

# HOME

Due to COVID-19, schools turn to remote learning.

# WORK

By Katherine Bucaro

As students walked through the doors in August, none of them were expecting what would happen the following March. But who could have? It was an unprecedented event. In January, students first heard about the COVID-19 outbreak in China; however, most did not take the virus seriously. "I was one of the only people who was panicking a bit; everyone thought it wasn't important, but I disagreed," eighth grader Ainsley Kelter said. For most, China was very far away and removed from reality, yet it became very real by the time the district announced that schools were transitioning to remote learning. Students began to realize how much more serious this virus was becoming and just how different their daily lives would be.

The first days of remote learning were difficult to get through. Many students found it harder to reach their teachers and get the help they needed. About online school sixth grader Madeline Floyd said, "It can be great but also really confusing. It is great because I can finish my work in two to three hours, but it can be confusing because some of the work I do not understand." This isn't the only issue that many students ran into. Since so many people are using the internet at the same time, this has caused some tech issues. "I can't get my work done without it crashing every two seconds," explained Bradlee Paine (8). This was a source of frustration for many students since this caused them to get their work done more slowly.

Although the situation could sometimes be frustrating, there were still some things students liked about remote learning. Many students adapted quickly to the remote learning system. "My experience with online school is actually better than I thought it would be because everything is organized on my computer," said Isabelle Barela (6). That had a great deal to do with the efforts of their teachers. The transition has not been simple for them.

Teachers received word on Friday, March 13 and began teaching online on Tuesday, March 17. That gave them three days to

convert their curriculum to complete online instruction, and the work continued. "I was up until 1:30 AM last night getting it all organized, then up at 6:30 AM to make sure all the links were in place. Then I'm on the dang computer from 7:15 AM-4:30 PM. I break for dinner and then get back on. I've got to figure out how to work smarter!" said ELA teacher Carine Lockwood.

Teachers also weren't able to teach the same amount of information they would in a regular classroom. Online, most teachers gave one or two assignments that, on average, took 20 minutes. "I cover about a third every day of what I would cover face to face," explained Laurel Wicke, the drama and yearbook teacher. Online classes affected elective classes the most. Classes like tech ed and family and consumer science are harder to teach from home since students may not have resources to complete the same things they would in class. "The elective teachers are struggling the most because our classes tend to be more interactive and team oriented," said choir teacher Holly Brinkman.

For students, their main sacrifice is the social aspect of school. "The hardest thing I have had to give up is time with my friends. I have a great time with all of them, and it is really hard to not see them as often as you would at school," said Liam Johnson (6).

Everyone hoped for a return before the school year ended, but on April 3, Jefferson County and many other districts closed school buildings for the rest of the year. "I'm not going to lie, when I read the email [about school closures] I started to cry," said FACS teacher Kristina Herrin. "It doesn't feel good," said assistant principal Michelle Murphy.

Although the transition was not easy, the entire Drake community, students, teachers and parents, all came together to make the most of a terrible situation. The goal was not only to continue to educate, but to give kids a sense of continuity and stability in a very altered reality. Throughout the experience, everyone joined forces and made the best out of a bad situation. A+ work, Dragons. #jeffcostrong.



photo by laurel wicke

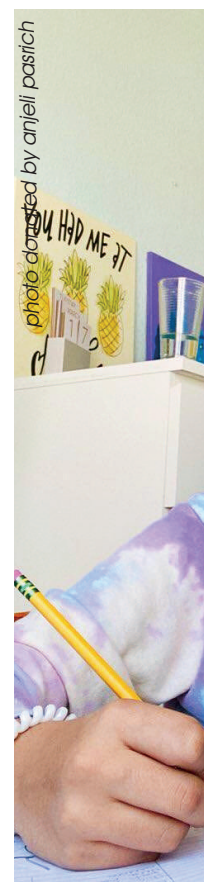


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