



THE NEVER ENDING BREAK

COVID-19 OUTBREAK CAUSES SCHOOL CLOSURES, TEST CANCELLATIONS, STUDENT ADAPTATION TO E-LEARNING

What started as an extra week off after spring break soon became over two months of online school. After Collin County issued a shelter-in-place order and Texas Governor Greg Abbott enforced state-wide school closures for the rest of the school year, teachers and students prepared for the long haul of at-home, online learning.

“There’s so much less work, which I love,” senior Oghenesuvwe Kokoricha said. “I spend more energy on learning the material and on individual assignments. Before, I used to just get through a ton of assignments to keep my grades up without understanding much. The lighter workload helps, and all my teachers have been great at using Google Classroom and are still available through Zoom.”

Even teachers faced a learning curve to adapt. Teachers modified their curriculum for at-home learning, which meant condensing lessons to assign online and utilizing conference tools, like Zoom, to communicate with students.

“I think one pro is that it helps students prepare for future online classes in a college setting,” precalculus teacher Andrew Stallings said. “Of course, it is also helpful to keep the educational ball rolling and the mind working during unfortunate disruptions. One big con is being disconnected from my students physically. It’s one thing if students go into a course knowing that it will be online, but it is a difficult change to lose the daily energy of being immersed in learning in a classroom with my students.”

The district invested in technology security for Zoom to be utilized for non-traditional classes. The yearbook staff heavily relied on video conferencing to meet and plan the remainder of their book in order to make their final publication deadline.

“I think our yearbook Zoom meetings are definitely necessary to finishing our book because we were so close to finishing (before spring break),” sophomore Sydney Chapman said. “I think we all will do whatever it takes to make sure the book is finished and ready for the community and student body to enjoy. It’s been different than normal class because, normally, we just have one Monday meeting and the rest of the time is work time. But on Zoom, our meetings are typically longer because we have to come up with our work plans since we’re all new to this. It is nice to see everyone’s faces and have human interaction on Zoom, so I do like it.”

Statewide, Gov. Abbott suspended all state testing requirements on March 18, meaning that all STAAR tests were canceled. Despite school closures and state testing cancellations, students were still required to learn content and prepare for their AP exams.

“For some (AP exams) I’m less nervous, like Lit, but for others, like Statistics, I’m more nervous,” Oghenesuvwe said. “I’m studying with websites and YouTube channels for most classes and with review books for others like I did last year.” *story by Anna Beard and Allie Conrad; icon created by Weltenraser, via the Noun Project, licensed under CC BY 2.0*