



College of

Education

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

## Leading Tips

*"Little moments, big impact."*

WSU College of Education Educational Leadership Program is committed to quality leadership during this time of uncertainty and new circumstances. "Leading Tips" is a quick resource for educational leaders.

### "Leading Through Crisis: Silver Linings" by Glenys Hill

Prime Minister Winston Churchill said, "Never let a good crisis go to waste." If that's the case, the COVID 19 crisis provides a unique "opportunity" to reimagine brick and mortar schools and to reconsider the way we deliver instruction. Many school leaders are using this opportunity to create nimble teams of professionals who are effectively rethinking educational systems and imagining new ways to differentiate and enhance learning for all students. They are disrupting and disbanding archaic practices and engaging teachers and other service providers in reframing structures and strategies to increase student engagement. There is much at stake; the crisis must not be wasted!

#### *First things first*

Great leaders understand timing and culture. Before they go charging into change-mode, they will take time to celebrate the professional heroes who have stepped up, who have gone the distance, and who have enhanced the lives and the learning experiences of students. They have already accomplished much. However, the path forward will be arduous and uncertain. Now is the time to celebrate small victories and the heroes who made them happen, and in so doing, we strengthen a culture of caring and of students-first.

This, then, is a great time to capture photos (as many have done) of our folks preparing meals for students, loading supplies into school buses, delivering learning packets, and accepting the challenge of online learning. Many professionals have stepped up and gone over and above to serve our students and families. Let's flood our websites, Facebook pages, and Instagram and Twitter accounts with our heroes. They deserve to be recognized, and when we do, we solidify the values that make us great.

#### *Expanding our Toolkit*

Recently, a group of education and civil rights organizations issued a statement advocating for professional development for teachers; professional development designed to provide the tools teachers need to meet the needs of at-risk students whom the Covid-push to online learning place further at risk. The statement specifically focused on lesson design and instructional strategies that increase student engagement in an online environment.

Prior to Covid 19, teachers were challenged to adapt lessons and teaching strategies to ensure equity in student outcomes. Covid 19 exponentially increased this challenge. Teachers need, and most are begging for the knowledge, training, and support they need to meet this daunting challenge. They need timely, appropriate professional development.

This crisis is spawning teaching strategies that expand our ability to assess student needs and deliver appropriate instruction. We must leverage these emerging strategies; the best need to be identified and teachers need to be trained in their use. Our teachers need this support, and no matter the challenge, our students, particularly those

who are at-risk, deserve quality instruction. In addition, stakeholders need to know that despite the crisis we never stop learning, and we never stop looking for ways to improve student learning.

*Equity: Accepting the Challenge*

Although inequitable educational opportunities and learning barriers for students are not new, their significance dramatically increases when instruction moves outside the schoolhouse. The Covid 19 crisis exacerbates access to learning for students who have issues around food and shelter, language proficiency, disabilities, and access to technology. For some students, the loss of learning during this crisis threatens their ability to achieve success for the remainder of their school career. Reimagining and reframing structures and strategies for delivering instruction to at-risk students is our immediate and paramount challenge. But let there be no doubt that we're up to it! It's who we are! It's part of our educator DNA!

We have a crisis, let's not waste it!

## Your Statewide Educational Leadership Team...



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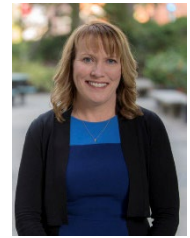
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