



MAP ACADEMY

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[Episode 12: Whatever They Need, Whatever It Takes](#)

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[drum beats]

Nick: Last week we heard how Map Academy's asynchronous blended model allowed the school to pivot quickly to remote learning.

Maxanne: Because we are such a flexible place all the time, because we're always pivoting every day by design.

Ryan: We were able to just fluidly move on to student support because they already have computers.

Nick: In today's episode of *Education Disruption*, we'll talk to the staff and co-founders of Map Academy, a charter school in **[00:00:30]** Plymouth, Massachusetts, that, like all other schools in Massachusetts, has been forced to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We'll find out how they're adapting their wraparound supports to meet the immediate and evolving needs of their students. This was recorded the first full week of the shutdown.

Maxanne: I think we're lucky at Map—

Nick: That's Maxanne, a wraparound co-lead and social worker at Map.

Maxanne: —because we are so relationship-based and so connection-driven **[00:01:00]** that we have, as a staff, collectively established very good relationships with our students.

Ryan: I think we're set up from the get-go for a worst-case scenario like this.

Nick: Ryan is a student services co-lead and special education teacher.

Ryan: We don't want this going on. We want the students here; the students want to be here. We foundationally are set up for being able to still function and adapt and adjust for the students and the families. That first move was, how are we going to support the kids? We **[00:01:30]** know that our kids rely on us for food. We know that our kids rely on us for mental health supports. We know that they rely on us for that more. A lot of our students, we are that haven. We are that connection. We are the reliable stable factor in their life.

Nick: To maintain that reliable, stable connection, Map Academy kept a small team working on-site to ensure students' and families' needs are being met. That includes academic and emotional support. In addition to providing resources [00:02:00] and supplies, Map immediately addressed the access to food and began serving grab and go breakfast and lunch as well as daily deliveries of food and other critical essentials.

Maxanne: We literally delivered a refrigerator because one of my students wanted food, but didn't have a way to store it because he didn't have a refrigerator. We added Narcan to the list of deliveries and then were able to secure additional Narcan because we have concern that as the situation lengthens and stressors increase, it may be a resource [00:02:30] that's needed.

Ryan: We play it student by student. You're just trying to find the right time to get them engaged, but just making sure, letting them know that we're always there to support them with whatever they need, whether it's academics or just tech support or food or water, or toilet paper or anything that their families or themselves need.

Maxanne: I have a young boy who's on house arrest and he's currently living in a shelter. He's only allowed to come to school now school is closed. His mother has lost her job [00:03:00] because she can't work. The week prior she had already had to lose her job because she couldn't come to work and leave him at the shelter alone. Even to go grocery shopping is a violation for him if he goes with her. He has to go with her because he can't stay at the shelter alone. They're very much in this difficult limbo of they can't win. We've been doing daily Monday through Friday outreach in person of food delivery. The support staff has been taking him for a walk. [00:03:30]

Lance: Like multigrain bars and bagels and cereals—

Nick: Of course, while maintaining appropriate social distancing, food delivery touchpoints are much more than just delivering food. Lance, the community support partner at Map, was on the road making these deliveries and also just touching base with students and families.

Lance: Right now, I've done [00:04:00] five. Then I check in with a sixth. I've been to like five towns. I make it a point to know the kids and the families really well. I want to see the same families every day. The consistency of seeing the same families every day allows me to assess and see if there's anything different or anything alarming. [00:04:30] I can give good quality feedback because I have every previous day of experience to draw from.

Nick: Lance isn't the only Map staff out making these deliveries. Map is currently serving 61 families, including one family in a shelter, two parenting moms, one pregnant student, and eight homeless students. The needs are evolving as the crisis drags on.

Maxanne: It's very difficult because if the way the disease is spread, if they're in a shelter [00:05:00] and one person gets sick, it's likely it's going to go through the shelter. Which makes it hard obviously to manage the situation. Some of the shelters that we've been working with student-wise have closed access to any outside staff. I have one mom She just had her baby during this pandemic. She's staying at a shelter [00:05:30] and the shelter is basically locked down. We're not allowed to access her except through the telephone and email. She's actually pretty remarkable. She's been completing work and engaging with support staff and she got a baby like five days ago.

Nick: Map staff is also helping students navigate housing, sobriety, job security, and unemployment applications. They're assisting with the access to healthcare as families transition to telehealth, which poses a host of other challenges.

Maxanne: We've been outreaching to all of our students, but we've been working really **[00:06:00]** hard to have a touchpoint of our students that we know are housing insecure. The far the ripple effect for our young people who are now at risk of losing their jobs and unemployment. Then if that's to increase in terms of fair housing ability. Also, unfortunately, a lot of our-- not just Map's older students, but the young adults in the world who are trying to stay in recovery right now, it's very difficult because all face-to-face meetings have been canceled.

Nick: The staff at Map **[00:06:30]** are trying to do their best to fill in the gaps wherever possible.

Lance: I want to do whenever the most important thing is given the circumstance. Right now this is the most important thing.

Ryan: We are so accommodating and were always looking out for the best interest of the kids, even here that this is normal for them. Even though they're not physically with us, we're still acting as if we're functioning as a normal day, even though it's not normal, it's the furthest thing from **[00:07:00]** normal. We're still supporting our students.

Maxanne: Yes. It feels pretty amazing in light of such a crisis the way that this school community has really rallied around our students and their families and that the staff have been able to work so effectively together with all the restraints that are currently in place around social distancing, that we've been able **[00:07:30]** to use technology and human-like outreach to really maintain those connections.

Nick: Even with having to close their doors to students, Map is still able to provide all of these wraparound supports. This has been a special edition of *Education Disruption*; stay tuned. We'll be back next week to talk about how academic progress continues through the crisis. If you enjoyed this episode, please give it a rating. Don't forget to subscribe for more episodes about how a **[00:08:00]** school like Map Academy is disrupting the traditional model of education. My name is Nick Tetrault. Our executive producer is Kristen Hughes, and this is a Hairpin production.

[silence]

Rachel: Hey, this is Rachel, co-founder of Map Academy. As you can probably tell from that episode, Map Academy is a really unique school. We're constantly **[00:08:30]** looking for new talent to join our team. If you or someone works in education or youth development and wants to make a difference, check out our website, themapacademy.org. We're always looking for talented teachers and youth development staff that are ready to do high school differently and serve the students that find their way to us. Thanks for listening.

[00:08:58] [END OF AUDIO]