

➤ Story #1 (Elementary):

This year has been like being dragged down a bed of nails. We were slammed with 3 days of intense but not always useful PL. We weren't even given log in information for several of the programs until after school started. There has been no additional plan time offered to us throughout the day for the additional work needed to prepare for online and in person learning simultaneously. Now, on day 3 we have a team member absent for 10 days. That means we are out of an assistant for the time being and all of the other assistant's schedules in the building have been disrupted to help cover these duties. I can't imagine what it will be like when additional staff are asked to stay home/become sick. The students are doing the best they can, and I don't fault them for any of our issues. The problems stem from the district asking us to do two jobs with half of the resources that we need and no time to do so. I spent over 10 hours this weekend planning and recording lessons while my family begged me to "get off my technology and have fun with them". I'm burnt out, frustrated and feeling very disrespected.

➤ Story #2 (Secondary):

Day three with students and I am quarantined with some symptoms. Test results in two days. I played it by the book since March—not a problem. Back to work: symptoms in just over a week. Meanwhile, half of my 180+ students I have only taught via Zoom. I am praying I will be able to continue to teach all of them by Zoom, since for some of them the ability to receive dual credit is on the line, and for all of them a qualified teacher will not be available to sub. Was I sent back in-person just to become ill so that there would be NO ONE qualified to teach my students at all? Not sure what sense all of this makes, and the economy won't benefit from a year where all the teachers in the state were sent into an unsafe environment like guinea pigs. Is anyone willing to stand up for us? We actually do matter, and we actually do have a significant impact on the overall opportunities and quality of life for upcoming generations. I'm not sure why it isn't plainly clear that failing to invest in our safety is like sending soldiers to war without armor or ammunition.

➤ Story 3 (Elementary):

If we are being honest, I can't keep this up. This morning, before school, I felt like I was so overwhelmed by the day ahead that I couldn't breathe. I teach kindergarten and after next Monday I will have nineteen kids in-person and several remote students as well. My partner and I are both teaching remote and in-person because we are a smaller school and there are too many kinders to put in one classroom. We each have nineteen in-person kids. Starting kindergarten is a challenge in itself but this is unbearable. I don't even know where to start. I arrived home at 6:15. I have been at school since 7:15 this morning. My first grader, who attends my school, has been forced to be at school, in a mask, for ten plus hours while I attempt to keep my head above water for tomorrow. She will be awake for two hours at home.

In my class of 19, I have two students sitting at a table. They are not directly across from each other and I have positioned them so they are as far apart as possible. However, they are five. They don't stay in this small space. They spread out and move all over the place because it is nearly impossible to stay in one place. I spend all day trying to spread them out and reminding them how to wear their masks properly. This is an all day struggle. They are not refusing, they are children. Just the physical logistics of all of the new requirements are impossible with this many children who are simply trying to be at school. We aren't even able to read a book to them in-person because there are so many of them and they are so scattered around the room, they can't see. We have had to stream every book we have read. The cleaning requirements are impossible to keep up with. I can't engage nineteen children (who have no independence at school because they have only been there for three days) and clean and disinfect at the same time. Cleaning up breakfast and starting the day is a nightmare! While all of this is happening, I am expected to be sure I am engaging with my remote learners too.

My grade level partner and I are spending ALL of our time trying to figure out what to put on the LMS and how to put it there. After leaving just before 6:00, I am only prepared for tomorrow and I am not confident that the content will be good either in person or remotely. I can't sustain this at this pace with these expectations.