

Head of School Weekly Check-In

April 24, 2020

What are the issues on your mind this week?

- Appreciation for Prizmah's guidance and support through this challenging period. Feels so good to not feel alone and the topics are highly relevant.
- Ensure advocacy and support for Canadian schools. Round table with Amy and Debra will be held May 14
- Emergency Relief Fund will include funding in loans and grants. More information will be available as we have it. The grant side is focused on innovative and transformational response to the adaptation to the crisis.
- **How are schools navigating through various scenarios? What questions are schools dealing with now?**
 - Questions on whether or not to proceed with planned tuition increases. Prizmah expert Dan Perla joined the conversation and recommends schools roll back tuition increases, even if there will be fewer full pay families. Whatever level, schools will have some full paying families continuing to meet same level. This is a way to acknowledge present conditions. One school leader encouraged others to think carefully about the rationale and paradigm: would the rollback be because we want to be sensitive OR because we know distance learning isn't the same so a rollback/steady tuition acknowledges reduction in quality, but they are paying staff at full.
 - Anxiety around ability to make payroll if the school does not receive the SBA loan.
 - If we are open in September, different scenarios for what enrollment and scholarship needs might look like. Enrollment trends may be affected next year (with some schools experiencing a decrease in enrollment and some an increase and some will remain steady.) The main shift will be in scholarship needs which could go up 10 points and net tuition could be ten points worse triggering a huge need for support.
 - School leaders are concerned about whether they will remain virtual in the fall and/or if they are going back and forth next academic year between virtual/in-person.
 - Schools are thinking about how to leverage cost-savings from facilities this year as a credit for next year or a donation to emergency relief.
 - Eye on community initiatives. Trying to see how this will help with emergency relief.
- **Projections and looking forward:**
 - What are school leaders anticipating is going to be happening in the next few months?
 - Endowment will be down and all other revenue is going down.

- What cost saving measures might schools consider and what would it look like to explore blended learning through the lens of cost saving?
 - Anticipate parents will demand a lower tuition if this current reality becomes the norm
- **Concerns from Canadian Schools**
 - Government funding has continued and has not been cut.
 - Some issues are unique to Canada due to the role the government plays. In particular, in Montreal there are strict guidelines.
 - Haven't been able to lay off employees up until May 1 due to government orders.
 - Have not had as many requests for TA or refunds. But they are offering full days of online learning. Other JDS are offering only a few hours of instruction.
 - They want to promote the amazing things that are happening but don't want to give the government reason to hold back on funding.
 - Their parents are SO happy and there are so many wonderful stories but they cannot share it openly because of concerns around losing funding. Montreal is hard hit.

How are schools navigating the financial hit?

- They would like to avoid layoffs at all costs and would rather look at pay cuts. There are other costs in terms of morale etc...
- Smaller communities are being very hit hard. More actual job losses in the smaller communities

Long term Online Blended Learning Considerations and Models:

- Heads are interested in how schools are adopting various models.
- Some schools have used blended learning but not from a cost savings perspective ... they wanted to use teachers who had moved back to Israel for distance learning and this model didn't save any money.
- Might there be opportunities to work with Lookstein?

2020 Summer Considerations

- Considerations are being driven by assumptions that both sleep away and day camps will be closed.
- Schools understand kids' mental health was strengthened by online connection with peers and teachers and they have done programming in the interim periods (over Passover break) and as they head to the end of the school year they are thinking about what role they will need to do with kids to while also honoring the fact that the school staff needs a break
- Rising concern about the ways in which kids will be impacted by lack of connection over summer
- Some schools run a camp in the summers and are thinking about ways to adapt this given current conditions. They are considering it to build engagement and skill building for students as well as to generate income.

- Might there be opportunities for partnership between camps (experiential ed) and schools (formal ed) and could there be funding for a hybrid model of collaboration. This may help strengthen relationships with parents.

Specific Summer Planning Ideas:

- Once a week science class or art class. Concern about whether families would pay for it.
- Summer school and need to meet academic needs.

Re-Entry Scenario Planning:

- Pushing back the point parents start paying for next year.
- Consider starting the academic year earlier
- Ask: what materials do you need to have on hand if you do open (thermometers, masks etc...)

What support do you need?

- Budget planning
- Self Care