

## September 2020 Bulletin



Welcome to Fall! Here in the U.S., the end of summer means back-to-school. In France, it is la rentrée, which is a major cultural event that involves everyone, not just parents and teachers, but also the government and employers who welcome people back from the long August vacation. France has a national school system, so everyone starts on the same day, leading to a widely shared experience and traffic jams on the roads into metropolitan areas. La rentrée brings a sort of renewed optimism with children excited to be heading back to school, parents visiting with friends they have not seen in a few months, and a general happiness to be back to the schedules of work and school. A new school year in the U.S. brings much excitement and anticipation for what will come. But, of course, this year has been a little different.

### La Rentrée 2020

In Nantes, while some of the preparations for back to school such as purchasing of supplies are the same, there has not been the usual congregation of parents outside of the schools in the first few weeks as the children enter the buildings. All students are supposed to be back to school in person. Going back to school means wearing masks for those over age 11; all teachers must wear masks, and masks are necessary for outside as well as inside (except for primary students). Masks are also mandatory nearly everywhere in France right now, even at work and walking outside in the streets with fines imposed for violating the directive.

Still, the Nantais are adapting. We have heard some comments (here translated into English) from teachers and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at École élémentaire Anatole de Monzie in Nantes (first day of class at the school below; photo from Ouest-France):



From the Director of the school:

"Despite the situation, I find that the students are rather calm. It will be necessary to relearn habits after the end of the unusual year. But I have the impression that they adapt easily."

From the teachers:

"I am discovering the difficulty of wearing a mask the whole day, even during recess. At the end of the day, my throat is dry, I am very thirsty. One will have to get used to it. Overall, everything is going well, all the students have returned to school and it is satisfying."

"I am happy to meet a new class. However, I would have liked to remove my mask because it is tiring to wear for the whole day."

From the students:

"It was strange because we have a new teacher in the school. We also changed classes and we don't have all our friends in our classes. On the playground in June there was a fence to separate the classes, but it isn't there now, that's better."

"I changed schools, so this is all strange to me but in the end not much has changed. I have already made friends."

"I really liked the start of school. But it is stressful with Covid because the teachers have masks. Sometimes I don't hear well and I can't tell if they are smiling or not."

"I enjoyed starting school again but because of the coronavirus we don't go onto the same playground as the little kids, we can't be with them, that's too bad."

## Back to School in Seattle

Alaina McCallum, our VP of SNSCA, is experiencing firsthand the current way of teaching and learning in the Seattle Public School system at McClure Middle School.

"There is always a sense of excitement associated with the start of a school year; the newness and unknown can be exhilarating. This year was definitely no exception. With last school year ending in such an unpredictable way in Seattle, this year began with a lot of loose ends still untied.

Seattle Schools are completely remote, and all students have district devices to access school. The first two vocabulary words that most students learned this year were synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous learning refers to the live online class meetings; the asynchronous learning refers to the independent work time. My students have at least three and a half hours of synchronous lessons each day. Instead of attending all six classes in one day, students are on a block schedule most the week, which offers time during the day to complete their independent work.

McClure 2020-2021 Distance Learning Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9:00-9:50	Period 1: sync	Period 4: sync	9:00-9:25 Advisory	Period 1: sync	Period 4: sync
9:55-10:45	async/ small group	async/ small group	small sync groups and/or async work	async/ small group	async/ small group
10:45-10:55	break	break		break	break
10:55-11:45	Period 2: sync	Period 5: sync	9:30-10:05   P 1 10:10-10:50   P 2 10:55-11:35   P 3	Period 2: sync	Period 5: sync
11:50-12:40	async/ small group	async/ small group	11:35-12:20   lunch 12:25-1:05   P 4 1:10-1:50   P 5	async/ small group	async/ small group
12:40-1:25	lunch	lunch	1:55-2:35   P 6	lunch	lunch
1:25-2:15	Period 3: sync	Period 6: sync		Period 3: sync	Period 6: sync
2:20-3:10	async/ small group	async/ small group		async/ small group	async/ small group
3:15-3:50	Advisory	Advisory		Advisory	Advisory

sync = synchronous = LIVE Teams meeting  
async = asynchronous = independent work

The beginning of this school year is definitely an adjustment for students and families alike. I am impressed with students' tenacity as they navigate the new platforms for learning. I am delighted that I have high attendance, though students still are not turning on their cameras... teaching to dots on a screen is an interesting experience."

**Another aspect of Fall is the SNSCA annual general meeting.** We will end this look at la rentrée with a reminder for members to place your order for either the apple brandy or the bookmark by Oct 10 to [seattlenantesSCA@gmail.com](mailto:seattlenantesSCA@gmail.com). We hope you will join us for this year's brief but fun virtual AGM on Nov 15 5:00-5:30pm, where we will have some exciting announcements and a raffle winner.