



# WEEKLY CHECK IN NOTES



## Head of School Weekly Check In August 7, 2020

We will be skipping next week's 8/14 head of school check in.

In two weeks, on 8/21, we will switch over to a Zoom room. Everyone who RSVP'd will get a confirmation email with the link on Wednesday and 1 hour before our next conversation. If you're joining from a phone, please keep your eyes out for a passcode that will be set up for the first time - Zoom links with embedded passcodes sometimes don't work by phone. [RSVP here](#) to receive the new Zoom link.

How are you, how's your team, what COVID inspired leadership will you be integrating into your school moving forward?

- 2 classrooms of each grade (GS and JS) are using both rooms. Created much more curricular integration, teacher collaboration, even the walls reflect that integration.
- Teachers need their own space for a break
- Director of Curriculum and Instruction is a new hire. That's a hidden lining of this cloud and allows others to step in to make things happen, give the new layer of work upon our shoulders.
- Hiring an In-house substitute teacher has been a dream. Now it's a reality.
- Hired a new Dir of Admission and Marketing
- Hired a nurse - took a great deal of pressure off of me.
- How taking care of our community looks different for different people. Gift givers, those who communicate with transparency, listening and sharing, etc.
- We've been trying to push tech integration. This gave us a shot in the arm to move leaps and bounds forward. I'm hopeful that this will continue with the momentum moving forward.
- Anxious and nervous about pushing our start date off by 2 weeks.
- Admission office - Zoom calls with new families. This is an ongoing level of connection. A natural equalizing of planes. Golf Cart tours by camera has been a fun addition.
- I'm a mess today. Having a really hard time being everything and being understaffed. Eliminated a position to free up funds for technology
- Utilizing tech for board and faculty meetings is a serious time saver and an easy way to communicate with folks.
- Governor announced that we'll be going to school in-person. (NY)

- Tech has allowed a lot more admissions and full staff meetings. Pre-sharing reopening plans. One meeting with staff and one with parents.
- Tech has trickled into the elementary school. Looking forward to maintaining it.
- So much more differentiation
- Better lesson planning with tech integration
- Repeatedly pleasantly surprised by the way in which our faculty steps up with curve balls and info that we can't provide yet, etc. We're met from every person with a sense of gratitude given our transparency. On the other hand, I'm living the experience of the toxic board member from hell.
- How you all? Most people answered: We're as okay as we can be.
- Realized what's important in my interactions and what's not important. When you're in emergency mode, you can't afford to be petty. All of our personality issues have been put on the back burner. We're doing our best for the best of the school.
- Really appreciating these opportunities to come together. This connectivity has been a huge benefit for us.

**During this call, which topic(s) would you most benefit from conversation with colleagues?**

- In times of challenge, the characteristics of individuals and teams get exponentially exasperated.
- How do we add staffing without confirmed enrollment numbers?
  - I've blown my budget. Enrollment numbers are down by 10%, which is what Prizmah suggested would happen.
  - Asked my board and development director to raise funds for these areas
- Creative ways to find faculty
  - Teachers word of mouth
  - Facebook groups
  - Substitute teacher pool
  - <https://prizmah.org/knowledge/resource/coronavirus-contingency-online-jewish-studies-learning-options> hire someone outside the building and add a madrich or fellow or assistant to the classroom
  - Assistant teachers move into full teacher roles
- How are you dealing with students who are registered and back out at the last minute? Is that different this year?
  - Last policy is that you have to stick to this contract unless you moved out of state. Typically we let the family out of the contract or meet them half way. This year, we are considering a new policy. Working with our board on the potential floodgate (with a ripple effect of needing to furlough our teachers). I hope to have a decision by next week.
  - We are hearing more claims of recently developed hardship. Typically, parents owe 50% of tuition. Sometimes we pursue this and sometimes we come to a settlement. The default move from our finance director is that we understand that things are hard right now. We'll keep this debt on our books and we will allow it as a credit towards next year's tuition.

- We've been more lenient on giving money back until we decided on going live. We gave them an out when we weren't sure whether we would be virtual. Once we decided that we're going to be in person, families are locked into their contract.
  - We're waiting to see how many students end up registering.
- I'm nervous about the sanity of heads of school. I've never felt that way in the past. How can we cope and survive this.
  - Suggestion: Try not to forget to get out there with your students. That's why we're in this business.
  - 30 seconds of green space/nature space.
  - Please let me know how Prizmah can continue to support you. We're open to any suggestion and out of the box idea you've got!  
debras@prizmah.org
- **New weekly and bi-weekly check-in groups for your faculty**  
**[CLICK HERE to register](#)**
  - Admission professionals in schools with fewer than 150 students
  - Any Admission professional
  - Any Development professional
  - Judaic Administrators
  - Heads of K-12 schools