

The Thorntonian

Remote Learning Edition

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Trials of a pandemic

By: Keishawn Craig

Because of the widespread cases of the coronavirus, Governor J.B. Pritzker issued a “stay at home,” order for the state of Illinois last March.

Teachers, administration, and students had to teach and learn from home. It was a very drastic change; students were pulled out of school abruptly and told they would be back but it never happened. The weeks that followed, students were on computers instead of in the classroom, so it was a big and immediate transition.



One of the difficulties of learning at home is motivation, as stated by Junior, Roxana Mendez, “The difference is that going to school makes you more motivated to get things done, being organized, and finishing assignments. Working from home is a little difficult staying motivated and staying in front of a screen all day and still having to do homework on a screen.”

Eighty-eight T.F. North students participated in a questionnaire about remote learning. Of those students 85% said teachers have risen to the occasion and changed their teaching methods from home. Changes have been made from last spring to make remote learning more efficient, According to Assistant Principal Mrs. Shuldes, “New teachers participated in a professional development session that focused on how to develop remote lessons that build relationships, create opportunities for student voice and engage students in meaningful learning.”

Even though administrators are doing a great job supporting teachers, teachers are also learning how to support their students as stated by English 11 teacher and Advanced Journalism teacher, Ms. Hinton, “I had to learn how to help students use their devices. I don't own an iPhone or an iPad, I'm a PC user so I had to learn by having students share their screen and we discover how to do different functions together. I tried to make it a learning experience for both me and the students.”

Transitioning the classroom to online has been difficult for everyone involved in the process, Mr Rucinski, Principal at T.F. North, stated “Changing to a virtual format has been difficult for students, families, and administrators (...)We have asked teachers to completely change the way they do their job and I've been so impressed with the creativity they have shown in supporting virtual learning.

We got spirit, yes we do!

By: Erica Goodman

COVID-19 has caused many students of all grades to miss out on in-person learning because the virus is so widespread.

But there are ways that students can incorporate having school into remote learning. Speaking to school administration and coming up with tips and ways that students can make the remote learning process easier. Ms. Gladu, the school's Assistant Principal, has given ways to help. "I think if students create a dedicated workspace for school they can be more invested and successful. It's important to have an area that you use and have set up just for school so that you can maintain focus." Helping students stay focused on the school task at hand can help a lot and might give them a more in person learning experience.

Another topic discussed was senior year to

which Ms. Gladu stated "I think we still can. We just have to adjust them. For example, we could have dance competitions, we could have Seniors create videos about why they would be the best king or queen of prom and students could vote. I also think we might be able to with CDC guidelines create walks for social distancing to get the Seniors together or a social distancing picnic." This can help seniors become more happy and in tune with learning and not having those in person experiences so seniors don't despair. There are still things that you can do at home to make your last year of high school the best.

This school year may also be a tough year for incoming freshmen so Ms. Gladu gave some tips with "I think advertisement in the announcements is a valuable tool. We need more

upperclassmen to get involved and help out with announcements. Please email Ms. Gladu at lgladu@tfd215.org if you have ideas for the announcements to be great! We all need to get involved to keep everyone engaged. The admin team and some Freshmen teachers delivered goodie bags to all Freshmen to help welcome them to T.F. North. There are also weekly advisory meetings via zoom to help keep the Freshmen motivated and invested in our staff at T.F. North. It meets once a week on Thursdays. If you would like to be a part of that please email Ms. Gladu at lgladu@tfd215.org".

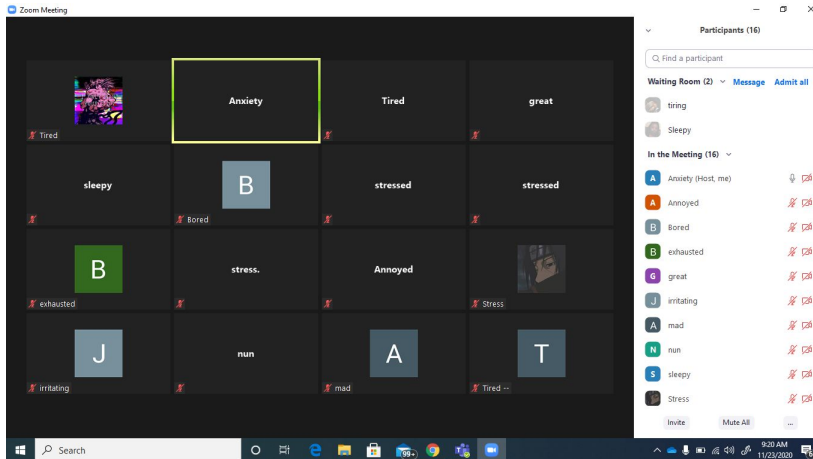
Even though school has changed in many ways let's try to make the best out of it, there are many things that you can do at home to make remote learning a better time for you. Have some Meteor Pride!



How to cope with e-learning

By: Jade Henry

Stress has been floating around since the start of quarantine. Students and teachers alike have been trying to adjust to this new environment in the most efficient and stress free way.



Even with the months passing, it still feels foreign to many. This is the first time anyone had to go through this, as the spread of COVID-19 is something new to everyone. Having bedrooms transformed into classrooms with computers as smart boards is not how anyone expected 2020 to be.

With all the stress of being at home, everyone needs coping mechanisms to keep their mind off the stress of the new lifestyle, not only dealing with the school, but in general. Sophomore student, Arianna Plumey, stated “Remote learning has honestly shown me how much I actually need to be in school, actually at school. I’m a visual learner so it’s hard to understand things.” With these

hard times, it is important to remember to find ways to cope with new life.

Arianna stated “Some coping mechanisms I use to deal with the new world of remote learning is listening to music.

Music is a good method to use when dealing with online. It calms me down, gets me through homework I don’t understand, and helps me vibe better.”

T.F. North staff, Rebecca Williford stated “It is a different feeling not being able to physically be in the classroom with my students this year. I think this experience has made me reevaluate my own priorities as a teacher where my main focus in remote learning is primarily centered around building relationships.”

Teachers have been trying to keep up with their change in career just as students have been trying to keep up with their new responsibilities. They have a lot on their plates as well,

and Ms. Williford shares her point of view, stating “I have been practicing a ton of self-care. I think it is important for everyone to recharge and take some time for themselves because it can be extremely hectic staring at a computer screen all day.”

The issues with remote learning aren’t limited to our school. An article by Edward Roesch on elearningindustry.com states “While teachers are focusing on providing engaging eLearning experiences, 55% of students still find the lack of social interactions troubling. They learn better with fellow students, and for 45% of students, this could lead to underperforming in their academics.”

In order to cope with the difficulty that comes with remote learning, remember to find new coping mechanisms and find a way to make it most efficient for you. Set a schedule, do your classes somewhere that is not your room, wash your face before school--Small things make the school year easier to push through.

Many students brush off mental health and believe that some of the stress they are feeling will be ignored. Everyone is going through changes, and that is okay. Mental health is something that is not taboo, it is normal and should be talked about. Reach out if needed. No one is in this alone.

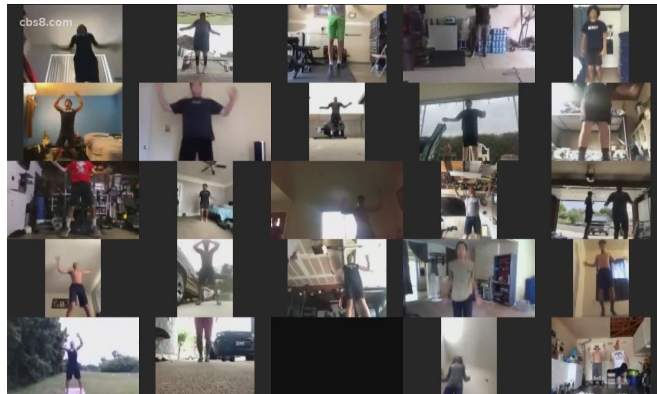
Be calm and be safe

By: Joseph Dunem

During the COVID-19 pandemic, students face the problem of losing social skills and physical fitness.

The year 2020 is facing a deadly virus, and because of that students have to do online school for their own safety. But the problem is that some students will stay in their house all day because they cannot go to school, or they cannot interact with their fellow students or teachers in person anymore. Students and teachers engage during Zoom meetings but not every student talks and some students will go the whole class without saying a word or go the whole day without even leaving the house. Social skills and physical activity are important to a child's health. As Texas A&M Today, stated, "While in school, students literally move throughout the day, transitioning between classes and activities. Online instruction requires screen usage, which contributes to seated time. Spending the day at home while parents are struggling to maintain employment tasks increases the

likelihood that children will also use screens recreationally." It may not seem like it at first but students move and interact so much at school, and staying home affects students more than they realize. Things like getting dressed, going to school, transitioning from classes, talking to friends and teachers all contribute to your social skills and physical health.



Staying at home is for the safety of everyone, but these are some ways to stay healthy while at home. If someone is having trouble with the work during class, students can ask teachers to split up the zoom into groups. That way students can talk amongst themselves and work together, making the work go faster and to keep them socializing. If they can't do this

during school, students can always create a group call themselves after school and work together. As for ways to keep up physical health a website called Inspire Health gives simple yet effective ideas, "Studies have shown that some of the most effective exercises, both in terms of cardio and weightlifting, are ones that use the body's own weight instead of external weights or forces. These exercises can be combined with running or walking on a treadmill for a full body workout.

Some of these exercises include:

- Pushups and sit-ups
- Jumping jacks
- Planks

It is not necessary to have fancy equipment to stay in shape. There are many ways to do it but these are simple and easy. Remember staying in shape is important but staying safe is even more important. If students find anything useful after reading this feel free to tell teachers and friends.

We can do this!

By: Tre'Vonte Gartrell

Remote learning has been a hard transition for many students at T.F. North, due to the pandemic.

Although many students are struggling with managing a new routine and schedule, they have found new ways to use this misfortune to gain useful skills. Senior, Tiara Bullock, says that “As a student, e-learning has forced me to rely more on myself when it comes to time management and getting ready for college. It has required me to be more determined than ever with filling out applications, completing the FAFSA, and looking for scholarships. My focus has been tested more than in prior years(...). The amount of time I am on my computer is crazy but my focus is stronger now because I know I have to do what I have to do regardless.”

Learning has become difficult but when people are put in positions to change, often they rise to the occasion. Independence and self-management are skills that are transferable and redeveloped through a crisis.

According to freshman, Yazmin Martinez, she worries that she has to be organized differently than when she goes to school. She feels overwhelmed when she has a lot of assignments due in Google Classroom and worries how late assignments will affect her grades. Once she figured out how to better organize her day and classes she advised other freshman students “(...)to turn in all assignments. Even if it isn't well done at-least you will get a grade and feedback. Not turning in assignments affects your grade greatly.” Learning this was a motivator for her to get

better grades and she hopes other students will do the same instead of complaining about what is.

Students from their senior year have been there before in their freshman year, worrying about grades at that time. Turning in assignments is very important, either it is completed or uncompleted because it will hurt your grade and success of passing the class you were assigned. Try to complete or answer some questions and get half credit. Always remember that getting a half credited is better than getting a zero.

Senior, Keishawn Craig stated “To be very honest it has ruined my senior experience. On the other hand, it has shown me how unpredictable life can be.” The pandemic has thrown everyone for a loop but we continue to stand!



Tips for freshmen...online

By : Tiara Bullock

The class of 2024 are struggling in their first year of highschool where a map of the school is no use due to the rescind Covid-19 Pandemic forcing everyone online.

E-learning presents an entirely new set of challenges to teachers and students across the country. But, this year's freshman class are hit with two strikes against them before even stepping foot in the building. Starting off highschool comes with an entirely new stage in adolescence. Hormones are changing, teens are figuring out who they are, and new connections are being made. Freshmen are now tasked with navigating the idea of highschool online along with rapidly changing mental states. While staying focused is a key component in success, the class of 2024 are going to need some extra help.

Tip#1 "Wake-Up, Get Up, and Stay Up"

While staying alert during Zoom-calls is a struggle, there are ways to manage it. The best way is to get out of bed. According to senior student, Laura Sanchez, "Be engaging in class, get out of bed when you have class." Freshman have to remember that laying down makes the body more tired than it actually is, hence falling asleep in class. But, If students

turn the lights on, sit up at a table or desk, and continue their morning routines as if they were in school, then being tired and falling asleep would be less of an issue. Laura further stated, "Zoom calls can be just like in class discussion, everyone just needs to speak up and turn on their cameras, we are all on the same level." It is especially important that freshmen show their faces and engage in class. If students were in school, they would not have the ability to not



pay attention, put their heads down, or work on other assignments. When students show their faces, it is less likely that material discussed in class will be missed and/or disregarded due to students' lack of participation.

Tip#2 "Teachers, Be Ready to be Understanding"

It is extremely imperative for freshmen teachers to be as understanding as

possible. This year's freshman class has nothing to get the feel for highschool besides the change in workload compared to that of junior high. In other words, freshmen need more time and patience. While they are in highschool now, they are not actually in school. To them, it is just another Zoom class with more intense work and less of the first year to their last four years of childhood. Because freshmen are being cut off from all the resources found within the school, it is harder for them to keep up with the flow of highschool than years prior.

According to Freshman Honors Algebra Teacher, Mrs. Jones, "Think of how e-learning feels the way a student would."

Mrs. Jones knows she does not want to sit on the computer for another few hours after 3:30 so she doesn't want to make students do something she herself wouldn't do. Mrs. Jones keeps her class light but educational because she is aware of the strain e-learning already has on students. She allows room for conversation and discussion outside of the curriculum. Doing so relieves tension and makes students want to participate more without feeling as forced and rigid. Another tip is that it is important for teachers not to get stuck on a lesson that they would teach in person because classes are not in person. There is no way that everything is going to go as planned therefore teachers need

to be flexible and understanding. It is possible to keep the importance of your class while being considerate of the other ones students may be struggling to keep up with.

Tip#3 “Stop the talk and Start to walk”

According to Mrs. Schuldes, “The greatest advice I can offer is to reach out if you need help. Whether you are struggling with a class or have something going on at home, we can help. In addition to your teachers being available from 2-3:15pm everyday, administration, counselors, deans and support staff are still

here for you too! Take advantage of that and make sure you are getting what you need! Organization is also more important than ever. Everyone has his/ her own system for how to keep track of things to do and that’s ok as long as it works for that individual. Struggling to stay on top of things and balance school and other responsibilities are great reasons to ask someone for help or advice.” Above everything, freshmen need to learn and practice advocating for their education. Teachers and staff are urging students to ask questions and schedule meetings. While the situation is unfortunate, it is important for

freshmen to stop using Zoom as an excuse and take advantage of the resources available.

More resources to start off and continue highschool on the right track whether online or in person

- Freshmen Tutoring Sessions from Seniors (Every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:00pm to 4:00pm, Contact Mrs. Bivins for further questions, All topic are covered)
- Khan Academy
- IXL
- Freshmen should also connect with upperclassmen they may know or have in their classes to help



Meet the Press



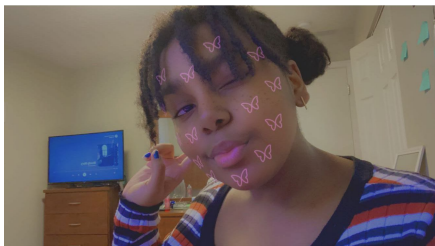
Keishawn Craig

“I joined the Newspaper for a new experience. I am into sports and love to research.”



Erica Goodman

“I joined Newspaper because I love to research new things and spread information to others. I enjoy my fellow journalists; they are amazing to work with and are extremely helpful.”



Jade Henry

“I joined Newspaper because I enjoy writing. I like interviewing people to get their standpoints on certain topics. Even this is my first year, you won’t see me pushing myself any less than everyone else on the team.”



Joseph Dunem

“I like the freedom we get in terms of writing. I enjoy English class but there’s so many requirements that it takes away from enjoying writing.”



Tiara Bullock

“I joined journalism to act out my passion for communications. I have always found power in words and constantly seek to use them to change the lives of others. The thing I enjoy most about newspaper is the freedom of trial and error. Everything is a process and in newspaper, we are encouraged to try out different ways to produce a good story for a great issue. I want our readers to know that I am always open to story suggestions about any topic so don;t be afraid to come to me for requests or suggestions on what they'd like to see more of from me particularly, or in the issue altogether. I would also like them to know that as Editor-In-Chief, I am here to serve the school through the newspaper as best I can and to continue paving the way with my peers for future meteor journalists.”



Tre’Vontae Gatrell

“ I joined because it is interesting to me. I’m enjoying most of the brainstorming about ideas”



Victor Herrera

“I joined the Newspaper to help keep my classmates informed in not only staying informed about school events but also the world. It lets me contribute to this staple of T.F. North that has been around for as long as the school.”



Ms. Hinton

“I am a part of Journalism this year because it takes the skills of teaching English class (research, writing, collaboration, project deadlines, citation, gathering evidence and facts to analyze, understanding different points of views, and learning written and verbal communication) and applies it to a different format. Being able to learn and teach how to transfer skills is an important skill in itself, so I am happy to learn and teach something new.

Journalism is also important because it teaches students how to differentiate between biases, so they can make well informed decisions as they are growing and learning about the world around them.”