Volatile just one effect of virus on schools

Many have tried to describe and give relevance to the last 200 days. But none have come as close to capturing the essence more than the use of the acronym, VYCA. VYCA is the acronym created by a child to represent the daily activity of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. It stands for "Vocal Yelling, Crying, and Antisocialness." It got that name because it’s the reality to date for a time in the world where the situation is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. While it lends itself to an overall feeling of negativity, confusion, and being untrue, many have used the acronym built within VYCA times to understand, appreciate, and grow as we come.

We have never faced such a time when change has moved so quickly through our lives. The rapid rise of the "new situation" at hand has allowed us to finalize the course alterations or implement the plans we needed to address yesterday’s situation. This volatility brings the uncertainty of what will come next and has led to different facets of our personal, virtual, and school-based landscape. As you are facing this unknown, and when tomorrow arrives, we face differing opinions from experts, news data, revised plans, community outcry, all of which yield the complexity, making every decision a wrench decision for someone. And finally, because our senses are keenly aware of the fragility humans are regressing, one care toward the other.

In the last 200 days, many of us have had multiple opportunities to meet our values and our understandings. We may even have had an opportunity to care for others and make our school settings feel as comforting and safe as possible. We understand how this is an indescribable need to belong. It was always understood how school settings often give us a sense of belonging. Whether we identify with our school mascot, with values when we wear our school colors, feel safe inside our classrooms, or just find joy being with our school friends, we now fully understand how "going to school" gives us purpose and reason. That sense of belonging has been understood to be a new degree by students and staff alike. We understand just how important school is to the whole child.

Caring for our students has always been part of our DNA. However, over the last 200 days how we care for students and parents has looked very different from afar. The normal smile is now covered by a mask, so the words you say are more important than ever. And each day holding one adjustment after another, is a huge under-statement. Taking time to volatility and finding what we value, turning our uncertainty into deeper understanding, using care to simplify the complexity and making adjustments to bring clarity to the ambiguous will allow us to be the architects of post-COVID education.

The NCECS SEL team has presented nationally on creating environments where all students feel safe and supported.

**Shannon Cos, Superintendent**
Montgomery County Educational Service Center

Through a partnership with the Miami Valley Career Technology Center, the MCECS student population has access to education education through counseling instructors, books, and materials.

**MARIETTA HARRIS**

MEET THE MCECS – MARIETTA HARRIS

Marietta Harris enjoys reading the Bible in the morning. When she gets hectic, she finds comfort in the pages. And does not get hectic in her world. Marietta is one of the MCECS school psychologists. The Wilberforce University and University of Dayton graduate is in her 30th year in education and second at the Montgomery County Educational Service Center. She is at the Dayton Regional STEM School Monday and Wednesday. On Tuesday, Thursday and Friday she is working in the district. Each school is unique in how they approach educating children. “In addition to supporting teachers and staff with special education, and the intervention programs, I want students to determine if they have a desire or career or mental health,” Harris says. “I am concerned with students as needed, taking with them about concerns they have regarding their education and the future.”

The NCECS SEL team is partnering with the Miami Valley Career Technology Center to support the students of the MCECS student population in accessing to trade education including instructors, books, and materials. The NCECS students will receive hands-on instruction and virtually a career-based skill.

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**Ari Davies**

Ari Davies is an associate of the Miami Valley Career Technology Center. Davies believes that the COVID-19 pandemic further underscores the importance of SEL as essential in high-quality, comprehensive education. For more information visit the SEL Emotional Learning Pages on moosic.org.