

**AE/MS from page 28**

munication, lesson plans, locker clean-outs, and a whole host of other things we had to figure out in a very short period of time. Parents would be arriving as early as noon on Tuesday to drive through and pick up needed items for students.

By the time we left on Tuesday, we were feeling good about our efforts. Everything was well organized and little had been missed. It gave us all a feeling of pride and accomplishment that we had achieved so much in such a short period of time. Wednesday morning, we were all ready to receive our students' questions and assignments in our new virtual school.

I think with all the adrenaline flowing through us, my fellow teachers and I didn't have time to think about what was really going on in the rest of the country. Of course we knew; it just hadn't sunk in. This was just a temporary situation, and we had one focus: to do what was best for our students.

As our three-week closure progressed, it had become apparent that this would be a daunting task. Meeting the varying needs of students face-to-face was a part of teaching that I had become accustomed to doing each and every day, but to do it without actually being in the same space was something I (or my colleagues) had never had to attempt with everyone ... all at once ... for weeks. Google Meets with students and staff have helped to make connections and made me smile, but my heart

was often heavy knowing that three weeks would become seven.

On April 16, thirty-two days after the original temporary school closure announcement, the moment we all knew deep down inside was going to happen had finally arrived. Governor Sununu announced that schools would not reopen for this academic year.

It was a hard reality to accept, as the one thing that I had been looking forward to through this entire experience was the day I would be able to teach my students in person back in our classroom. For me, having two-thirds of my students in the eighth grade, it was the reality that I would never have them together in my classroom again.

I also felt sympathy for the class of 2020, as they all had no choice but to accept the fact that their time had ended at AE/MS without the usual end-of-year activities. I reflected on the many staff members who are retiring at the end of this year as well. This is certainly not how any of them intended to wrap up their careers in education.

As I move forward with my online lesson plans, I will try to look at the positives with this unexpected twist in the year. I am able to give each individual student more specialized feedback on their work. I am discovering new resources I can use in my classroom when we finally get to return. And the bond being formed with my fellow teachers as we move through this process together will never go away. 

**Poem By AE/MS Student Strikes a Nerve During COVID-19 Crisis**

*The following poem was written by Elizabeth Henderson, AE/MS Class of 2020. While it was written before COVID-19 began affecting life around us, her teacher, Kasey Schoch, realized that it was very relevant and submitted it to go along with other reflections about life and remote learning during these trying times.*

*It is even more poignant in light of the fact that AE/MS eighth graders like Elizabeth will not get to participate in final school gatherings, parties, or graduation.*

*The poem:*

Time is something we should never take for granted.  
 We never realize it but time is moving fast and the years are piling onto us.  
 We don't think about these things, but what if we did?  
 It's crazy isn't it? To think in five to seven years you and your friends will be having their own lives.  
 As time moves on, without even realizing it, we will slowly start to separate from each other.  
 We don't think about these "last" moments until they already happen.  
 Like someday we will have our last sleepover together,  
 Our last hangout together,  
 Our last party together,  
 Our last late night rant together,  
 Our last call together,  
 Our last birthday together,  
 Our last argument together,  
 Our last laugh together,  
 Our last cry together,  
 Our last happy moments,  
 Until finally we have our last conversation.  
 All of these "last" moments are ones that once they are over, you may never be able to gain them back again.  
 We are young and naive and we don't want to believe that at the end of the day everything will come to an end and we will all have these "last" moments.  
 But these memories will never be forgotten.  
 One day, your kids will find a picture of us and they will ask who we are.  
 Some may laugh, some may cry, but most will smile as the memories come flooding back to you.  
 You will remember your first sleepover together.  
 Your first hangout together,  
 Your first party together,  
 Your first late night rant together,  
 Your first call together,  
 Your first birthday together,  
 Your first argument together,  
 Your first laugh together,  
 Your first cry together,  
 Your first happy moments,  
 Until you finally recall your first conversation.  
 The conversation that started memories.  
 The conversation that pushed the limits of friendship.  
 The conversation that brought you out of your comfort zone.  
 The conversation that brought times of joy, sadness, and anger.  
 The conversation that started a pathway for a whole life of drama and chaos but also a life of fun and events that will never be forgotten.  
 Life changes and life evolves.  
 But you have to cherish the time you have now and the people you have now so that you have something to look back on in the future. 



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