

➤ Story #1 (Secondary):

I have never cried so much at my job. Not even the first year. I've never seen so many teachers cry at our jobs. On a daily basis. It has never been this bad. Never. Something has to give and soon. The workload of three different groups of kids to keep track of, on top of trying to teach both in-person and virtually, on top of the stress of the pandemic, is crippling. We are all drowning, and instead of bringing a raft of a full day of work time (or actually recognizing that two adults and twelve kids already tested positive in our building and the community infection rate is already 14 times higher than it was when we closed last March) the district gives us two hours of extra prep time. Of course, two hours is better than nothing, but all of us have been working fourteen to sixteen hours a day for three weeks straight now. I have never wished I wasn't a teacher. Until this year.

➤ Story #2 (Elementary):

On the first day of school I had students switching between in person and virtual, and I had nothing ready for them when they switched because I wasn't aware of it. Now I am up to 16 in person kids while my teammates have 10 – I don't know why it isn't more balanced.

Also, I am now doing online lesson for only 3 students, but I am putting a lot of time creating virtual lessons for them when most of the time the kids aren't even doing them. I'm teaching the same skills to both in person and virtual, but it takes a lot longer to get resources ready for the virtual kids because everything I find has to be uploaded. To top it off, the iPads aren't letting kids watch the YouTube videos I selected (which are needed to reinforce skills). I am doing the amount of work of two teachers, and I am one person with hardly any training on technology.

➤ Story #3 (Secondary):

I'll start by saying that I'm used to working overtime. I've never been the type to "clock in and clock out" during contract hours. I stop working when the work is done, not when the clock says it's time. So it's not just the fact that I'm working extra hours. It's the fact that I'm at school 11 hours a day (at least), and still I'm not getting everything done.

I also coach a fall sport. I wasn't sure I even agreed that sports should start, but I knew if I didn't coach, it would only hurt the players. So I'm coaching for the same reason we do a lot of things- for the kids. We've been doing our best to follow protocol, but how do you keep teenagers socially distant while playing a sport in a gym? The IHSAA "Return to Play" plan states that equipment should be sanitized regularly. We were promised equipment sanitizer back in early July before summer conditioning started, and we have yet to receive it. We've played two home games with the visiting team using our equipment and nothing to sanitize with. I guess we just hope that other players and coaches are being honest about not having symptoms and are practicing good hygiene?

The added hours of coaching are a lot under normal circumstances. Now, it's impossible. A coworker in my department has been sharing lesson materials with me and I owe her my life. If she wasn't helping me out, I would be getting even less sleep than the 4 hours my Fitbit tells me I'm logging. Then I still have two more preps to plan for, but with teaching hybrid and virtual students every class period, it feels like having six preps that I'm planning day to day. I haven't been able to sit down and grade any assignments that have been turned in, let alone provide feedback to students. There is no way to catch up and it's only been 9 days. From a self-proclaimed workaholic- this is too much.