



NSPDK NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2020

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WHAT HAPPENS AFTER NOVEMBER 3, 2020?

We have urged young people, seniors, massive numbers of unregistered citizens, immigrants, discouraged and disheartened men and women to vote on November 3, 2020. Yes, it is more than a right, it is an honored duty extended to every United States citizen. This right happened during and after prolonged vigorous struggles for many years and decades over many issues: who is a citizen; the Civil War; the ownership of slaves; the place of women in society; the freedom of Black men and women; school desegregation; and the attempted annihilation and displacement of Native Americans.

So here we are today! The struggle continues. Some of us have been severely misled, uneducated, and tricked into believing that things will mysteriously change after November 3, 2020. I do hope that if you persuaded someone to vote based on their hopes to see a change immediately then you will engage them in a frank and honest realistic conversation, as soon as possible.

Some of our young people, prior to the unlawful and unjustified killing of George Floyd, thought that the safety precautions from their Black parents and grandparents did not have validity and were unnecessary. They felt that many bad things happen to other people, but not to them. Then they saw on social media and the nightly news footage of the civil unrest stemming from the killing of George Floyd and the atrocities that continue to happen almost daily in different towns and cities. They began to see that their admired celebrity friends are now urging them to vote and many are visibly supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. Will these actions make a difference?

November 3, 2020 is the beginning! It is not a "once and out" event. The vote for President is not the only thing on the ballot. It is my prayer that each new voter felt a sense of pride and obligation to stick it out, be a committed long-hauler, and realized that this valuable right is theirs for life and cannot be given away. If not used, the right to vote lies dormant and worthless. This must not be their last vote.

Moving NSPDK Forward.....Together!

Be Blessed!

Soror Etta F. Carter, 26th Supreme Basileus
nspdksupreme@gmail.com
(917) 566-9499



Casted early vote October 19th
at 9:10am, #32 in line at the
Hillary Clinton Children's
Library, Little Rock, Arkansas

SAVE THE DATES: JANUARY - JULY 2021

RESCHEDULED- VIRTUAL - 2021 SPRING (ONE -DAY) REGIONAL CONFERENCES

REGION	YOUTH CONFERENCE	REGIONAL CONFERENCE	K.O.T. CONFERENCE
Eastern	April 24-25,2021	June 18-19, 2021	June 18, 2021
Southeast	June 12, 2021	May 14-15, 2021	May 14, 2021
Midwest	March 26-28, 2021	April 30-May 1, 2021	April 30, 2021
Southwest	February 26-28, 2021	June 25-26, 2021	June 25, 2021
Far West	April 10, 2021	May 21-22, 2021	May 21, 2021

VIRTUAL - NATIONAL FOUNDERS' DAY RITUALISTIC CEREMONY

THEME: ONE HEART, ONE SISTERHOOD, ONE SPIRIT, ONE TIME

Saturday, May 22, 2021

REGION	DATE	TIME	TIME ZONE
Eastern	May 22, 2021	12:00 PM	Eastern
Southeast	May 22, 2021	11:00 AM or 12:00 PM	Central or Eastern
Midwest	May 22, 2021	11:00 AM	Central
Southwest	May 22, 2021	11:00 AM	Central
Far West	May 22, 2021	9:00 AM	Pacific

VIRTUAL - NATIONAL MEETINGS

Organization	Day	Date	Time (Central)	Presiding
100 th Anniversary Centennial Committee	Thursday	July 15, 2021	10 AM-12 PM	Margarette Galloway, National Chair
Board of Trustees	Thursday	July 15, 2021	1 PM-4 PM	Charlotte M. Williams, President
National Anthropos Board	Thursday	July 15, 2021	1 PM – 3 PM	Alexander Smith, President
National Executive Council Pre-Conclave	Friday	July 16, 2021	10 AM-3 PM	Dr. Etta F. Carter, Supreme Basileus
Perpetual Scholarship Foundation Board	Friday	July 16, 2021	10 AM-12 PM	Lisa Frieson, President
National Executive Council Post- Conclave	Wednesday	July 21, 2021	9 AM-12 PM	Dr. Etta F. Carter, Supreme Basileus

VIRTUAL - 98TH ANNIVERSARY CONCLAVE

HOST REGION – SOUTHEAST HOST CHAPTER: BETA XI ORLANDO, FLORIDA JULY 17 - 20, 2021

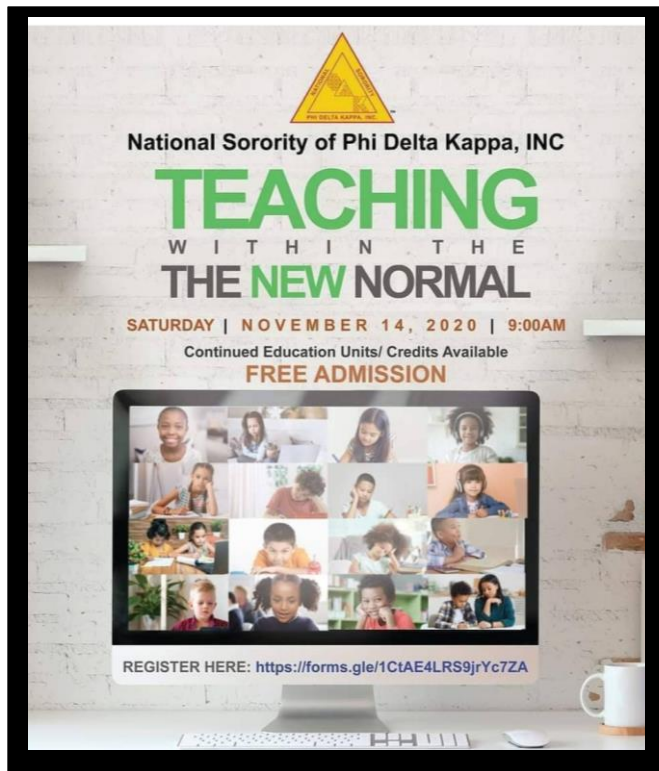
<u>Saturday, July 17, 2021</u> <i>National K.O.T. Conference</i> 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM	<u>Sunday, July 18, 2021</u> Worship Opening Ceremony - PM	<u>Monday and Tuesday</u> <u>July 19 -20, 2021</u> - Business Session - Special Events and Programs
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Dear Lord, we need You! Please sweep through this nation and heal this land. Restore our strength, renew our minds, and cast out anything that is not of You. In Jesus Christ's name we pray, Amen. " Pray for our country!



Remember the Dates...



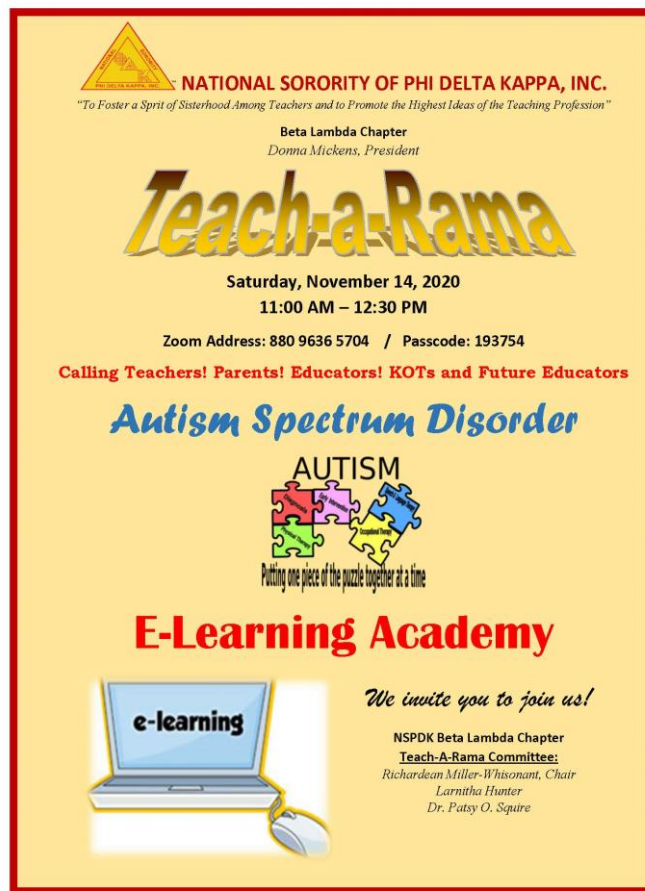
National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, INC

TEACHING WITHIN THE THE NEW NORMAL

SATURDAY | NOVEMBER 14, 2020 | 9:00AM

Continued Education Units/ Credits Available
FREE ADMISSION

REGISTER HERE: <https://forms.gle/1CtAE4LRS9jrYc7ZA>



NATIONAL SORORITY OF PHI DELTA KAPPA, INC.
"To Foster a Spirit of Sisterhood Among Teachers and to Promote the Highest Ideals of the Teaching Profession"

Beta Lambda Chapter
Donna Mickens, President

Teach-a-Rama

Saturday, November 14, 2020
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Zoom Address: 880 9636 5704 / Passcode: 193754

Calling Teachers! Parents! Educators! KOTs and Future Educators

Autism Spectrum Disorder

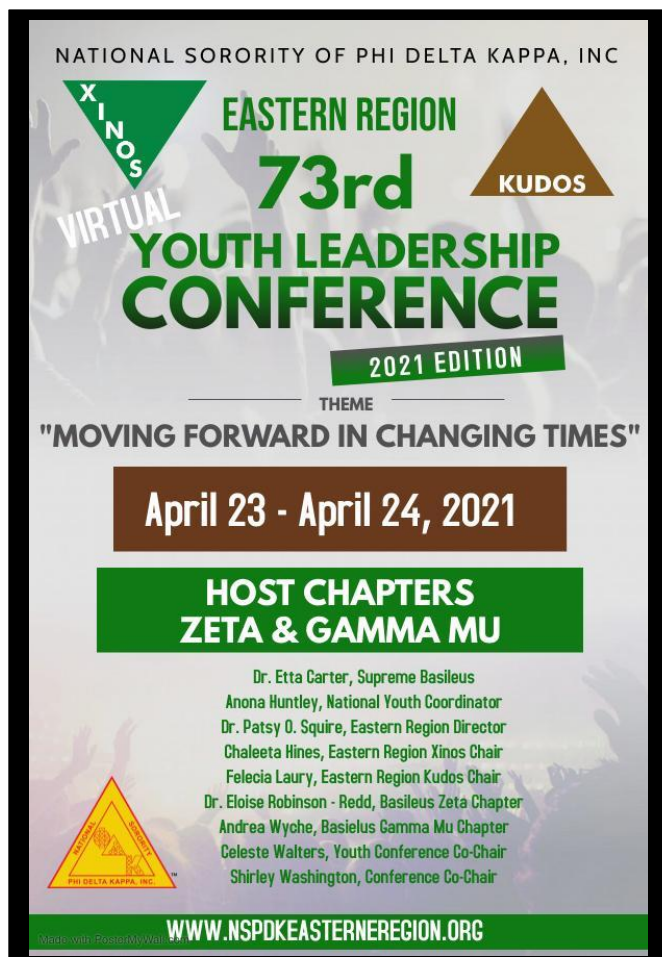
AUTISM

Putting one piece of the puzzle together at a time

E-Learning Academy

We invite you to join us!

NSPDK Beta Lambda Chapter
Teach-A-Rama Committee:
Richardson Miller-Whitson, Chair
Larnitha Hunter
Dr. Patsy O. Squire



NATIONAL SORORITY OF PHI DELTA KAPPA, INC

XINOS EASTERN REGION KUDOS

73rd YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

2021 EDITION

THEME
"MOVING FORWARD IN CHANGING TIMES"

April 23 - April 24, 2021

HOST CHAPTERS ZETA & GAMMA MU

Dr. Etta Carter, Supreme Basileus
Anona Huntley, National Youth Coordinator
Dr. Patsy O. Squire, Eastern Region Director
Chaleeta Hines, Eastern Region Xinos Chair
Felecia Laury, Eastern Region Kudos Chair
Dr. Eloise Robinson - Redd, Basileus Zeta Chapter
Andrea Wyche, Basileus Gamma Mu Chapter
Celeste Walters, Youth Conference Co-Chair
Shirley Washington, Conference Co-Chair

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NATIONAL SORORITY OF PHI DELTA KAPPA, INC.
"To Foster a Spirit of Sisterhood Among Teachers and Promote the Highest Ideals of the Teaching Profession"

YOUTH EDUCATION SERVICE

STATEWIDE VIRTUAL INTEREST MEETING VIRGINIA

15TH NOVEMBER
4:00 ~ 6:00 PM

JOIN ZOOM MEETING
ID: 836 4800 4339
PASSCODE: 849104
DIAL: 13017158592

National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc is a professional organization of women in the field of education. 3-point program is YES/Youth, Education & Service

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NATIONAL SORORITY OF PHI DELTA KAPPA, INC. GAMMA ALPHA CHAPTER
Presents
EDUCATORS "GOT" TALENT
10th Anniversary
This event supports our scholarships and service projects

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2020
CURTAIN TIME ON ZOOM: 3:00PM
DONATE AND RSVP BY NOV. 14, 2020
TO RECEIVE THE ZOOM LINK


DONATIONS PAYABLE TO:
NSPDK GAMMA ALPHA CHAPTER
Mail to: Sharon Simmons
1767 E Sycamore St
Columbus, OH 43206

DONATION CATEGORIES:

<i>Coffinity</i>	<i>Bronze</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Golden</i>
\$15-\$24	\$25-\$49	\$50-\$99	\$100+

ADDITIONAL INFO:
614-205-7681

NATIONAL SORORITY OF PHI DELTA KAPPA, INC.
GAMMA ALPHA CHAPTER



NSPDK, Inc. RHO Chapter
Presents: Learning In A Virtual World
Teach-A-Rama

Join us for virtual learning sessions!
Parents, Teachers, & Students are invited to attend!


Saturday, November 21, 2020
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Sessions Include...

Parents - Virtual Learning Support	K-2: Imagination Station
Teachers: - SEL/Mindfulness	3-5: Interactive Math
- Digital Games	6-8: Internet Safety
	9: On-Track to Graduation
	10-12: College and Career Readiness

To register... <https://forms.gle/JUBtS85WmLMJ5Q2v5>
You may also email your contact information to: rhochapterde@gmail.com

Dr. Beverly Wallace, Teach-A-Rama Chair
Cheryl Calicott-Trawick, RHO Chapter President



CONGRATULATIONS TO GAMMA NU CHAPTER SORORS FOR AN AMAZING 2019-2020 YEAR. SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS TO CHAPTER CHAIRS OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS: SCHOLARSHIP CHAIRS, SOROR FARLOW AND SOROR THOMAS, AND TO MEMBERSHIP AMENITIES CHAIR, SOROR GANTT-MARCUS.

..AND THE WINNERS FOR 2019-2020 A



November Highlights



National Author's Day – November 1, 2020

Careers, Writing



This November 1ST celebrate National Author's Day by curling up with your favorite book, a hot beverage, and spending time drifting into another world. To appreciate the writers who, help inspire us, it's important to get a sense of the time, blood, sweat and tears that go into getting words on the page. On November 1, National Author's Day, take a moment to appreciate the author(s) that spent countless hours writing your favorite books.

Daylight Saving Day – November 3, 2020

Civic



Daylight Saving Day, occurring this year on November 3, is officially the end of the Daylight-Saving period which began on March 10. This means that not only do you get an extra hour of sleep, but it will also become darker earlier in the afternoon. Brace yourself, winter is coming.

Veterans Day – November 11, 2020

Historical, Military



Veterans Day, observed annually on November 11, is a tribute to military veterans who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Not to be confused with Memorial Day, which honors those who died while in service, Veterans Day honors all military veterans, including those still with us.



NSPDK SALUTES AND HONORS OUR MILITARY SERVICE SORORS



Veterans Day is officially observed on November 11.

Veterans Day is intended to honor and thank all military personnel who served the United States Military in all wars and peacetime particularly living veterans. It is marked by parades, church services, school assemblies and in many places the American flag is hung at half-mast. A period of silence lasting two minutes may be held at 11am. Some schools are closed on Veterans Day, while others do not close, but choose to mark the occasion with special assemblies or other activities.

Use your November chapter meeting to acknowledge your Sorors who have served in our United States Military. Remember to send the names of military Sorors/chapter to Soror Vanessa Jenkins, ETA Chapter, vanessajenkinsnspdk@gmail.com

Military FREEBIES and discounts

Businesses and Restaurants are saluting Veterans Day with free meals and discounts for veterans, service members and their families. Check for freebies and discounts during late October and November. Here are a few:

<https://www.military.com/veterans-day/veterans-day-military-discounts.html>

<https://www.theoceanac.com/casino/rewards-club/honor-ca.html>

<https://m.theborgata.com/casino/m-life-rewards/military>

<https://m.theborgata.com/veterans-day-atlantic-city>



Soror Vanessa Jenkins



STEM/STEAM Day – November 8, 2020

Educational



STEM/STEAM Day falls on November 8. There's no way around it: children are significantly better off with strong science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics skills. That's why STEM and STEAM education programs are so important. It's undebatable that these subjects push society forward, and these programs help to find fun and engaging ways to teach them to students, which is all worth commemorating. So, on November 8, we celebrate STEAM/STEAM Day!

Thanksgiving – November 26, 2020

Cooking, Cultural, Family, Food, Historical



America's Thanksgiving holiday, born in the 1500s, mythologized in 1621, and observed even during the bleakest hours of the Civil War, now stands as one of the nation's most anticipated and beloved days — celebrated each year on the fourth Thursday in November (November 26 2020). Perhaps no other nonsectarian holiday has more tradition. Family, friends, food, and football have come to symbolize Thanksgiving — a rare celebratory holiday without an established gift-giving component. Instead the day urges all of us to be grateful for things we do have.



National Diabetes Month – November 2020

**NSPK MOVING
FORWARD...TOGETHER!**

SISTERS OF SUBSTANCE...

Adds value to the world. They create something, whether it is a material item, a thought, or an emotion. They work extremely hard and accomplish something. They can be thinkers, or they can be doers. That's just what we do!



"To Foster a Spirit of Sisterhood Among Teachers and to Promote the Highest Ideals of the Teaching Profession"



V
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A vote is not a valentine, you aren't confessing your love for the candidate. It's a chess move for the world you want to live in.







EPSILON ALPHA SORORS





WE STAND! SISTERS OF SUBSTANCE! WE VOTE IN MEMORY OF SHIRLEY CHISHOLM, FANNIE LOU HAMER, HARRIET TUBMAN, SOJOURNER TRUTH AND HONOR KAMALA HARRIS AND MANY OTHERS FOR THE SOUL OF OUR NATION. SORORS WEARING THEIR SHIRTS AND PEARLS HONORING OUR FOUNDERS.



V
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GAMMA THETA ATTENDS THE "GET OUT AND VOTE" CAMPAIGN

October 3, 2020 the Brewton Branch of NAACP held a "Get Out and Vote" rally where Gamma Theta assisted the community to register.



GAMMA THETA SUPPORTS COMMUNITY DAY OF PRAYER

On Saturday, October 26, 2020 Brewton Alabama had a community prayer gathering. Soror Andrella Nettles led prayer for people who have been affected by COVID-19. Other members of Gamma Theta Chapter and Anthropos Edward Nettles attended to show their support.



National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc.



Dr. Tonya Chestnut
National Chaplain



Dr. Etta Carter
Supreme Basileus

2nd Sunday Monthly Prayer Call

6:00 p.m. CST

Click on Zoom Link in Message for Video

Audio Dial In- 1-312-626-6799 or 1-346-248-7799

Meeting ID-865 4028 4084

Hosted by Regional Chaplains:

Sandra Crockett (SW), Maggie Burnes (MW), Debra Moody (FW), Jerrie Foster (SE) & Naydene Williams (E).

W
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JOIN US
W.A.I.T. TIME



WOMEN ANCHORED IN TRUST



Teacher's Lounge

“

If you are in school administration right now, you have one main job—make it easier for teachers to do their jobs well.

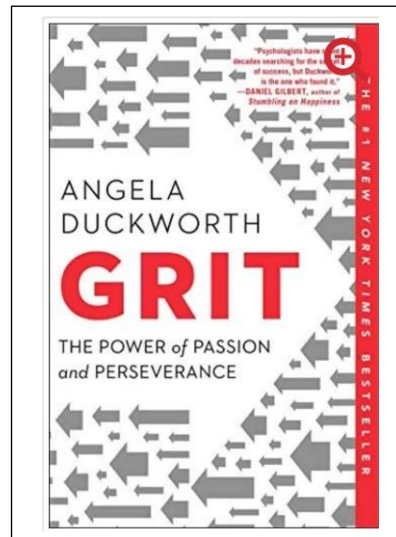
I mean... that's pretty much our jobs all the time, but it's never been more important or harder to figure out how to do well. **CLEAR A PATH. THAT'S ALL.**

—Chris Lehmann
Principal

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Among Math Apps

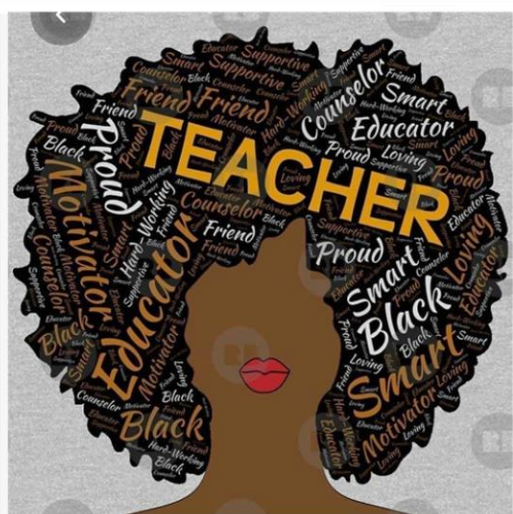


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Learners.



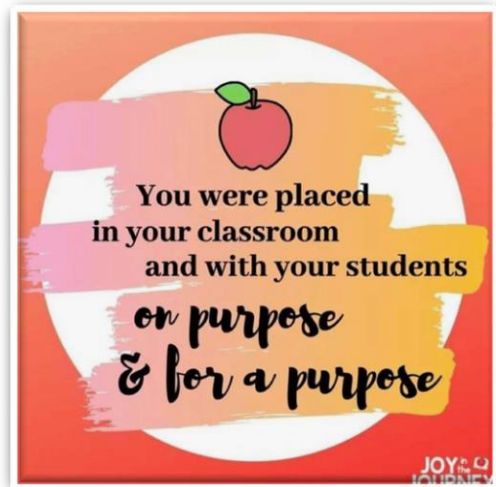
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Please Stop Expecting Normal From Kids
(and Teachers) Right Now



ASSESSMENT

In Schools, Are We Measuring What Matters?

The psychologist, researcher, and MacArthur Fellow Angela Duckworth believes that to make better decisions in our school systems, we need to rethink the way we measure student capabilities. By [Stephen Merrill](#) October 16, 2020

Years ago, as a young public-school teacher, Angela Duckworth struggled to motivate her students and get them to realize their potential. Those early classroom stumbles would shape her work for decades to come, and today her influential research remains focused on fundamental questions of “effort, motivation, and sustained commitment.”

Duckworth’s 2016 bestselling book *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* launched her public career and changed how many educators view non-cognitive skills. An exhaustive, thoroughly researched inventory of highly successful people in fields as varied as music, professional football, and the military, it examined what makes people who perform at the highest levels tick, and concluded that characteristics like passion for the subject matter and a willingness to work hard were more predictive of success than scores of raw intelligence or natural ability. For the highest achievers, it was grit—not talent—that made the difference.

But if Duckworth’s primary contribution to the science of human achievement is in identifying and measuring grit—in certain circles, the word has become synonymous with her name—her idea of what makes students successful is far more expansive. In our far-ranging

conversation, we talk about a constellation of traits that research is increasingly linking to success throughout life, including grit, passion, creativity, teamwork, loyalty, and honesty.

Her work has attracted its share of critics, who argue that the concept of grit fails to account for the socioeconomic and racial hurdles faced by so many students. But Duckworth has never believed that it's an either/or proposition. As a psychologist, she tells me, any assessment practice that is "narrower, more myopic, and more insensitive to equity" is headed the wrong way. "We want to go in the direction of more holistic, better information and evening the playing field"—so that we can broaden our understanding of human potential and see more pathways forward for all of our children.

I sat down with Duckworth recently to discuss standardized test scores, the paralyzing fear we all have of making mistakes, and why she takes issue with the idea of "discovering your passion."

Steve Merrill: I'm struck by this idea from your book that we come preloaded with a bias about human ability. Can you tell me about naturalness bias?

Angela Duckworth: Naturalness bias is the idea that when we look at somebody's performance and we think, "Wow, what a natural," we are biased to think that they're definitely going to do well in the future. We tend to favor them and think "I should recruit them. I should admit them."

In contrast, when we think that somebody is just as good but got there through hard work—we would call them "strivers," not "naturals"—we're still admiring but we don't judge them as favorably. We're simply not as optimistic about their future, and we may be a little less inclined to pay them money, for example, if they're applying for a job.

Merrill: Right, we're either born great, or tainted by the undignified need to work hard. That feels like a myth that's a serious danger to learning. How do we know that naturalness bias exists?

Duckworth: The [research on naturalness bias](#) comes from a friend of mine named Chia-Jung Tsay, also a psychologist and researcher. She's done experiments in which participants are randomly assigned to see a description of a talented performer, for example, but in one condition they're told that this performer is a natural, and in another condition they're told the performer is a striver—and that changes people's judgments.

She has personal experience as a pianist. She would go to these music competitions and notice that when people were considered naturals or prodigies, they were treated more deferentially than someone with equal skill who was really open about practicing and working hard for it.

Merrill: I just reread your book *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, and one researcher you mention argued pretty adamantly that natural ability is only a small part of the puzzle that separates the extraordinary from the ordinary.

Duckworth: The scientist who probably deserves the most credit for demystifying high performance is Anders Ericsson. Anders passed away suddenly this summer in his early 70s. He spent his whole life as a cognitive scientist, trying to understand how high performers do

what they do. And what he learned is that these world-class experts start off like everyone else—they are awkward, clumsy amateurs. And it's through thousands of hours of what he called deliberate practice that they attain greatness.

I think Anders took a relatively purist view. I don't think he was convinced that there was anything about talent that helped distinguish the superb from the competent. But regardless of whether you take that view, I think [his research](#) demystified the actual things that people do to get better and better every day.

Merrill: We don't seem to have accepted that culturally. *U.S. News & World Report* weighs standardized test scores—students finish them in a matter of hours—more than three times as heavily as four-year high school grades to create their college rankings, for example. Do you think the preoccupation with standardized tests is related to our preference for natural ability?

Duckworth: So, it's a great question to ask: What's the connection between these notions of "natural talent" and standardized tests, particularly in college admissions? This is a very complex topic, and the more I understand what testing is, actually, the more confused I am. What does the score mean? Is it how smart somebody is, or is it something else? How much of it is their recent coaching? How much of it is genuine skill and knowledge?

But what the research scientist Brian Galla and I found is that when you look at, for example, four-year and six-year graduation rates, it turns out that standardized tests like the SAT or the ACT are predictive of college graduation, but they're not as predictive as high school grades. We found that the reason that grades are so predictive of finishing your college degree is that grades are a very good index of your self-regulation—your ability to stick with things, your ability to regulate your impulses, your ability to delay gratification and work hard instead of goofing off.

Merrill: So other traits are at work below the surface. I wanted to ask you about a Google study that concluded that the most important qualities of the company's top employees were things like communicating, listening well, and being a good problem solver. STEM expertise came in dead last. We're spending a lot of time and placing a lot of emphasis on SAT and ACT scores. Are we measuring the right things?

Duckworth: It's very clear that a human being's worth, and more narrowly even their productivity, depends on more than their cognitive ability. That's what the Google study suggests.

Call it soft skills, call it social and emotional skills, call it healthy habits, call it character—whatever you want to call it—I think any educator and certainly any parent would say that we have to broaden our view of kids' capabilities. That's partly because students have a rainbow of capabilities, but it's also because I don't want to send a signal to young people that cognitive ability is the only thing that matters. It's not. If teamwork matters, if loyalty matters, if honesty matters, if grit matters, if creativity matters, then we have to start assessing these things, because as it's often said, what gets measured is what gets treasured.

Merrill: What about tolerance for mistakes? We seem to have an obsession with right answers and with checking boxes in our school systems. But according to your research, truly successful people often have a surprising relationship with mistakes.

Duckworth: Nobody likes making mistakes. Recently I noticed that almost every prominent psychology department has somebody who is studying failure. I think that's because failure is such an emotional and aversive, frightening experience. Students fear failure because it's human to fear failure.

When you look at very successful people, though—when you watch commencement speeches, for example—many of them are about learning to embrace failure. So how do I get from fearing failure to doing what commencement speakers want me to do? I think the answer comes from cognitive therapy. Cognitive therapists have known for 50 years that when you have somebody who has fear or anxiety or depression, you have to identify the thoughts behind those emotional states.

With fear of failure, what's the thought that flashes through our mind the moment before we're embarrassed? I think the thought that flashes through the mind of a student is "I'm stupid." And I think when you're an adolescent, feeling stupid in front of other people is something to be avoided at all costs. We have to learn to replace the thought—"I'm stupid"—with another thought, which is "I'm learning."

Merrill: OK, but how do you do that?

Duckworth: I think if teachers could think about that microsecond right before a student's emotions flood them—can you insert that new thought, can you model that language? Can you make mistakes in front of the class? Can you, for example, screw up logging on to Zoom and then with humor, and self-deprecation, share with your students that you felt pretty stupid but you then learned to replace that self-talk with "I'm learning how to do Zoom."

Merrill: I see a lot of folks fixating on the word "grit," but you've long suggested that successful people need passion too. And you talk about passion in a way I'm not used to; it's an active construction. Kids don't have passions and interests that need discovering—they actively develop passions and interests. What does that mean?

Duckworth: I realize now that when people think of grit, they think of toughness. In the word "grit" I'm trying to convey a sense of both perseverance and passion. I can't really think of a single example of somebody I've studied who has become truly great at what they do without intrinsic motivation.

I think the idea that kids have to discover their passion is misleading. I would say that instead of thinking about discovering a passion, which is fully formed, you actually have to find it. It's around middle school where you get the emergence of interests, where students are beginning to have favorite subjects and inclinations and strong views on extracurriculars. During that time, students need to sample different things, and sampling—you can also call it tasting because interests are like foods—will lead to the rejection or acceptance of certain kinds of foods.

Merrill: And how do interests become passions, and stick?

Duckworth: I think lingering with something long enough is important. Do track, do it again. Do the newspaper, do it again the following fall. That's the developmental course: from lots of sampling—kindergarteners might try things for a day—to high school, where you're still

sampling but in deeper ways.

So students need opportunities, and they need their teachers to be their observant advocates, to say, "I noticed that you really liked Tolstoy, so I thought I would give you this extra copy of a book that you haven't read yet." I mean, those are moments that can change lives.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

7 Ways to Do Formative Assessments in Your Virtual Classroom

Finding out what your students are really learning remains indispensable to teaching. Here's what teachers are doing to check for understanding online. By [Nora Fleming](#) October 1, 2020

Pen-and-paper pop quizzes are no more: thumbs-up/thumbs-down, hand signals, online polls, discussion boards, and chat boxes have become the new mainstays of formative assessments in virtual classrooms.

These quick pulse checks [help teachers make sure that students](#) are [grasping key concepts](#)—and identify holes in their understanding. "Good teachers in every subject will adjust their teaching based on what students know at each point," says Vicki Davis, a director of instructional technology in Albany, Georgia, [underscoring how crucial](#) ongoing formative assessments are in the classroom.

Teachers don't need to completely reinvent their traditional formative assessments, however, according to Mike Anderson, an educational consultant in Durham, New Hampshire. He recommends that teachers modify familiar practices—like exit tickets and think-pair-shares—so they work virtually. "Formative assessments might feel harder now in virtual classrooms—you can't just walk around class and look over a kid's shoulders—but I'm not sure they have to be harder."

In fact, many of the popular digital apps and sites like Nearpod, Flipgrid, Padlet, and Seesaw, can actually work in tandem with the tried-and-true assessments that teachers honed in their classes pre-pandemic. Nearpod, for example, enables teachers to embed short quizzes, polls, surveys, and games into a lesson so that teachers can check for understanding before moving on to the next concept.

But don't go overboard, says Andrew Miller, director of teaching and learning at the Singapore American School, [emphasizing that teachers](#) should be careful not to overwhelm students with too many virtual assessments and too many new tools. Focus on two or three tools at most, he recommends, and be sure you always define a clear and differentiated purpose for using each. It's also important to remember non-tech solutions, like the simple but invaluable [one-to-one conversations](#) that can yield information about students' progress—and their well-being.

"In our distance learning environment, we run the risk of being further isolated. By scheduling individual sessions with students, we can assess their learning and provide feedback with a real human connection," Miller says.

Here are some different ways that teachers can use formative assessments in the virtual classroom:

1. DIPSTICKS

Like using a dipstick to check the oil in a car, teachers can use [short, quick checks](#) virtually to make sure that students are on track—both academically and emotionally.

At the start of a live class, pose a general question about the previous day's lesson, like "Does everyone feel comfortable with what we learned about [fill in the blank]?" and have students respond individually by dropping an emoji or a thumbs-up/thumbs-down in their chat box or video window. Students can also hold up a sticky note or piece of paper to the screen with a response. They don't all have to be serious questions; funny questions can help get students engaged at the start of a lesson. [In this Twitter thread](#), teachers share fun question ideas like: "Are Pop-Tarts a kind of ravioli?" and "Would you rather have no elbows or no knees?"

Another option: Ask students a more specific question about content you've recently covered, then have them assess their understanding on a 1–5 rating scale. They can hold up the appropriate number of fingers as signals during a live class online. The popular spotlight approach also works. Ask students to show a color based on how they feel about the topic you're teaching: green—go ahead to the next topic; yellow—proceed slowly as I'm still processing; or red—stop, I don't understand.

2. DIGITAL JOURNALS AND ONE-PAGERS

Not all students process information at the same speed or like to raise their hand and be acknowledged publicly during class. After-class reflection exercises that give students a private space to reflect a little more deeply, and signal both what they understood and what they did not, are easy to continue remotely.

Teachers can create a "Journal Jot" online document for each student using Google Docs or a platform like Blackboard to measure how well students are retaining information, recommends Rebecca Alber, an education professor in Los Angeles, California. In their journal, students can respond individually to prompts like K-W-L: what they know, what they want to know, and what they learned; or 3-2-1: three things you found out; two things you found interesting; one thing you didn't understand.

Teachers can also adapt Jill Fletcher's [one-pager activity](#) to virtual settings. Fletcher, a curriculum coordinator in Kapolei, Hawaii, asks students to write down key themes, questions, and ideas about a topic or lesson on a single page (kind of like a study guide), and include artwork or imagery if they would like. Have students create their one-pagers in a tool like [Canva](#) or Google Slides, or they can draw them by hand and submit as a photograph.

3. ELEVATOR PITCHES AND TWEETS

To help students synthesize important takeaways from a lesson, ask them to take one to two minutes during live class time to summarize everything they learned on a particular unit by typing it into a Google doc, in a chat box, or on a virtual message board like [Padlet](#).

You can also ask for student volunteers to share their elevator pitch, or verbal summary of what they learned, with the class in 60 seconds or less. As a 21st-century spin, Matt Levinson, a principal in Seattle, Washington, [suggests having students](#) summarize the lesson in a tweet or Instagram post, staying to character limits.

4. SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE

Giving students choice with formative assessments is really important, says Anderson, as not all students show their thinking the same way.

Anderson recommends [Square, Triangle, Circle](#), an activity wherein students choose a shape and its associated question prompt. A square means something that is now “squared away” in their thinking. Choosing a triangle tasks students with extracting three important ideas from what they learned, while a circle asks students to discuss something “circulating”—ideas that are not yet fully formed—in their minds.

For asynchronous learning, students can write their responses independently in an online document as a reflection exercise. Or, in a synchronous lesson, teachers can make the exercise collaborative by asking students to pick a shape and then dividing them into groups based on the shape they chose. Students can briefly discuss their reflections with classmates in breakout rooms and share back to the class to close out the learning.

5. MAKE ART YOUR ASSESSMENT

While teachers may question if old classroom standbys (and popular classroom wall decorations) like collages, mind maps, and sketches can work virtually, teachers we spoke with say they're still finding ways for students to use art, music, and drama to share their thinking.

Students can create an ad to describe and market a particular concept, draw a comic chronicling a historic event or explaining a scientific principle, write a poem or a song, or act out a chapter from a book or scene from a play. Using a phone, students can record themselves using apps like Voice Memos or photograph/film their work with the phone's camera to upload and share virtually.

6. PEER-TO-PEER EVALUATIONS

When learning outside the classroom, it's especially important to foster relationships between students. You can do both at the same time, drawing a bead on what your students have learned while encouraging deeper peer connections.

Assign each student a virtual buddy for the week, or pair off students at random to get them talking across the class—and assessing each other's learning.

In pairs, students can be placed in breakout rooms on Zoom or another videoconference platform to do many of the same activities they once did in the classroom to check for understanding. Give each student a general rubric, or use the [TAG feedback](#) process to evaluate their peer's assignment; have them share the feedback with you as well. Or have students teach each other a concept while recording themselves (audio or video) and upload the file for you to review. These activities can also be adapted for asynchronous learning using tools in Google Classroom.

For synchronous classes, organize a talk show panel. Assign three to four students roles to represent different ideas or themes of a unit, such as having students in history class impersonate leaders from different countries during World War II. Have each student discuss their perspective in front of their peers and allow the rest of the class to ask questions to probe their thinking.

7. VIRTUAL EXIT TICKETS

Using exit tickets, or students' responses to prompts or questions on a slip of paper at the end of class, is a popular formative assessment practice that easily transfers online.

Teachers can keep a running Google Doc for each student to keep the information private, or broaden it to the whole class by posting questions on a platform like Flipgrid so that students can see and comment on others' responses.

To get a wider view into students' thinking, use open-ended prompts like these:

- What I found most interesting today was...
- Today was hard because...
- What do you understand well?
- What's something that's still shaky?
- What's something I [teacher] don't realize?
- What takeaways will be important three years from now?
- How does this relate to [something learned before]?
- How would you have done things differently today?
- Today was hard because...

RESILIENCE AND GRIT

With Stress in Schools Increasing, Simple Strategies to Stay Calm

In North Carolina, a program offers 'rapid resets' to help teachers and students calm their minds and bodies and get back to learning. By [Laura Lee](#) October 2, 2020

The 6-year-old boy's eyes welled up with tears. His teacher, 30-year veteran Leigh Yelton, could see the explosive anger building in the first grader. After his mother died unexpectedly in his kindergarten year, he struggled with what his grandmother called "mommy days," or periods during which he would often cry uncontrollably. Instead of asking him what was wrong or trying to distract him, Yelton asked him to do something simple and unexpected: go to a private part of the room and push against a wall. It worked.

Yelton learned the technique from a resilience training program that shows teachers how to help themselves—and their students—calm the central nervous system. Stress and trauma can trigger a response in the amygdala, the part of the brain that sends the body into fight, flight, or freeze mode, hijacking the rest of the brain so it becomes focused solely on responding to or fleeing the perceived threat.

"Our thinking brain is where we process language, so if I have flipped my lid, and you talk to me, you sound like the Charlie Brown teacher," says Ann DuPre Rogers, executive director of [Resources for Resilience](#), the nonprofit organization that conducts the training. When a person is triggered and can't be reached through conversation, the training directs them to take a sip of water, press against a wall, or try a quick walk while paying close attention to their physical sensations.

For example, when drinking a sip of water, a participant might try to feel every droplet of water in their mouth. How does it feel as it passes over the lips? Is it cool or warm? Does it have texture? This process of closely examining sensory details called sensing-in is similar to

mindfulness practices which are increasingly **backed by research**, and even **prescribed by doctors**, for addressing acute stress and trauma.

"You notice all the sort of sensory elements of the sip," said Rogers, explaining one of the strategies that allows teachers and kids to calm their brains and bodies. Once the amygdala is calmed, she continues, "then the brain can come back and we can talk it through. We can make a plan."

UNDERSTANDING TRIGGERS

The simple techniques, called rapid resets, are designed for "anyone with a nervous system," Rogers says, but they can be especially helpful in the school setting where teachers and students of all grade levels experience different levels of stress and trauma. Students or teachers who have had many adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as living in an abusive household or having an incarcerated parent, may be more easily triggered.

Rogers and her staff train teachers, counselors, and other school personnel to recognize the triggers that cause a person to "flip their lid," or activate the stress response. Triggers in a classroom can seem minor: a student takes another student's pencil, or a student teases another student about their appearance. But even these events can spark a response rooted in mounting frustration or underlying trauma and disrupt learning—for both the student and the wider classroom.

While the methods tackle the immediate problem—getting the child to calm down is the first step—the program advises teachers to follow up and address the deeper issues as soon as they can. Getting brains back "online" is a vital prerequisite for exploring the student's challenges and making plans to help the child or teen self-regulate in the future.

"These are quick strategies that you can implement into your classroom with a little effort, but get a big response," says Susan Puckett, a counselor at Forest Park Elementary.

PUT ON YOUR MASK FIRST

Despite initial skepticism, Yelton calls the training "the most valuable workshop experience that I have ever been to." Like the flight directive about putting an oxygen mask on yourself before helping a child, the training encourages teachers to use the strategies for their own fight, flight, or freeze responses before teaching them to students.

After learning the rapid resets, Yelton tried them first on herself and then her husband. When she found herself growing angry, she would practice the grounding technique by focusing on the sensory experience of feeling the floor beneath her feet. The strategy brought Yelton back to a place where she could interact again.

The skills she learned in the training had immediate application in her classroom and transformed how she relates to her students. She taught her kids to imagine that their amygdala—which produces the first inkling of anger or anxiety—is like a barking dog. When the "lid is flipped," the dog barks to alert the rest of the brain to fight, flight, or freeze, and getting children to recognize the presence of the dog is a necessary prerequisite for getting them back to a place where they can learn. In her class today, Yelton's students use hand signals to demonstrate that a dog is in the house, periodically gesturing to indicate that they are starting to get anxious.

Before the training, if a child became upset, Yelton might ask "What's wrong?" and press the student to articulate the reason for their discontent. "Often I would say, when kids were really

flipping their lids, 'Give me your words. Use your words and tell me,' not really thinking that they can't do that at this point," she says.

The training sparked a paradigm shift in Yelton's interactions with her students. Instead of trying to fix the problem, she approaches triggered students with a new sense of patience and understanding. She realized that "when they get that out of control, they're not in a zone where they know what's happening. They are so amped up or so shut down... and they can't hear you. They can't listen."

Yelton related to the grief of her young student who lost his mother in a different way than she would have before the training, acknowledging his anger without trying to distract or control him. "He was angry, and he had every single right to be angry. I never tried to change that," she said. "You have a right to be angry. I get it. I understand where you're coming from. I would be upset too."

Over time, the student's crying became less frequent and he began to self-regulate, taking time-outs when he felt himself getting triggered. The young boy moved at the end of the year, but Yelton feels she sent him off with a toolbox of tactics he could use to deal with some of the effects of the trauma he had experienced.

CHANGING SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The shift in Yelton's classroom is just one of many in the Kannapolis City School system, a small district in the central part of the state that began training school personnel in the resilience practices in 2016.

Teachers and staff appreciate the simplicity of the practices and their easy implementation in the classroom. "I remember walking out and thinking I can use this tomorrow. I don't have to wait," says elementary school psychologist Amy Roberts. "I don't have to prepare anything. I don't have to make anything. I can just do it."

The practices have created a positive shift in the overall school culture at Forest Park. "Teachers would come to my office and say, 'I did this and this worked for these kids. I haven't seen anything work like this before,'" says counselor Puckett.

George Lucas Educational Foundation

The shared practices have created a common language in the school community. Fourth grade teacher Kelcie Lewis says her students know the strategies and respond when they observe her using them. "If I am getting frustrated waiting for them to pay attention or if they're not getting a skill, I might just go over and lean against the wall and they're like, 'Uh oh, guys, Mrs. Lewis is about to blow her lid,'" she says.

Bringing themselves back to a calm state is critical for teachers to avoid exacerbating triggers students may be experiencing. "Through the training, I learned that even the way that you approach the room can make such a difference," says Martha Motley, principal of Forest Park Elementary. "If you get called if there's a fight, a disturbance, or a student being disrespectful, and you show up... escalated, even from the quick walk there, then kids are going to respond differently."



Kelcie Lewis

A resilience corner in Kelcie Lewis' 4th grade classroom.

When school takes place in-person, Forest Park teachers create physical space for students who need to take a break and reset. Lewis set up a corner of her classroom for her students to try the strategies with a wall adorned with posters of typical emotions along with more specific synonyms. If a child says, "I'm mad," she asks for a more nuanced understanding of their feelings—are they betrayed, frustrated, or annoyed? For kids who can't yet read, Yelton uses a board with emotion words, coupled with pictures depicting a range of emotional states.

"The student knows that they can go to the calm down corner and do those strategies without the teacher, or they can let the teacher know that they need help," says teacher Lindsay Stowe.

THE RESEARCH IS IN

7 High-Impact, Evidence-Based Tips for Online Teaching

What do highly effective teachers do in online classrooms? We combed through dozens of studies to find the best research-backed ideas. By [Youki Terada](#), October 9, 2020

When online classes exploded in popularity a decade ago, the U.S. Department of Education embarked on an [ambitious project](#): Researchers pored through more than a thousand studies to determine whether students in online classrooms do worse, as well, or better than those receiving face-to-face instruction. They discovered that on average, "students in online learning conditions performed modestly better than those receiving face-to-face instruction." But there was a significant caveat: It wasn't the technology that mattered. In fact, many studies have found that technology actually hinders learning when deployed in a way that doesn't take advantage of the medium. All too often, for example, teachers would take a face-to-face lesson and replicate it online, a costly though understandable approach that rarely led to improvements. The key question for the researchers from the Dept. of Education was whether

an online activity served as “a *replacement* for face-to-face instruction or as an *enhancement* of the face-to-face learning experience.”

“This finding suggests that the positive effects associated with blended learning should not be attributed to the medium,” the researchers wrote. Online teaching required specialized knowledge, an understanding of the strategies that would allow teachers to adapt technology to suit their pedagogical needs—not the other way around.

Yet the large-scale disruption caused by the pandemic forced millions of teachers to quickly adapt to online teaching, often with little training and preparation. “I feel like a first-year teacher again, only worse,” Justin Lopez-Cardoze, a seventh-grade science teacher told the [Washington Post](#). So how can teachers enhance the learning experience in online classrooms? We looked over all the research we've read about online learning to find seven high-impact, evidence-based strategies that every teacher should know.

1. YOUR VIRTUAL CLASSROOM IS A REAL LEARNING SPACE—KEEP IT ORGANIZED

“Students value strong course organization,” explain Swapna Kumar and her colleagues in a [2019 study](#). They point out that teachers who are new to online instruction are often too focused on content—converting their lectures, presentations, and worksheets into digital format—leaving course design as a secondary consideration.

While “novice instructors have subject-matter expertise, it’s the design that falls short,” Kumar points out, explaining that novice teachers often “don’t know how to organize their materials or set up a design that makes sense” to students.

When students see a well-organized virtual classroom, they’re more engaged, more confident, and more autonomous, [says](#) Sarah Schroeder, an associate professor at the University of Cincinnati. And students who encounter messy online learning environments actually [project that judgment onto the teacher](#); they conclude that the teacher is disorganized more generally.

Here are a few simple tips for organizing your virtual classroom:

- Have a single, dedicated hub where students can go every day to find their assignments, and other crucial announcements.
- Create and articulate the simplest communications plan you can. For example, it may be that students can reach you via text during working hours, and via email after school.
- Consider holding “learn your technology” days with your class to walk through common-use cases, like submitting work or signing on to synchronous lessons.
- Make an extra effort to be clear and concise in your directions and consider making a short daily video summarizing the day’s objectives. When writing, avoid the dreaded “wall of text” and use numbered lists and short paragraphs with subheadings.
- Get rid of visual clutter. This includes hard-to-read fonts and unnecessary decorations or images.

2. CHUNK YOUR LESSONS INTO SMALLER, DIGESTIBLE PIECES

In a [2010 study](#), researchers examined how well high school students learned from an online science curriculum and concluded that on average, online materials “require high mental effort” to process. “Working memory capacity is limited, and a learner can only deal with a few concepts simultaneously,” the researchers explain.

What would normally be a 30-minute activity in a face-to-face classroom should be much shorter in the virtual one. Instead of recording an entire lecture, consider creating several smaller ones, each covering a single key idea. The ideal duration for an instructional video, according to a [2014 study](#), is about 6 minutes, and researchers recorded steep drop-offs in attention after 9 minutes.

In order to give students additional time to process the material, alternate high- and low-intensity activities, and incorporate [brain breaks](#) regularly throughout the school day.

3. THE BEST ONLINE TEACHERS SOLICIT LOTS OF FEEDBACK

When you're standing face-to-face with your students, you can usually tell when a lesson's working. If students are riveted, their eyes light up and their brains are in overdrive. But in a virtual classroom, much of that information is lost.

That's why the authors of a [2019 study](#) which sought to identify the methods of the best online teachers say that you should regularly "gather student feedback on various aspects of...online courses" in order to identify "what was working or not."

Unlike formative assessment, which focuses on how well students *understand* the material, it's crucial that you also gauge how well students can *access* your virtual materials, according to the researchers. Most teachers and students are newbies in virtual classrooms, and serious communication and process-oriented issues can go undetected—and fester. Consider using [student surveys](#) administered via simple tools like Google Forms to ask questions such as: Are you having any technical problems? Are you able to quickly find and submit your work? Is this virtual classroom easy to navigate?

4. ANNOTATE AND INTERJECT TO SCAFFOLD LEARNING

If you're standing in your classroom and you want students to pay attention to something—perhaps a location on a map or information on a slide—you can use gestures to direct students' attention. But that context can be hard to reproduce online.

To compensate, use simple annotations like arrows and text labels to provide "visual scaffolding and help direct the users' attention to those aspects that are important in learning materials and help guide learners' cognitive processes," say the authors of a [2020 study](#). The researchers demonstrated that students who were shown maps with visual and text cues, like arrows and labels identifying key locations, scored 35 percent higher on a recall test than those exposed to maps with no cues.

Also, strategically interject questions into an instructional video at key points to check for understanding. Questions that prompt critical thinking like "Can you think of any exceptions to this rule?" or that probe for comprehension like "How do you determine momentum from measures of mass and velocity?" not only keep the lesson lively but promote deeper engagement with the material and allow you to assess learning, according to a [2018 study](#).

5. FREQUENT, LOW-STAKES QUIZZES ARE EASY TO DO, AND HIGHLY EFFECTIVE

Low- and no-stakes practice tests enhance retention of the material—and students who struggle the most benefit the most from weekly practice quizzes, according to a [recent meta-analysis](#). While online quizzes don't provide a greater benefit than paper ones, they can be automatically graded, saving hours of work.

You can use popular tools like [Kahoot and Quizlet](#) to create online quizzes that are not only fun, but also help students re-process and retain the material better. If you want to boost engagement even further, you can create a [Jeopardy! board](#) to gamify your quizzes.

6. FIGHT THE ISOLATION OF REMOTE LEARNING BY CONNECTING WITH YOUR STUDENTS

You're not just physically separated from your students. As classrooms move online, the psychological and emotional distance also increases, eroding the critical social context that is fertile soil for learning, according to a [2016 study](#). You'll need to make special efforts to create a sense of community in your virtual classroom.

"To offset the isolating effects of an online class, teachers can strive to communicate more regularly and more informally with students," writes Jason Dockter, a professor of English at

Lincoln Land Community College in the study. The goal isn't just to address academic issues, but to demonstrate "that the teacher is personally interested and invested in each student." John Thomas, an elementary school teacher, uses daily [morning meetings](#), which can be done both synchronously and asynchronously, to check in with his students. Using Seesaw, he records a greeting that students can respond to and builds in "interactive, engaging activities designed to help our students learn more about themselves and their classmates"—such as sharing a favorite book or the family pet.

Beyond morning meetings, you can adapt many face-to-face activities to work in virtual classrooms:

- Use unstructured time to chat at the beginning of class.
- Try Zoom's "waiting room" feature to welcome kids to class one by one.
- Use breakout rooms to split students into small groups for show-and-tell, two truths and a lie, or other [relationship-building exercises](#).
- At the end of the day, ask students to reflect on their learning with [discussion prompts](#) or a closing activity like [appreciation, apology, or aha!](#)
- Pose fun questions like "What's your favorite movie?" in your all-class video tool, or on digital whiteboards like [Jamboard](#) or [Padlet](#), and have students share out.

7. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

You're not alone: teacher well-being has experienced a "steep decline" in recent months, with [71% of teachers reporting lower morale levels](#) compared to pre-pandemic levels. As the adage goes, "You can't serve from an empty cup." If we want our students to succeed, we need to ensure that our teachers are taken care of. Not only is [teacher stress contagious](#), resulting in higher stress levels for students, but it also passes through as [poorer academic performance](#) for students as well.

"In order for any of us to provide that safe, stable, and nurturing environment for the children that we serve, we have to practice self-care so that we can be available," said Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, a pediatrician and California's first surgeon general, in a [recent interview](#) with Edutopia. "Please make sure to put your own oxygen mask on and practice real care for yourself so that you can be there for the next generation."

ONLINE LEARNING

How to Make Virtual STEM Lessons More Engaging for Young Learners

These easy-to-implement strategies can make science, technology, engineering, and math lessons come alive for elementary students. By [Melissa Collins](#) October 22, 2020



PeopleImages / iStock

In a STEM-centered classroom setting, my primary purpose is to create a space where students explore inquiry-based learning in a fun and innovative way by establishing a

foundation for scientific thinking and ideas. I give my students opportunities to research, problem-solve, and collaborate with peers as they persevere through challenging tasks. When they work together, they engage in critical thinking skills and develop soft skills that are necessary both within and outside the school setting. This type of work doesn't easily transfer online. Still, it's my goal to provide students with what I call V.I.P. access to STEM through virtual learning experiences, intentional instruction, and presentations. Here are a few suggestions on how to teach STEM virtually.

VIRTUAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Currently, my students' learning experiences consist of working with STEM experts and engaging in virtual field trips. I invite STEM experts to attend my online classes to discuss topics such as the coronavirus and how students and their families can stay safe. I also host a Week of STEM, where students talk to various STEM professionals. The experts create PowerPoint presentations and engage students in hands-on experiences. The students ask questions they prepared beforehand to gain insight into the topic and possible careers.

I use [Skype a Scientist](#), various medical groups, and my personal network to find STEM experts to support student learning experiences. I also have a STEM professional, Dr. Nicco West, who serves as my mentor to assist with planning. In working with students of color, it is essential to invite professionals who look like them to motivate my students to pursue STEM-related fields. When my students engage in experiments virtually, I encourage them to wear lab coats, and I call them junior scientists to empower them as well.

My students go on virtual field trips that are free or low-cost to provide rich learning experiences during distance learning. Many museums are collaborating with schools to make this happen. These "trips" allow students to observe various artifacts and primary sources, making learning more meaningful. The [Henry Ford website](#) is one of my favorite online resources to assist with virtual field trips. I invite curators to speak to the students to share historical perspectives from exhibits in their respective museums. Inviting curators to share with students provides an additional opportunity to dig deeper into their understanding of various topics. For example, Julie Wertz, a conservation scientist at the Harvard Art Museums, talked about her role and engaged the students in a learning experiment.

INTENTIONAL INSTRUCTION

Primary school students have curious and creative minds. They're always asking questions about the world around them, so they need to have a safe educational space to promote self-discovery. Students collaborate in groups to complete inquiry-based activities. They create questions to help launch their investigations. Then they use lab sheets to help guide their learning.

When students ask and answer questions, they are engaged in high-level strategies that support their knowledge acquisition. Questioning techniques help spark curiosity and exploration for students. Questioning also helps teachers to assess students' understanding while promoting overall success. The students' questions are recorded on a virtual direct question board, and the questions are maintained on a Google slide so that students can revisit them. Working in groups permits students to problem-solve, make observations, and develop 21st-century skills.

I provide students with research opportunities in various subjects, including animal life and climate change, through the use of books, articles, videos, and websites in order to gain more

insight into scientific topics or concepts. I use the platform ClassDojo for students to complete activities to add to digital portfolios that track their work over time. I can select different learning modalities on ClassDojo, such as drawing, typing, completing a worksheet, or making a recording.

Along with questioning and research, my students engage in hands-on learning experiences. Some activities may require families to purchase materials up front. I provide advance notice of what's needed and always consider the costs. My preference is for no-cost or low-cost activities. For example, I do a bird adaptation activity with my students that's designed to teach them how birds' beaks have changed over time to help them find food. It requires gummy worms, cheese crackers, a bowl of water, sunflower seeds, tweezers, a spoon, a toothpick, and a clothespin, objects that most students can obtain without too much trouble.

PRESENTATIONS

My students need to have opportunities to present their research using a virtual platform. Therefore, they present to the entire class or in small breakout groups of four or five students. If breakout groups are selected, I ask my parents, caretakers, grandparents, former students, or community volunteers to assist. It is important to monitor students, especially the younger ones, to keep them on track. These classroom helpers basically serve as facilitators and sometimes assist the students in completing the experiments. Another way my students present is through pictures or videos that can be displayed in their digital portfolios. At times, I compile their pictures in a PowerPoint presentation and permit them to discuss their project. As we embrace a new way of learning, students can excel in STEM if provided the opportunity to be exposed to enriched, hands-on learning experiences. When students love STEM, they develop critical thinking skills that transcend all school subjects, and they consider possible careers in STEM-related fields. In these unprecedented times, we must continue to provide students with V.I.P. access to STEM education to inspire hope for the future.

ONLINE LEARNING

Why Teaching Kindergarten Online Is So Very, Very Hard

Teachers, kindergarteners, and parents are trying to make online learning work—and snow days and other future emergencies will likely mean they have to again. But is it really possible?

By [Marva Hinton](#), October 21, 2020

One kindergarten meltdown has become the stuff of legend. In a [story](#) that went viral, a defeated 5-year-old sits in front of his computer screen during class time and simply cries in frustration. The post garnered thousands of sympathetic responses from families across the nation. Teaching our youngest children online, as many parents and teachers can attest, is not quite working out.

And while the pandemic has forced the issue in many U.S. states, there have long been both [federal and state programs](#) that have sought to substitute online teaching for in-person teaching for very young learners.

There are plenty of reasons why it leaves some kids crying. Kindergarten teachers have to cover ground that's taken for granted at other levels: Kids learn how to separate from their caregivers, how to line up, and how to ask to use the restroom. On top of all that, in many

cases, kindergarteners are now expected to learn how to read—one of the most cognitively demanding challenges we take on as a species.

Can teachers really convey things like the importance of cooperation and how to resolve conflict when students only see their friends in tiny boxes through Google Meet or Zoom? What about the intense work that's required to teach a 5-year-old child how to decode words?

And then there's the children, who aren't really built for it. "Kindergartners usually need a lot of movement and exploration, and these are things that you can't really do remotely, especially having to sit and stare at a screen," said Lily Kang, a kindergarten teacher in the Boston area who's teaching her students online this year.

Not far away, Catherine Snow, a professor of education at Harvard, agreed: "The biggest worries about missing in-person kindergarten are about socio-emotional development, learning to work in groups, and things like that," she said.

Having a parent or guardian to assist kindergarten children with online learning makes a big difference. Sophia Prinzivalli's son, Sal, started kindergarten virtually this year in Plantation, Florida, a city about six miles west of Fort Lauderdale. Her husband is charged with making sure their son stays on track.

"The big joke in my family is my husband is going back to kindergarten because I told him you need to sit there with him at the laptop," said Prinzivalli. "And they're both going to have to be educated together and he's going to have to help him through it."

Children with this type of support are more likely to do well with remote instruction, while those without it are more likely to struggle, a fact that further exacerbates existing inequalities. But even with supportive parents or guardians, Snow says, some things are just hard to pick up online.

"Some kids have a lot to learn about how to operate in group settings where you can't just jump up and do whatever you want, whenever you want," said Snow. So how can teachers make this happen? Coordinating with caregivers and providing opportunities for socialization are key.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

This year, and at junctures in the future when kids this young are working from home, like snow days or other emergencies, it's important that kindergarten teachers see their students' parents as partners. Most children at this age can't sign in to an online class without assistance, although once they get the hang of Zoom or Google Meet, many can learn to turn their camera on and off and mute themselves.

Since many parents are stretched thin working from home while also overseeing their children's learning, teachers should make things as simple as possible: Cut down on the number of applications you use—you might even reduce it to one or two—and use a single communication channel like email or text. If you use an LMS, streamline it and post at the same time and the same place every day so that everything is easy to find. Embed links to any required documents or references. When in doubt, keep it simple.

Allison Sawyer is a new kindergarten teacher in Tampa, Florida. She told [Jeffrey S. Solochek with the Tampa Bay Times](#) that when her school went to remote learning, she was able to make things better for her students by listening to their parents' concerns.

"So Sawyer cut back on some of the demands, while keeping expectations high," Solochek wrote. "She focused on just one platform for interactions and links. And she heightened communication with both children and parents, some of whom needed to learn how to guide their kids."

Kindergarten teacher Ruth Calkins emails her students' parents daily. She says when her school went to remote learning last year, she realized that she needed them to make it work. "It was vital for parents to be a part of the virtual learning experience," [Calkins wrote in Edutopia in August](#). "Their children needed the help, and I needed a partner in getting the kids to do their assigned work." Calkins used the check-in emails to provide parents with a list of her expectations for the following day, along with links to assignments and Zoom classes.

ADDRESSING STUDENTS' NEED FOR SOCIALIZATION

Janette Morency's daughter, Olivia, is attending kindergarten virtually this year in Plantation, Florida. "It's very sad for me because she's very social, and being home is not easy on her," said Morency, who's a stay-at-home mom of three, raising an issue that resonates with most families schooling the very young from home today.

Teachers are using several methods to try to help their young students like Olivia get to know one another during distance learning. Some teachers ask questions at the beginning of the day such as, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" that are designed to get kids talking and to help them make connections with one another.

At other schools, children are encouraged to come together for virtual lunch breaks. These informal social gatherings allow the students to see and talk to their friends while they're eating, just like they would at school.

When her kindergarteners were working from home, teacher Samantha Hinds, from New Orleans, provided frequent brain breaks to make sure her young students didn't sit in front of the computer too long. She also used small group instruction to help her students feel more comfortable with each other.

"It's definitely harder to socialize online unless you make it a point to do that," said Hinds. "We spent the first two weeks really getting to know each other. The students greeted each other by name when they came into their small groups, so that they could get to know who their classmates are and what they look like."

Hinds also used closing questions with her students each day. When she asked the students about their favorite snack, they discovered that a lot of them liked the same foods. Her kids have also worked together to make a list of the qualities of a good friend.

She said these practices worked pretty well, although she's now back in class teaching full-time. "They [were] just excited to see other people again, even if it [was] online," said Hinds.

A WORD ON READING AND WRITING

At many schools, the days of kindergarteners fingerpainting and playing in a dress-up corner are long gone. Increasingly, kindergarten has become more academic, with some educators calling it the new first grade. Under these circumstances, many kindergarten students are expected to leave the classroom knowing how to read. Snow finds this troubling.

"All over the world, kids start to learn to read at 6 1/2 or 7," said Snow. "There's nothing magic about learning to read at 5 or at 4. The American obsession is how can we do it earlier, how can we do it faster. And that doesn't necessarily make it better or easier." Snow argues that kindergarten teachers can make the most of remote learning by focusing on helping students to develop unconstrained literacy skills, which are things learned across a lifetime, such as vocabulary and background knowledge. She suggests things like having read-alouds and discussions about the content of a book or having students respond to the book by drawing pictures or using invented spellings to answer questions about it. Teachers can also have their students watch educational videos together and then discuss what they learned.

"If we could take kindergarten back to being a place where kids just get to explore a lot of interesting ideas and they were given a lot of resources to do that, I think they would not suffer in the long run," said Snow. But teachers in districts that push teaching reading can make it work online. Instructional coaches recommend working with students in small groups to go over phonics. Online tools can be used to replicate things like letter tiles to assist with this instruction. Teachers can also use breakout rooms to listen to students read. Another option is to request that parents take short videos of their children reading and email them or upload them on a platform like ClassDojo.

Teachers can have students practice spelling by calling out words and having students write them down using pencil and paper, which they can hold up to the camera. While this all might sound daunting, many parents are appreciative of the effort that teachers are putting in. Prinzivalli said that while online learning is no substitute for "real school," so far things have been going well.

"Despite hiccups with technology, he is a little sponge soaking up the teaching from his teacher," said Prinzivalli. "She's done a great job keeping him engaged and excited about school. His creativity and desire to learn [have] been opened up."



NSPDK, Inc. Beta Zeta Chapter
Presents Reading Power...

BOO
Book-Give-Away!

We will be giving away a treat that keeps on giving... **BOOKS!**

Not reading is the scariest thing ever!

Books for All Ages (Birth to Adult)-Costumes welcomed/not required

Saturday, October 31, 2020

11am to 1pm (while books last)

Hayti Heritage Center 804 Old Fayetteville St.
Parking Lot

Call 919-819-8120 for questions

NSPDK, Inc. Beta Zeta Chapter PO Box 51531 Durham, NC 27717
www.nspdkbetazeta.org

BETA ZETA USED THE FINAL DAY OF OCTOBER TO HAVE A FIRST ANNUAL BOO BOOK-GIVE-AWAY! CHAPTER RAISED SCHOLARSHIP MONEY AND VOTER AWARENESS IN THE BULLCITY.



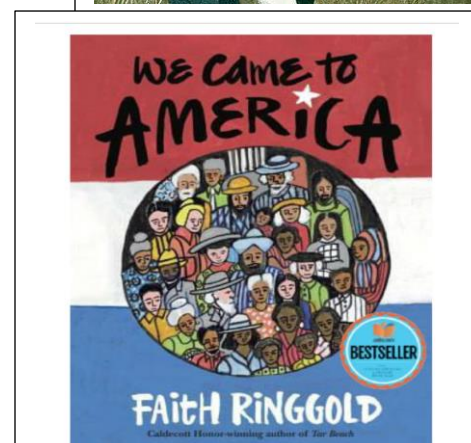
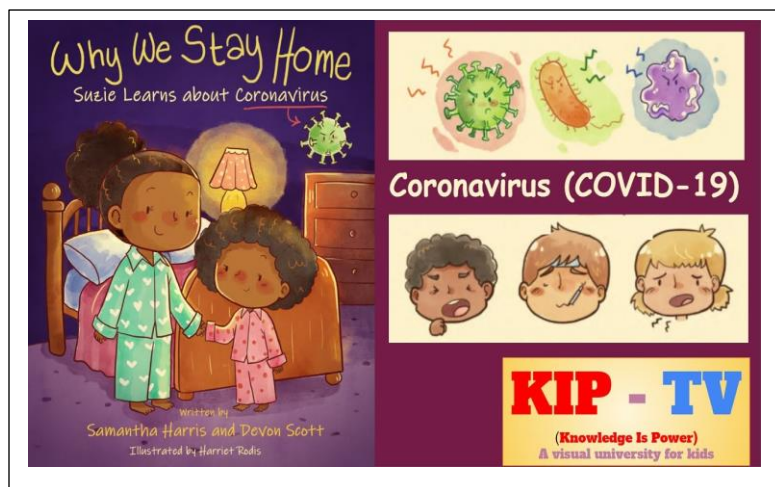
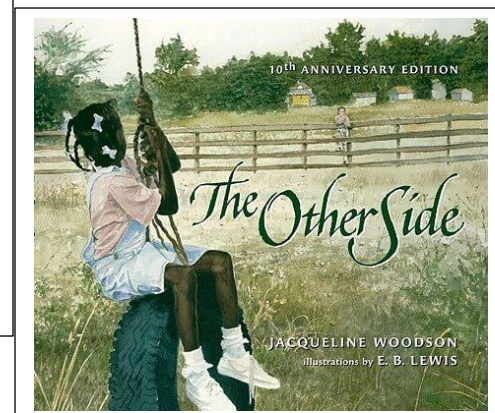
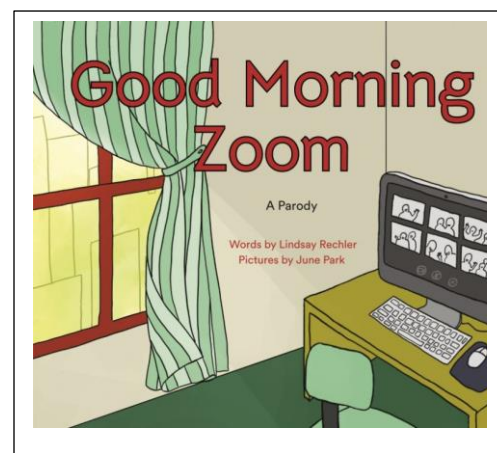
SORORS CAME OUT TO SERVE. WE HIT THE STREETS WITH SIGNS ON OUR SHIRTS AND IN OUR HANDS. FREE BOOKS! FREE VOTE! A MESSAGE FROM NSPDK, INC.!!



Message is, "get a book and VOTE" from #NSPDKINC (Tammy Sneed and Reba



K I D'S O R N E R





Twelve new young ladies were welcomed into the NSPDK, Inc. Alpha Chapter Xinos Club on October 4, 2020. Thank you to all the parents and the Villages" who supported these young ladies throughout the entire summer to get to this point. Looking forward to many great days ahead with our youth! So thankful for Zoom . Perry Jackson , Basileus



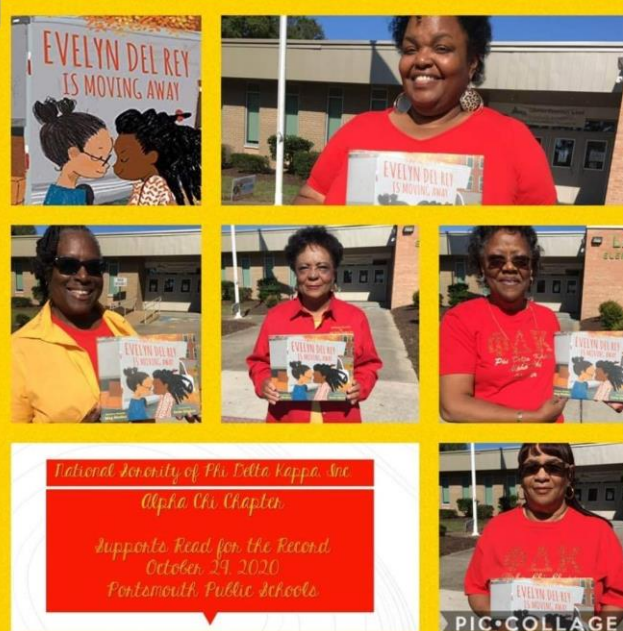
**XI CHAPTER SUPPORTS *ER DRIVE BY BOOK FAIR*.
PRE-K THROUGH GRADE 4 BOOKS GIVEN AT THE
COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH IN CHESTER, PA.**



National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa Inc. Alpha Chi chapter members were on hand to support the Fall Festival Drive By at Victory Crossing Elementary School . As part of the sorority's literacy program Sorors present were Soror Velvet Smith who is the K through two English program specialist and PALS coordinator, Basileus Queen Malone, Marian Carey, Literacy Co-chair, Ruth Coleman and Carolyn Stiff.



Attorney Stephanie Morales was guest reader for the Portsmouth Public Schools



This year was totally different for the Alpha Xinos and Kudos who are usually parading the streets of Newark, NJ, with bottles of water for participants, supporters, and survivors of Breast Cancer. Due to COVID-19, the American Cancer Society had a Pep Rally in a drive-by style in Newark. Although it was not physically the same, the mission remained the same. [Anona Huntley](#) [Francenia Britton](#) [Perry L Jackson](#) [Roseberly Pierre](#)



Making Strides Against Breast Cancer
10/18/2020
National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. Alpha Chapter Xinos and Kudos
CASH → 40
④ CHECKS → 470
online → 60
TOTAL → \$570



NSPDK GOES PINK...



KIMBERLY PHILLIPS



EPSILON TAU CHAPTER

DELTA LAMBDA, BASILEUS



SYDNEY TYSON SIMPSON

JEANETTE REED-DELTA LAMBDA



MARY E. ENNON



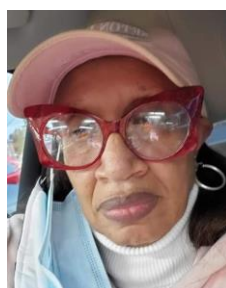
ROSALIND NORRELL-NANCE



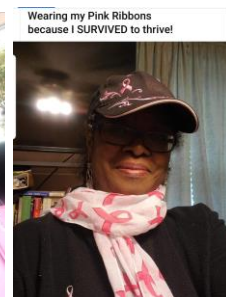
MELANIE HILL-WHITE AND
SHARON E. BROWN-JACKSON



DR. PRINCESS TOWE



CELESTE WALTERS



EPSILON
TAU
CHAPTER



Zeta Delta Chapter



Walks for Breast Cancer Cure and Celebrates Survivors

On Saturday, October 17 in the crisp autumn air, adorned with masks, and wearing bold worded "breast cancer cure" shirts, members of Zeta Delta Chapter assembled on the walking trail at Bloch Park to collectively raise their banner, lift their voice and stamp their feet to wipe -out breast cancer. Most walked, few jogged and fewer strolled around the trail once or twice to secure a cure and support survivors.

Under the pavilion, seated in social distance, members listened as survival members shared narratives and personal journeys as fellow members cheered victories and their successes. The tribute for breast cancer cure concluded with a huge balloon release as members verbally exclaimed names of loved ones who are cancer victims or victors.

Through this event Zeta Delta Chapter members joined millions of others nationally in the fight for a cure for cancer, a crusade for annual medical exams, and positive support for cancer sufferers and survivors.

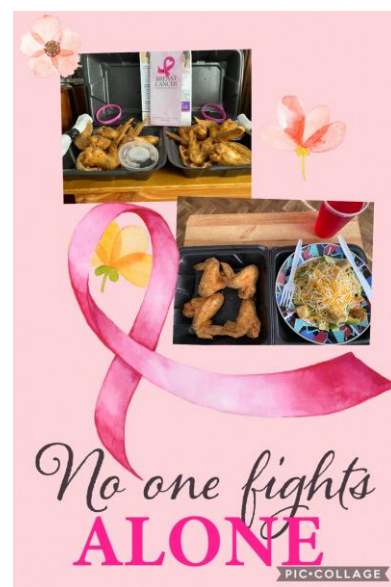
Zeta Delta Chapter, under leadership of Dr. Tonya Chestnut, went on record to passionately advocate education or awareness, early detection, and ultimately the prevention or annihilation of breast cancer, the most common cancer and the leading cause of cancer death in women.

Dr. Tonya Chestnut
Southeastern Region

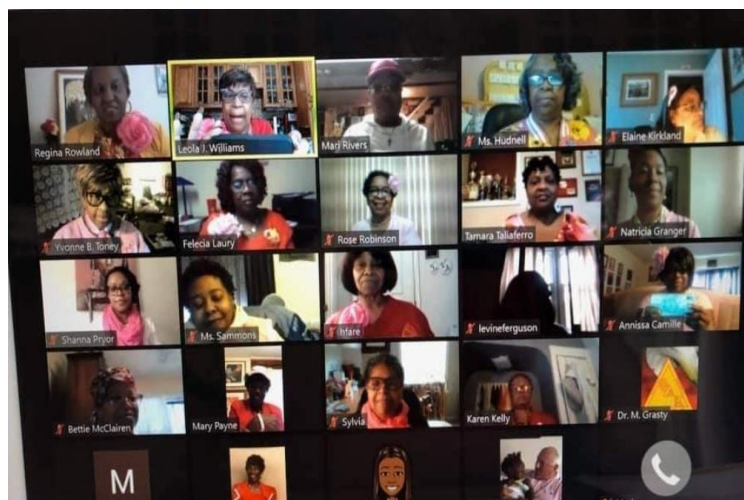


Zeta Beta Chapter, Port Arthur, Texas participated in the Winners for Life Drive-Thru Brunch Breast Cancer Fundraiser, "Wings and Pink Waffles," Oct. 31st to raise funds for free breast mammograms for the less fortunate through the Julie Rogers "Gift of Life" Program. Kudos to Soror Mary Sparks, Chairperson of Health and Hypertension Committee and her committee members for spearheading this Cancer Service Project. My husband, Anthopos Rodney Eddie and others enjoyed the wings and waffles. (Germaine Jackson Eddie)

During Saturday's chapter meeting of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa ,Inc., Alpha Chi chapter, Basileus Queen Malone and the members of the chapter observed breast cancer week by wearing pink as part of their Health, Nutrition, and Hypertension program. Chairperson Ruth Coleman had information on breast cancer shared with the members by Soror Shirley Coleman. The group enjoyed decorations by Soror Velvet Smith who changed orange pumpkins to pink for Breast Cancer month.



During our monthly chapter meeting, Xi handled business as usual and showed our support for Breast Cancer awareness by wearing a dash of PINK



ALPHA CHAPTER XINOS
PACKED HALLOWEEN CANDY BAGS FOR THE CHILDREN AT BABY WORLD IN JERSEY CITY



The public schools may be closed but we are thankful that our daycare centers are still open for the children and families. Soror Rhonda Jackson Baskerville

NSPDK MOVING FORWARD...

DELTA BETA CHAPTER SOUTHWEST REGION

DELIVERS DONATIONS TO RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES – CENTRAL TEXAS

October 23, 2020



Left to right: René Carlin, RMHC Volunteer Manager; Delta Beta Sorors Brenda Rogers, Crystal Jones and Basileus Estelle Brooks

The Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) – Central Texas, an annual service project for the Delta Beta Chapter of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. has been completed successfully!! Many families travel far from home and spend several weeks or months to get treatment for their seriously ill or injured children – a long time to be away or to divide a family. And, for children facing a serious medical crisis, nothing seems scarier than not having mom and dad close by for love and support. The Ronald McDonald House is a “home-away-from-home” for families so they can stay close by their hospitalized child at little to no cost.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic, the items requested—hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, dryer sheets and dishwashing liquid—for proper cleaning and sanitation of the facility were ordered online through Amazon for delivery directly to the Ronald McDonald House. After all donations ordered on Amazon were delivered to RMHC, Soror Crystal Jones coordinated the date and time with the RMHC Volunteer Manager, Mr. René Carlin for the outdoor presentation of the donations to RMHC from Delta Beta Chapter. On October 23, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. Basileus Estelle Brooks joined by Sorors Brenda Rogers and Crystal Jones, and Mr. Carlin completed the presentation of the donations to RMHC. Delta Beta Chapter agrees to carry on this worthwhile annual event in year 2021.

Submitted by:
Soror Crystal L. Jones
Public Relations Chair, Delta Beta Chapter (Southwest Region)

CONGRATULATIONS to Soror Kristy Jones for being recognized by the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Indianapolis Chapter, Inc. as the 2020 Breakthrough Woman in Education! 🌟 Soror Kristy, a Tau neophyte member of the line VIRTUAL REINCARN8ION, is the Founding Assistant Principal of Promise Prep. 📖🍎 If that is not enough, she is also the founder of her own nonprofit community organization called Spirit of the Village, Inc. 😊 whose mission is to educate parents and guardians on how to navigate the educational system and advocate more effectively for their student(s). Tau Chapter is honored to have this visionary leader in our sisterhood. ❤️



Congratulations to the Sorors of the Alpha Chapter of NSPDK, Inc. Your Teach-A-Rama on Saturday was thought provoking and outstanding in content. I will be answering the call to Level Up for Social Justice ❤️❤️❤️❤️



Chi-Town (by way of New York) aspiring Broadway star, dance performance poet, and published author ended up creating curriculum, designing courses, and teaching at an Arkansas HBCU. Learn about word processors, NSPDK, Inc., and Philander Smith College's Creatives. Stay tuned until the very end to get mesmerized by Dr. Carla Carter's original spoken word! (click on link)

[Walk and Talk with Veteran Educator Dr. Carla F. Carter](#)



Basileus Mu chapter



PLEASE WELCOME
National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc
 Gamma Nu Chapter

SPRING 2020
KAPPA OMICRON TAU MEMBERS

Supreme Basileus, Dr. Etta F. Carter
Southwest Regional Director, Anita O'Neal

Pandemic 3



ASYA WEBSTER
 KETURAH BROWN
 DOROTHY WILLIAMS

WELCOME TO THE SISTERHOOD
SOROR SHARON WILLIS, MU CHAPTER



National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Incorporated
Alpha Chapter

#NSPKALPHA




VIRTUAL
Teach-A-Rama
2020



National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Incorporated
Alpha Chapter

#NSPKALPHA



VIRTUAL
Teach-A-Rama
2020

THE BASILEUS' ROCKIN' SORORS SISTERHOOD AWARD



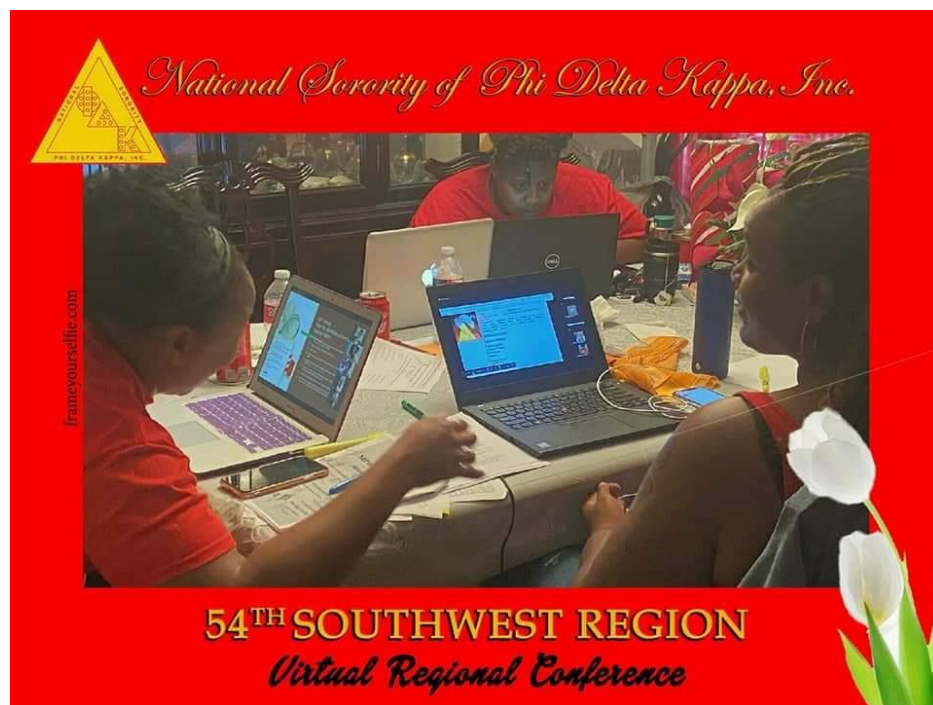
THE BASILEUS' ROCKIN' SORORS PRIDE AWARD





GAMMA ALPHA SOROR TINA ALLEN WILL BE A PRESENTER AT THE TEACHER SELF-CARE CONFERENCE IN JANUARY 2021. PLEASE CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO REGISTER:

[tina allen](https://bit.ly/janselfcare)



The Sorors of the Gamma Nu Chapter Of The National Sorority Of Phi Delta Kappa, Incorporated hosted an October fundraiser tonight! We rented out a private theater for 20! We secured the first showing so we were the first inside, and it was capped at 20 people. Plenty of room for social distancing and the kids could talk, scream, and run around all they wanted. Stress-free movie experience while raising money for our beloved sorority! ❤️👉👈 #NSPDKGammaNu



THANK YOU EASTERN REGION LITERACY CHAIR, MARIA ALLMOND AND COMMITTEE, SOROR SUZANNE GIBBS/RSVP COMMITTEE, AND RHO CHAPTER FOR A SUCCESSFUL ER BOOK GIVE AWAY!



LEADERSHIP
IS ABOUT MAKING OTHERS
BETTER AS A
RESULT OF YOUR PRESENCE
AND MAKING **SURE**
THAT IMPACT LASTS IN YOUR
ABSENCE.



Jarian R. Graham
National Public Relations Director
nspdk.pr@gmail.com

