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A new normal

Coronavirus cancellations cost to co-curriculars

EVA MCCORD '21
Supervising Editor at Large

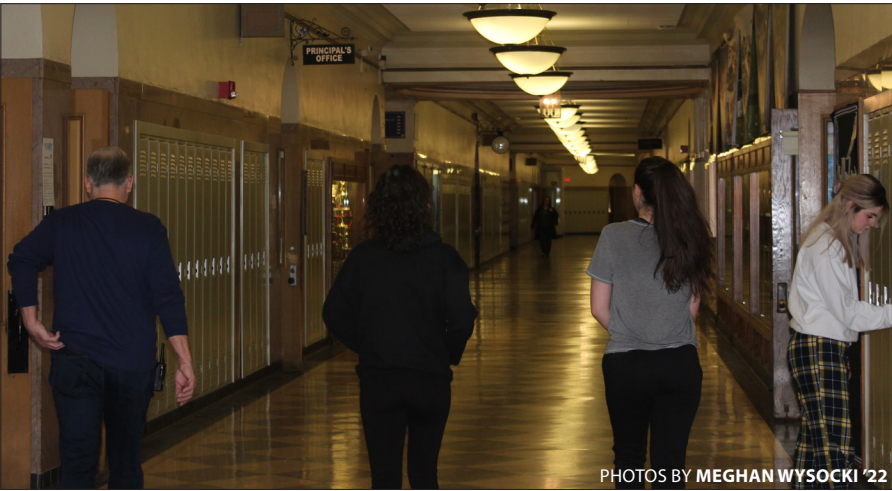
Empty halls. Empty classrooms. Empty hearts. Last week, what seemed like an abstract issue became much more real to students at South, according to Steven Spangler '21. "I woke up the next morning and thought, 'Oh my god. This isn't real,'" Spangler said. "This isn't some distant problem anymore. It's with us." Students across the Grosse Pointe community found themselves in the same flustered, uncertain panic as Spangler following Michigan governor Gretchen Whitmer's announcement on Thursday, March 12. The governor stated the closures of all K-12 schools until April 6 across Michigan as the country grapples with slowing the exponential spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). As of Tuesday, March 17, the state boasts 54 positive cases-- a dramatic jump from the two initial cases identified one week ago on Tuesday, March 10. "I know this will be a tough time, but we're doing this to keep the most people we can safe," Whitmer said in her statement. "I urge everyone to make smart

choices during this time and to do everything they can to protect themselves and their families." The Friday after the announcement, students found themselves returning to school to collect their belongings from their lockers and walking the halls for, presumably, the final time until mid-spring. However, even after the reality of the situation set in and the district officially shifted to remote learning, students continued to mourn another integral part of their traditional high school lives: their teams and extracurricular activities. "The robotics team, as a whole, was crushed when we heard the news," Spangler said. "I could barely focus in seventh hour-- all I was thinking about was how much time we lost."

Spangler, the programming controls captain on North and South's joint robotics team the Gearheads, helped lead the team to victory in their most recent competition at the Milford District Event. And yet, the celebrations were cut short after the operators of the FIRST Robotics Competition suspended the current FIRST season as well as both championship events, leaving many teams across the nation with little to no record of competing for the 2019-2020 season. "I have, with no exaggeration, most likely put over 175 hours into programming the team's robot and helping out the team as a whole," Spangler said. "To hear that you can't even compete in a full season and need to scrap all of the work you've done and start fresh for next year was crushing." As a to-be senior on the team, Spangler expressed concern not just for this year's team, but for the future of the team's skills, size and legacy. "Robotics gives me the drive to do everything else I need to do," Spangler said. "Freshmen who just joined and haven't had the chance to fall in love with robotics are now both loosely tied to the team and less experienced than they should be by now. We could be facing a skills gap and a drop in membership."

This sentiment is shared by the South's fellow academic team of Science Olympiad, who were expected to send both a varsity and a junior varsity team to the regional competition later this month prior to its cancellation, according to Shannon Kerr '20. However, these same disappointments are echoed by members of South's artistic community, Andrew Fleming '20 said, as the theater program struggles to determine how to best approach the spring musical. "There's just a lot of hypothetical situations that could play out," Fleming said. "It is such a hard blow to the program to not be in school for four weeks; the show is so reliant on after-school rehearsals."

As of now, the program is debating between whether or not the musical will be pushed back and performed at a later date or performed in a concert-style, in which the songs are preserved while the production elements are dropped, Fleming said. In essence, he said all members of the department are trying to avoid the worst case scenario of cancellation. "It's obviously been hard, especially being a senior," Fleming said. "(As someone who is also heavily involved with student council), a lot of the things that we've seen so many other classes get to experience are up in the air right now (such as prom and graduation)." As uncertainty runs deep throughout the student body, athletes are facing the brunt of the fallback, with preventative measures against the virus resulting in public gyms, pools and training grounds being virtually inaccessible. To add insult to injury, swimmer Isabella Gelle '21 and the rest of the swim team were unable to compete at the state meet, leaving many to-be seniors proverbially "stuck" with their sophomore year times when applying to college. "I'm an athlete (representative) for



EMPTY HALLS A hall monitor escorts two students to their lockers to retrieve their books and supplies. Students were only allowed in the building in small groups for precautionary safety measures.



RELEASING DEVICES Secretary for Assistant Principals, Heidi Hannan helps a student sign out a Chromebook to use during the three-week period of remote learning. GPPSS has a limited number of devices available for families in need.

USA Swimming and for Michigan," Gelle said. "I was involved in the conversations surrounding whether or not states would be closed, and we all knew no one would be happy." According to Gelle, swimmers are especially impacted by the closures in that swimming requires constant practice and dedication, and without one's coach to correct their mistakes, even the minimal opportunities to practice are less than ideal. At this time, athletes are staying in communication with recruiters as to the future of postponed events, considerations for the 2020-2021 application year and the opportunity to get back in the water as a whole. "All of the swimmers are very upset, as you would expect them to be," Gelle said. "I'm sure they'd swim even if it meant they would get (the virus)-- they care that much about the sport."

For these students and the South student body as a whole, the virus is more than mere downtime away from school and online classes-- it's a separation from one's passions and motivations. In an email from the GPS Mental Health Team on Monday, March 16, the team encouraged students to seek acceptance of the situation and find ways to healthily embrace the change. "Be like the water that passes the rock in the middle of the stream without resistance," the email read. "The water doesn't pound on the rock, screaming, the water moves to the side and continues, focusing on what and where it can." Though a both daunting and disappointing task to take on, the student body has found solace in reaching out to one another and acknowledging the nature of the situation by taking days as they come, according to Fleming. "I think the best thing that we can do is to go one day at a time because we (genuinely) don't know what's going on," Fleming said. "We have to take it day by day (and) live in the now."

Hiding behind a happy face

KATIE MARALDO '21
Staff Writer

When in high school, the pressure is on with homework, activities, social life and fulfilling all the requirements needed to

be considered successful. These pressures can lead to serious mental health issues like depression and anxiety. Depression and anxiety can also be caused by human biology with hormones, according

to clinical social worker Raine Gersky. Gersky said she's seen different experiences of the ways teens handle depression. "I do notice that teens will talk about having to fake being happy-- it's actually more

common in females than males," Gersky said. "Males don't usually say that they have to be happy-- they usually just say that they're depressed, sad or don't feel great-- whereas most of my female clients say that their

friends wouldn't recognize them when they're at home because then they let the sadness out." Fiona O'Byrne '21 said she deals with depression and feels that she has to put on a happy face in school.

"You don't want people to have to worry about you (and your situation)," O'Byrne said. "However, you also don't want to have to talk about it."

Continued on Page 3.

COVID-19 in Michigan

Out of the **336** positive cases of COVID-19 in the state

44 are in Wayne county

51% are male **47%** are female

1% aged 0 to 19 years old

28% aged 20 to 39 years old

38% aged 40 to 59 years old

26% aged 60 to 79 years old

5% aged 80 years old and older

By executive order 2020-9, the following facilities are temporarily closed until Mar. 30

- gymnasiums
- fitness centers
- recreation centers
- indoor sports facilities
- exercise studios
- movie theaters
- performance venues

- restaurants
- cafes
- bars
- clubs
- spas
- casinos

By executive order 2020-11, public gatherings exceeding 50 people are temporarily banned.

INFORMATION COURTESY OF MICHIGAN.GOV AS OF THURSDAY, MARCH 19.