apply in person, except there is real-time support and feedback to help students navigate and be successful.

This year we have adopted the school theme "Rise Above the Circumstances."

Everything we do this school year has been centered around improving academic scholar achievement and focusing on the social and emotional growth of our students and ourselves. The journey we embarked on this year had some sharp curves, steep hills, and a few narrow paths, but our staff continues to move in the right direction. With virtual learning and so many changes throughout the year, we are confident that everyone wants what is best for our students and community. We will remain collaborative, ensure there is constant communication around what is happening, and try our best to be consistent in our practice. That is how we move ahead and Reopen Strong!



Stanton Elementary students in a CARE Classroom learn virtually with their teachers.

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