

# School District of BELOIT

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October 2021 - Teaching in a COVID-19 Year

## Anything but Normal

We've heard it over and over - the last two years have been anything but normal. Words like quarantine, social distancing, and Zoom flooded our conversations with family, friends, and co-workers. The world we once knew came to an abrupt stop as we relearned how to manage our days that mainly consisted of us staying home as much as possible.

Teachers everywhere worked even harder to meet their students' needs, and districts had to make many difficult decisions about what to do next. All the while, we heard so many say, "I can't wait to get back to normal."

As a newer teacher, I didn't really have a "normal" to get back to. I was just starting my career...literally. I started officially working in the district in January, about five days after I completed my student teaching. Not even two months later, I received an email about school buildings shutting down. I was confused and deeply disappointed. I was just getting into the swing of things and finding my place at my school.

## Excited to Get Creative

Although waiting to find out what would come next was difficult, I was excited. I was excited to try something new. I was excited to get creative with my teaching, not just follow the script and the same old routine. I was excited to add some of my own talents and interests to my teaching in an effort to get my kids learning from home.

At first, it was difficult, but as time went on, it was easier and fun. As we moved into the 2020-2021 school year, I was a little sad about starting virtually, but I again relied on my talents and what I knew best to carry me through. At least 90% of my class participated virtually in daily lessons and created some of the best relationships with students I have ever made. Although school was different from normal, we still were learning together in different ways, and our eyes were opened to how lucky we were to get to go to school.

## Over the Moon to be back in School

There's no doubt that I was over the moon when I heard we'd be coming back completely in person this year, though. I've longed for that first day of school when you meet the kids for the first time and watch as they add their own gifts and talents to the classroom.

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I'm proud of all of us for sticking it out and adapting. I'm even more proud of the students who have overcome such an obstacle and who have taught us so much.

This pandemic has definitely been challenging in so many ways, but I am grateful for the way it has pushed me past the barriers I set in my own mind about the way to teach. It showed me how to be the educator I've always wanted to be, and it reminds me that my learning isn't finished.

COVID-19 has taught me how to be a better teacher, and as for normal, I really hope we don't get back to it.