

Consistency

10/9/20

From The Principal's Pen

During autumn evenings, I like to sit on the front porch, surrounded by quiet, considering the events of the day. For the last few nights, as I sat in my rocking chair, I noticed a faint blinking red light off to the north that eventually crossed in front of the house at around 30,000 feet and then disappeared into the distant horizon of the east. After the third night of watching the light travel the same path at around the same time, I got curious. It turns out that the plane is a regularly scheduled flight from Chicago to Charlotte. It takes off around 6:20 in Chicago and lands around 9:30 in Charlotte. A little after 8:30 each evening, it appears in the night sky. It caught my attention because of its consistency.

Those of us that struggle with overorganization often crave consistency, predictability, and routines. There is an unquestionable comfort in being able to anticipate what's next. There is comfort in having a well thought through plan. It is an understatement to say that I function better in this kind of environment. From a regular morning routine to a schedule for my days, I crave the comfort of consistency.

As we have started back to school, we are all settling into the new routines associated with face to face instruction. Morning arrival routines, meeting routines, and dismissal routines are all becoming part of our typical day again. For most of our students, this also includes new afternoon routines and homework. Like adults, many students need the comfort of predictability in their lives. For the last six months, they have settled into a routine that did not include having to get out of bed and get ready for school. The sooner we can reestablish these patterns, the easier it will be for them to adapt to the new normal of school life.

Changing our routines can be difficult. Tonight is the first time I have written one of these posts in the evening since I began writing them after students were sent home in March. I settled in and enjoyed writing time in the mornings with a cup of coffee in my hand. Writing before the sun came up was the norm, but I now realize that my mornings are quite full, and I have shifted my routine to write in the evenings after dinner. I'm not sure I like it! I am reminded that settling into a new habit can be a struggle for some of us. If you are dealing with a child struggling with the new routine of school, I encourage you to give them a little space and a bit of grace. They may need some time to embrace it. Most of them need routines, they need consistency, and they need a little time to figure it out.

While I am struggling with some parts of this new process, I have fallen in love with other features. My new favorite part of the day is greeting our students and watching them enter the adventure of the

day with wide-eyed enthusiasm and excitement. I find myself in the evenings looking forward to the mornings and the experience that awaits. As crazy as it sounds, I love the car line, the good mornings, and the hellos. I have to remind myself that while change can be scary and I still hate having my plans and routines altered without warning, sometimes the new opportunities are amazing. Just like the opportunity to greet our incredible kids every day!