



# THE HERE AND NOW

A Q&A interview with Piper Dickerson (8)

**Q** What was it like for you coming back and having to get into the groove of school?

**A** I think it was terrible because I loved being able to hang out in my pajamas and be comfortable.

**Q** Describe your emotions prior to school starting up again.

**A** It was really depressing because nobody wants to be at school, but it was good to see friends.

**Q** What did you feel like the night before school started, getting the email saying that we had to wear masks?

**A** I literally felt like I was going to break down because it is very hard to hear [through the masks], and masks are uncomfortable.

**Q** What is the best thing that happened for you this year?

**A** I conquered a fear of doing things in front of people. I did a play in drama class. I would usually never do that.



**TOGETHER AGAIN.** Sixth graders Evan Drake, Dylan Hufford, and Jake Miller reunite before school starts on the first day. "I was excited just to be back in person with my friends. I had to do Google Meets with them before, and that's just not the same," Miller said. **BACK AT IT AGAIN.** Amidst the busy hallways, Abby Croteau (8) opens her locker with the help of science teacher Mr. Jacob Underwood. Eighth graders had not had the chance to open lockers since they were in sixth grade. "I feel like they [lockers] are easier because it's easier for us to remember the codes," Croteau said.

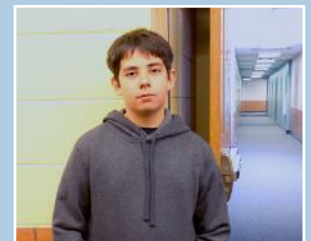


## BACK AT IT. R U READY?



Claire Hillyard (6)

"I'm an introvert because I don't talk to many people. I just have those three friends that I hang out with. I don't like talking with new people."



Bodie Kass (7)

"I'm an introvert because I feel like I'm right in the middle: I have quite a few friends, but I mainly stay in that friend group."

**RIGOROUS STUDY.** Penny Appl (8) works to complete an assignment in social studies class. "This year, school work involves more work," Appl said. "There are bigger lessons and more projects, but it's better because you can work with partners which is more social and creative."



**EVERYDAY PICNIC.** Adriana Riddle (8) eats lunch outside with her friend group. During the first trimester all students ate lunch outside due to COVID protocols. "It's colder outside, which I like. I also prefer eating outside," Riddle said. **WORK TIME.** Working with Taylor McQuitty (8), Lily Grau (8) completes an assignment. "I think this year is 'socially easier' because you could just see people more and interact more," Grau said.

## FACE IT Dragons share their opinions about masks in schools.

"I think it is a good idea because it keeps us safe even though I am tired of wearing masks, but if I have to, I will."

-Brayden Alcorta (7)

"Masks make me feel more protected, but sometimes it's harder to breathe."

-Angeline Ha (6)

"I really wish we didn't have to wear them, but I don't really care."

-Mari Colbert (7)

"I don't really like them, but it is what it is."

-Gavin Black (8)

"I don't think they are preventing Covid-19, but I think they do help."

-Sydni Gregory (6)

"We are kids and having to stay apart and wear masks ruins the experience we all once thought we would have."

-Emily McQuitty (6)

"People that got the vaccine thought they would not have to wear masks, and now they do."

-Elizabeth Burgess (7)

## learning CURVES

Coming back to school full time, students deal with both excitement and anxiety. Story by Kayla Pavlich

Students had the normal challenges of a long summer, including waking up early, catching the bus, and simply getting ready, but it was especially pressing after 18 months away from regular school. Having been either full remote or hybrid, going back to daily, full-time school forced attendance and regular habits again was difficult. Lauren Hauptman (8) said, "I hated having to get up earlier, and I couldn't just put on a shirt and get in front of my computer. I had to actually get ready. So getting back into good habits wasn't really fun, and it was hard."

Dragons also faced a surprise that came the evening before school started. The district called informing students that, despite vaccination status, they had to wear masks again. The reaction was mixed. As librarian, Kori Chubb said, "While slightly bummed at having to wear them, I was super happy that we were truly going to have in-person learning."

There was another difficulty students faced. Sienna Kittles (8)

said, "It's kind of weird because when you go outside and you see other people's faces, you don't recognize them, and it's hard to tell the emotions other people are feeling." It was hard to make new friends and learn how to interact with other people again. Audrey Nicholson (6) said, "Seeing friends felt weird." Last year's on-line learning put a stop to a lot of social contact, which brought problems. Keandra Dominguez (8) said, "I notice a lot more fighting, suspensions, and bullying. There are also a lot of people getting on other people's nerves; it's like they forgot about personal space."

Coming back to school was easier said than done, but there were some good things about returning. Gavin Black (8) said, "I was able to see my friends for the first time in a long time. It was nice to be home in some ways, but overall, I was most grateful for actually being [at school], because I was less distracted, and I was living in the moment."

With everyone back in school, the halls are a little crowded. Are you ready to deal? We asked: Are you an introvert or an extrovert?



Isaac Parr (6)

"I'm an extrovert because I really like friends and being with them gives me energy. Also being alone makes me stir crazy."



Morgan Farr (8)

"I'm an extrovert. I enjoy talking to people. I am fine speaking to a crowd. I'm a fairly loud person when in the stir place."