

The COVID-19 pandemic closed school buildings in the Spring of 2020. Schools had to adapt rapidly to provide remote instruction. What did you, as a student, learn from this experience? What should school districts do to prepare if this were to happen again?

Gaining Knowledge from COVID-19

As I was sitting at my desk in my room texting all my friends about how crazy everything seemed to be getting with the pandemic, my mom walked in to tell me something that made this COVID-19 virus a reality for me. Our schools were closed, closed, and shutting down for the rest of my junior year. All at once, I started thinking of everything this meant. I couldn't sit with all my friends at lunch, I couldn't finish working on my projects in ceramics class, and I couldn't live out the rest of my junior year of high school.

The first few days of staying at home weren't too bad. I chatted with my friends and did a few assignments I had left. My family and I all played board games to pass the time. After about the first week of not waking up for school, I soon realized that going to school wasn't just about sitting in math class learning the quadratic formula, or writing essays for English; it was about making memories with the people you cherish most. School was about making new friends, sharing crazy stories at lunch, sharing smiles with the kid with glasses you pass on your way to chemistry class. I missed the small things. I hate to admit it, but I even missed having to crawl out of bed each morning hurrying to be on time for my first hour.

Returning to school for my senior year, I went in with the knowledge of knowing how to appreciate the small moments. I started this year looking at school differently. One of the goals I set for myself for this year was to make the most out of every moment that I can. I want to cherish the time I spend with friends and make the most memories that I can. After the schools shut down in the spring, I learned that we aren't always guaranteed endless time with each other. Sometimes things happen and we can't fulfill all the moments we want to spend together. We have to spend each day like we're not promised tomorrow.

Being a senior this year with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is scary. I wish more than anything that I can spend my last year of school with the people I've been around since before I knew how to count to 10. The thing that makes this virus so scary is how much is unknown and unpredictable about it. If schools needed to shut down again, I think the district's main focus for students should be to keep the face-to-face interaction even when students have to be at home. Zoom and google meet are a great way for students and teachers to stay connected. As a student, I would love to be able to use those online video chat resources to have a scheduled school day. It would be more helpful if students could watch their teacher lecture live while being able to ask questions as if we were seated in class. The district should encourage schools to have live online classes for students. I struggled with a few of my classes in the spring just because I needed to ask questions that were too hard to ask over an email.

Having a scheduled school day online would also help students keep a positive mentality. Being at home with no schedule is hard for students to stay motivated and activated. It was very easy to fall into a slump each day just because I didn't have a normal routine. Many students at my school shared on social media that they struggled with anxiety and being overwhelmed by the absence of lectures and face-to-face classes. Using online video chat resources would be a great way for students to stay positive and healthy during this pandemic.