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FALL 2020



Delran High School

Fall 2020

# Virus forces cancellations of admissions exams

By SERAFINA CAROLLO  
**Editor-In-Chief**

Amidst the Coronavirus pandemic, seniors looking to apply to college have lost several chances to take standardized tests such as the SAT and ACT.

A number of students planning to apply early have been left unable to take a standardized test at all before they submit their applications, leaving them frustrated and even more panicked about what it means to apply to college during a pandemic.

From March through October, SATs have been cancelled due to the current circumstances. Students who want to submit their applications by the early action date, Nov. 1, were especially disadvantaged as they feel they haven't been given a true opportunity to take the exams.

"I had to reschedule my SAT twice already and I wish I got the opportunity to take another SAT before I apply to see if I could get my score up and possibly earn more academic scholarship money because I am applying early," said DHS senior Maddie Duffield.

Testing centers, which are often schools, continue to cancel standardized tests as close as a week before the exam.

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*Drama club members Chase Matthews and Anna Corradino practice for a theater production. Just recently, clubs were given permission to operate virtually. Photo courtesy of Anna Corradino.*

# Clubs make a comeback

By JOHN BAGONIS  
**News Editor**

Clubs that were unable to operate because of the pandemic, recently got the go ahead to start virtual meetings and events. At a meeting on Oct. 12, the Board of Education approved certain clubs that showed the ability to operate in a remote setting.

The list of approved clubs and other co-curricular activities included 15 from DHS, 27 from DMS, 11 from DIS, and 4 from Millbridge. Specific clubs include DHS Anime Club, DHS Color Guard, DMS Art Club, and DMS Culture Club among others.

This measure marks a shift from the guidance that only athletics and no clubs would be able to open at schools this fall.

The district initially permitted fall sports, such as football, lacrosse, soccer, hockey and field hockey, to operate as they take place in an outdoor setting which provides additional airflow. The only activities that were allowed to start along with sports were the National Honors Society and Marching Band as well as class council.

This angered some students and staff members who deem clubs just as important as athletics.

"The fact that the school has allowed sports to run and not clubs is shocking," said junior Sal Mancini. "First of all, clubs have the means to follow social distancing measures by using Google Meets for meetings, or if in-person meetings were used, social distancing and masks would still be implemented."

Mancini also noted that clubs often offer students an outlet or access to a comfortable environment.

"Some clubs provide opportunities for students that are otherwise unavailable.

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# Board of Ed allows clubs to meet in virtual settings

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For example GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) or the Ally Club provides a safe space for students that may not have an accepting home environment," he said. "Clubs allow non-athletic and even athletic students to explore, express themselves and to help the community. Whether that's music, culture, arts, academic or athletic depends on the student, but no student should have their high school involvement taken from them."

However, junior and Ping Pong club founder Ben Kalina understood the district's position on indoor activities.

"Most clubs are inside while sports are all outside, which allows kids to spread out and move around, on top of the fact that there's constant airflow compared to inside where there's not as much," Kalina said.

On the contrary, he also believes that if clubs are very careful and follow the proper health protocols, they should be able to operate. But Kalina thinks the district should

wait before it permits the indoor meetings.

Josh Sady, senior and cofounder of Ping Pong Club, and senior Mikey Martin also expressed their frustrations.

"I think it's very unfair that sports are practicing, but clubs are in the dark," Sady said. "If people are allowed to group together and play football, clubs should be allowed to safely come back with proper health precautions."

Martin agreed with Sady. Martin explained that "masks, sanitation, and social distancing" are the reasons why clubs are definitely safe enough to come back.

In addition, teacher advisors to clubs also offered their comments on the situation.

"It's not fair that sports practice because sports involve direct contact such as when you're tackling each other in football, but in clubs like Ornithological Society, there's no contact, all you do is stand somewhat close to someone else while outdoors," said Na-

than Petite, a biology teacher and sponsor of the Ornithological Society.

While Petite doesn't believe it's entirely safe for clubs to come back in-person yet, he's looking forward to organizing meetings and activities online in hopes that clubs will be able start up again by December or January.

"Clubs are more intellectually fulfilling than sports," he said "Depending on the club, it can be a great creative outlet. There's no creativity in sports compared to all the different clubs. For example, in football you know the outcome. There's two teams and one's going to win."

Andrew Niemczak, a teacher and Ping Pong sponsor, noted his disappointment in the situation.

"I feel sad for the students who miss out on the club, especially the seniors who would lose this final year of experience," Niemczak said.

## Letter from the Editor

Although students are finally able to return back to DHS for hybrid learning, many aspects of the high school experience have been altered due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This Back to School issue is quite different from the first issue of previous school years, where we traditionally covered Homecoming and all of the festivities. Instead, our team at *The Bear Facts* has taken the responsibility of covering some of the most pressing concerns of attending high school during a pandemic.

We cover topics directly that touch on life inside the building, including a discussion about the mask mandate, the switch to Canvas, and overall changes to DHS in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. For seniors in particular, there are two articles that touch on how college plans may have been altered due to COVID-19.

Despite the unfortunate circumstances, there are certainly things to look forward to within the DHS community. Recently, many clubs have been approved to start back up and the student council is working on making the Mr. Delran event possible.

Also, here at *The Bear Facts*, we are working on our first ever broadcast and will look forward to releasing various forms of media throughout this school year. We hope you enjoy this special issue.

Sincerely,

Serafina Carollo

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# Students & staff offer mixed feedback on Canvas

By DRUE HAMLET  
Broadcast/Media Editor

Delran High School introduced several new procedures in order to transition into this unprecedented year. In March, when classes went online, DHS utilized Google Classroom to post assignments and keep students in contact with their teachers.

Now, the district is using Canvas, which is a common platform among colleges. The switch was made possible through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) that provides emergency relief to schools across the country.

Canvas is a web-based Learning Management System that is used by educators for digital learning. According to the company's website, it is promoted to keep students engaged in courses while receiving feedback from teachers.

Christine DeSimone, the district's director of curriculum and instruction, explained that this was the prime reason why the switch was made: communication.

"Canvas increases communication with students, parents, teachers, and administrators," she said. "It allows everyone to support each other with viewing assignments, assessments, monitoring student usage and progress. The concept of increased communication is a consistent goal for the District and informed our decision to move for-

ward with this product."

While increased feedback and communication is a good thing, the program is not without its flaws.

"As with anything new, there is a learning curve," DeSimone said.

According to teachers, one of the primary limitations of the program seems to be the incompatibility with Google. With this compatibility issue, teachers are wasting valuable time on the tedious uploading process of the platform.

English teacher Ani McHugh expressed her concerns about the long-lasting functionality issues surrounding Canvas.

"I was under the impression it was going to be an issue of a learning curve. So once you learn it and figure out what you're doing, it will be okay," she said. "But, I think a lot of us are finding out the problems we are encountering are not going away. One of my biggest problems is that it does not work well with Google."

McHugh also explained that the platform poses specific challenges to English teachers. It is not possible for teachers to see edits in student work in real time. Through Google applications, teachers could see changes in student work and give direct feedback in areas that need attention because edits were up to date.

Some students are experiencing similar feelings, but others are *Continued on page 4*

## We asked. You answered.

What is your favorite thing about this school year?



"Since we have more time at home for online days, I like getting to spend more time with my dog Kenny," said Ben Porecca, grade 11.



"My favorite thing about this school year is actually being able to have a soccer season and play with the same people I've played with my entire High School career," said Lindsey Rodzon, grade 12.

# District adopts Canvas, nixes Google Classroom

*Continued from page 3*

more confident with the program. Freshman Michael Brignola explained that the program is overall pretty organized and straight-forward.

“I think that as I am using Canvas more, it is getting a lot easier to use and I am adjusting to it very well,” he said. “I like how Canvas is organized, and I like that it is easy to contact your teachers if you need help.”

Molly Pangretic, a junior, was very comfortable with Google’s tools, especially by the end of remote learning back in June. Now, she is facing problems with Canvas on top of all the other new stressful norms created by the pandemic.

“With everything going on, this new program just added more stress,” she said. “The tutorials were somewhat helpful, but I think Canvas, as a whole, is much more confusing.”

Returning students seem to have more frustration with change, while

the freshmen know nothing different. The student feedback is mixed, with those used to Google experiencing more struggles. In general, it seems Canvas is not meeting the expectations of functionality that teachers, students, and even parents need.

*“As with anything new, there is a learning curve,” said Christine DeSimone, director of curriculum and instruction.*

Tara Porecca, a math teacher at Riverside Middle School, is a mother of three children in the Delran School District. She, too, has concerns about the new Learning Management System.

“I understand that Canvas is a robust system, but I’m disappointed that the district chose to implement it during a pandemic with

little to no training for students,” she said. “The benefits do not seem to outweigh the emotional cost to our students and teachers during this already incredibly stressful time.”

According to DeSimone, there will be an opportunity for students, staff, and parents to give their feedback about Canvas and online instruction in the upcoming weeks.

The program and its implementation cost a total of \$49,487, or less than \$13 per user, including students, teachers, and staff. The entire purchase of the program was funded by the money the district received from the CARES Act.

The CARES Act provides funds for all types of areas that need extra assistance during this time. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, this includes unemployment insurance, relief to small businesses, direct payments to low- and middle- income families, and large efforts towards education.

## We asked. You answered.

“What are your biggest concerns with online learning?”



“I don’t feel like my work has as much meaning and everything feels like busy work. Plus with teachers giving out more work to compensate for time loss in class, the workload is a lot more than it has been in previous years,” said Scott Porecca, grade 12.



“My biggest challenge with doing school at home is finding the motivation to do my schoolwork,” said Rosie Palena, grade 9.

## Electives cut as school implements a study hall for all schedules

By DEREK NAMNUN  
Staff Writer

When the COVID-19 outbreak touched all facets of life, scheduling became one of the hardest jobs in the education world. This year at DHS, there has been a mandatory study hall implemented into students' schedules.

The unintentional casualty of this measure was an elective from the schedules of students, and the untold suffering of electives has been quietly affecting the students and staff.

Students did not get the chance to offer an elective to sacrifice; one was simply taken out of their predetermined choices.

Students have split opinions on the general uses of study hall, with some finding it beneficial and others considering it a waste of time.

DHS sophomore James Mitchell stated that study hall is "...very much so," helpful and productive. He expressed that study hall is a savior to his work management.

Ryan Quaker, DHS sophomore, offered a different opinion. Quaker resents the mandatory study hall.

"Usually kids just sit in there and talk," he said.

Quaker presented the perspective of an unproductive study hall period. For him, this year was an opportu-

nity to get a required course out of the way, so that his junior and senior years can be easier. Quaker stressed that his future course selection plans are going to be altered now.

As one of the main victims of the scheduling crisis, DHS elective teacher Jacquelyn McGhee was very understanding. McGhee, who teaches graphic design, reiterated she respects the administration and schedule creators immensely.

"If you want to give quality instruction, it has to be in fewer numbers. It also has to be safe. In order to get fewer numbers, you have to put them somewhere," she said.

Because of the change this year, elective courses have had a decrease in enrollment.

McGhee said the study hall is necessary in more ways than one. Study hall gives students an advantage in time management, helps the classroom stay safer, and gives a better student-to-teacher ratio per period. All in all, her thoughts were that these unprecedented times produced an unfortunate, yet necessary change.

Principal Daniel Finkle concurred that study halls were implemented in order to lower classroom numbers so that social distancing guidelines

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*"Usually kids just sit in there and talk," sophomore Ryan Quaker said of the universal study hall periods.*

## We asked. You answered.

How were you affected by losing an elective to make room for a study hall?



"I would have to say that it's really hard to not have an elective this year...I had planned to take journalism, and have been considering it as a possible career path for a while and would have enjoyed exploring the topic. But, there are so many other electives I want to get to for junior and senior years, that I'm not sure if I will get another opportunity for journalism," said Grace Diehl, grade 10.



In my opinion, starting a brand new elective from scratch in junior year is a waste of time, so I was really hoping to have Intro to Engineering as my elective this year," said Mahir Sanori, grade 10.

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## Mandatory study hall allows school to reduce class sizes

*Continued from page 5*

could be followed safely. Finkle also noted that removing a course would relieve stress for students.

“The mental health of the students needed to be taken into account,” he said. “Placing undue pressure on students to have eight classes was too many in under the circumstances.”

Finally, Finkle mentioned that elective courses would be further disadvantaged if and when the school has to switch to remote instruction.

“In addition, if we were to go virtual for any extended period of time, many of the elective areas would not be able to bring the same experience that one would get if it were in-person,” he said.

Students were dismayed to find that they had little to no input on which of their electives were removed from their schedules.

“I don’t think it’s fair,” Mitchell remarked.

Likewise, schedules were altered without any advance notice to students.

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## Students unable to take SATs & ACTs as virus cancels tests

*Continued from page 1*

The sign-up process seems to be filled with false hope and has evidently let many students down. Schools that initially planned to open had to push back their opening dates due to increases in COVID-19 cases, resulting in the cancellation of exam administration.

Likewise, testing centers could be closing in schools that were indeed back to in person instruction, but had a COVID-19 outbreak and had to shut down.

College Board, the company that creates and administers the SATs and a number of other standardized tests did not respond to a request for comment on this matter.

There are a few options for seniors who want to have a chance at taking the SATs before submitting their applications to schools.

“They [colleges] are fully aware based on where your region is and if testing was available. Some re-

gions are up and open and they are running. Other regions, you think you’re having a test and then they close it. Don’t panic,” said DHS Guidance Counselor Justine Carey.

When filling out college applications, there may be a space to write about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the applicant. This is where students can inform a school about test cancellations. Also, many colleges and universities have gone test optional.

That being said, if having a score to present to a school provides comfort, then there may be a strategy to follow when signing up for a SAT/ACT where there will be higher odds of a particular testing center staying open.

When signing up for an SAT/ACT, make sure to note the school’s current state due to COVID-19, whether that be fully in-class learning, hybrid, or fully remote.

There may be a better chance

of taking the test at a school that is either fully in-class or hybrid learning as opposed to a school that has had a COVID-19 outbreak, and has been forced to go all remote.

Students unable to take an SAT, or unhappy with their scores can still apply for early action. Because submitting standardized test scores may not be an option, admissions officers may rely more heavily on other aspects of the application.

“Those personal aspects are going to be your essay where you’re telling them about yourself, your strengths, your ability to work through and persevere through challenges, your ability to advocate, and what makes you unique to other people,” Carey noted.

“Another personal aspect will be coming from the letters of recommendation from your teachers. We would always be encouraging you to think about who can tell a strong story of you,” she said.

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## Program allows free meals for all school aged children

By LIZA CLARKE

**Staff Writer**

Among other major changes, this year the school is offering free breakfast and lunch for all students.

DHS is just one school of many offering these meals free of charge courtesy of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This federally funded program is state-administered and gives reimbursements from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for all meals given to students/children, according to EducationNC, an online publication based in North Carolina that strives to improve the state and educate students,

In March 2020, a federal waiver allowed the SFSP to continue operations through August 2020. This waiver was then extended by the United States Department of Agriculture to go through Dec. 31, 2020.

School districts usually operate under the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) through the National School lunch program or school breakfast programs. These programs have more restrictions which means families must qualify depending on their income levels.

However, with the waiver, schools receive \$5 per student per day to pay for their meals. The aim of the waiver is to reduce the stress of families struggling financially due to the pandemic and other reasons.

Stacy Clarke, food service director for NutriServ, believes this waiver should be extended for the remainder of this year.

“I do think breakfast and lunch should be free for the remainder of the year. It is my personal belief that many people are still reeling from garnished wages, being furloughed, or being laid off,” she said.

Food insecurity, which is when a family cannot provide enough food or every person to live a healthy life, has doubled overall and tripled among households with children, according to a study by Northern University, the institute for policy research in Illinois.

A report conducted by No Kid Hungry, a child hunger organization, found that 47 percent of American families live with hunger with even higher rates among Black (53

percent) and Hispanic (56 percent) families.

Both of these studies indicate the waiver was signed to allow schools to offer free meals. The pandemic has caused many hardships among families and the waiver is an effort to help decrease at least one burden.

“I buy lunch now that it is free because it is much easier and more accessible,” sophomore Riley Cristella said.

Cristella said she always bought lunch, but taking away the cost of lunch has made her feel less stressed because the food is available even if she doesn’t have money with her.

However, despite the offerings, many students still do not take advantage of this opportunity. Ashley D’alessandro, a senior, is one of these students.

“Yeah I don’t get lunch or breakfast,” she said, “I didn’t get them before they were free either. I just like bringing from home better.”

The cafeteria staff has reported that with less students in the building they are not as busy as in years past.

“We are definitely slower; however, I think the main reason is because we only have one third of the students in the building each day,” Clarke said. “We are also slower on Wednesdays for meal pickups. The main difference (all of those meals were free over the spring) is that folks are back to work and students are online learning.”

Just because some students aren’t in school and are instead learning virtually doesn’t mean they don’t have access to free breakfast and lunch. Each Wednesday, the district distributes a week’s worth of meals to the families that have students learning remotely through a process where the families drive through the school parking lot and are handed meals by the cafeteria staff.

In school, kids line up for lunch six feet apart and are handed the meals of their choice. Students are not permitted to pick up any food item, and instead it is all put on trays by the cafeteria staff and handed to students once filled.

All trays and utensils are disposable and thrown away once used to reduce the chance of spread. Once seated, students are authorized to remove their mask to eat, and put it back on as soon as they are finished eating.

*The aim of the waiver is to reduce the stress of families struggling financially due to the pandemic and other reasons.*

# DHS students miss ‘normal’ school

By MICHAEL CRAMER  
Staff Writer

Across the United States and presumably much of the world, many students have shifted from a normal school day and week to a more challenging way of getting an education, by being forced to work from home for at least part of the week.

This new approach to education has taken its toll on students’ ability to learn and achieve good grades, but it has also affected students emotionally and mentally.

Many students upon hearing that school would resume during this pandemic were shocked, but mostly glad since it gave them the chance to reunite and participate in academics and sports.

DHS freshman Trent Melito was happy to be heading back to school with friends.

“I was glad to hear that we would be able to go into school, and we would be able to interact with each other again,” said Melito, an athlete who enjoys playing baseball.

A number of students were happy learning school would resume with an altered schedule, however many were upset to find out the district had made sacrifices and cuts to things like homecoming, trips, and other events at DHS.

“I am very disappointed that many students will not be able to attend football games due to it being limited capacity. I was looking forward to watching our high school team play,” Vinny Carollo, another freshman athlete who was also frustrated by the change in regulations due to COVID-19. “I was angry because I didn’t want sports to be cancelled and was afraid of struggling with online school”

Moreover, students understand that there is a responsibility

when playing sports.

Likewise, they know that the coaches and staff members of DHS have to work very hard in order to keep everyone safe and healthy. And with this important responsibility comes sacrifice.

With the absence of popular extra-curricular activities, many students concur that homecoming and sporting events are what makes high school so enjoyable and memorable.

Now that students are back in school, some feel the new guidelines restrict them from being social and enjoying the time that high school offers with their peers such as social distancing in classrooms and hallways, in addition to the “lunchrooms.”

“I wish we could go back full time, the schedule has been decent but I would prefer things to be back to normal. I am happy we are not full remote, but I am glad my summer had ended,” said Melito

In addition to this facet, students are also struggling with Canvas and the schedule its demands.

“I feel Canvas is a bad website and it is very hard to keep track of my work. The staff is doing a good job coordinating everything,” said Carollo.

Despite these difficulties, students feel their teachers have been keeping things in check by ensuring that the classroom is clean, work is posted, and students are accounted for and taken care of if needed.

“I feel like the staff has done a great job in keeping everyone socially distant to stop the spread of Coronavirus. In school, I feel safe from Coronavirus due to the measures the staff takes in order to prevent the spread of the virus,” said Melito.

## We asked. You answered.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, what are you missing the most?



“I feel I’m missing out most on my soccer season. After going through pre season and getting to know my teammates, I have felt not only me but my entire team was ready for the season to begin,” said Vinny Carollo, grade 9.



“What I’m really missing out on is being able to go to school full-time, rather than relying on a hybrid schedule, and I miss being able to socialize with friends in the cafeteria and in other classes,” said Chase Pettit, grade 9.



*DHS students don their masks correctly even while remaining socially distant.*

**Left:** Senior Matt Rau

**Right:** Seniors Isabelly Silva and Tyler Travis

*Photos by Derek Namnun.*



## Students comply, but some struggle with long-term mask usage

By ANNA CORRADINO

**Editorials Editor**

Delran High School freshman Dominique Cameron wears a mask everyday just like her peers while she attends in-person school. While she feels that wearing a mask is important to respect everyone's safety and health, she noted that the cloth covering can get hot throughout the school day.

"The mask does bother me because I feel very hot and when I wear my glasses, they do fog up," said Cameron. "However, I respect the rule to wear them to ensure safety for everyone's health."

Cameron is just one out of the more than 450 students inside the school that has to wear a mask everyday. Even though masks help protect the students and staff's safety within the building, many feel that they can cause some discomfort and can be a distraction throughout the day.

Kyle McLaughlin, a senior in Delran, mentioned the difficulty of learning with masks.

"The mask makes it difficult to

talk and for the teachers to hear us," McLaughlin stated.

Cameron, however, said that her learning isn't affected by masks. They just impact her comfort level while in school.

In addition to ensuring safety, masks are a new fashion trend. Many students and staff members have customized masks sporting their favorite designs, teams, logos, and much more. But in some schools, certain masks are banned, such as those that make political statements.

"If someone is wearing a non school appropriate mask, that should be restricted," said Cameron. "But as far as politics go, I think it's OK to express your beliefs as long as people are mature enough to handle it."

McLaughlin also agrees that people should be able to voice their political opinions through their masks. Teachers Jason Pope and Caitlin MacFarland have similar feelings on the subject. They believe that as long they don't share hate messages or cause distractions, political

masks don't pose a problem.

"I think if there was a message of hate or a message that a reasonable person would think would cause disruption (that would be an issue)," said MacFarland, referring to reasons why certain masks may be banned. "If Mr. Finkle thinks as a reasonable person that it could disrupt the school day, then he can ask the student not to wear that. But in terms of banning election year masks, then no."

Also, due to new research, in late September the school banned the use of neck gaiters.

Neck gaiters are a scarf-like type of mask that can be worn around the neck and pulled up and over one's nose and mouth. Before COVID, they were used as a way to stay warm in the winter.

According to new CDC guidelines, these types of masks are no longer seen as effective. So Delran High School sent out an email explaining how students and faculty members are no longer allowed to

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## We asked. You answered.

Do you think masks are effective? Why or why not?



“Masks have been scientifically proven to be effective. I believe the experts, that masks are crucial to stopping the spread of COVID-19,” said Kaitlyn Stewart, grade 12.



“I don’t think masks are effective, I can barely breathe in it and it makes me break out. We’re suffocating ourselves so that we don’t get sick but we can’t keep all germs away and masks not having enough oxygen can lead to life long effects,” Lilly Hoffman, grade 11.

Scientists, doctors, and nurses have conducted experiments and studied the effectiveness of wearing masks. They came to the conclusion that masks limit the amount of particles that are released from your body into the air, while sitting comfortably on your face. Therefore, masks are very effective,” said Jack Pappas, grade 12.



“Masks are one of the most effective ways we prevent corona from spreading. I believe that the fact is that if two individuals are wearing a mask that the chance of spreading it to another person is under 1 percent according to the CDC,” said Sadie MacKinnion, grade 12.



## Students can show their style and support in masks

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wear these masks during the school day.

While masks help keep the virus out of our school, they also do pose some challenges to teaching. Pope and MacFarland explained how masks are affecting their classroom environment while in the school.

“We get so many social cues from kids from their faces,” said MacFarland. “We are constantly looking at your faces for signs of understanding and signs of confusion.”

McFarland noted that facial expressions are extremely important in the classroom for teachers, and that masks make determining how kids are truly feeling about the material more difficult. Likewise, masks can also inhibit classroom conversations and discussions.

Pope feels that the masks muffle kids’ voices and kids don’t speak up when they are talking, so it makes

it very hard for teachers to hear their students. But he also feels that masks are extremely necessary to wear.

“It’s the bare minimum I can do to not get the disease or to not spread the disease,” Pope said.

DHS Principal Daniel Finkle expressed that maintaining a safe learning environment was the main priority in the process of opening the school.

“As the scientists have stressed, masks, social distancing, and hand hygiene are the keys to containing this virus. I was concerned over the summer with this aspect of opening Delran High School; however, I have been extremely pleased with the students and adults within the community,” Finkle said.

He did explain that there have only been a few cases where staff and students haven’t met expectations of maintaining the new guidelines. But Finkle made sure that a discussion took place to address and rectify these issues.

# Social media usage surges

By BROOKE OBUCHOWSKI  
Staff Writer

Alex Mormando, a junior at DHS, uses social media everyday, but understands the anxiety it can cause.

“I feel it is a big distraction and can lead to a lot of stress with not being able to focus on school work,” she said.

Mormando isn't the only one who feels this way; many teens now are spending more time on social media amid the pandemic and aren't benefiting from it.

Social media platforms have transformed the way most people live their lives, from the Tiktok dances to the newest trends on Instagram. According to students, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Reddit, Tiktok, and Discord are popular sites. Teens enjoy the entertainment these platforms provide, but they know that too much time on social media can lead to anxiety, and cyber bullying.

Social media does have some benefits however, as teens are able to vent and find ways to seek advice from professionals, or to gain help with personal issues that they're afraid to talk about face-to-face with someone.

According to the Harvard Chan School of News, social media can have both positive and negative effects on a person's mental health. The good and bad impact social media can have is dependent on the individual.

For instance, the constant use of social media can negatively affect a person. Constant use can act like an addiction, and cause distress to the user when not on the app.

However, routinely going on social media platforms per day instead of per

hour can actually have a positive effect.

“I don't post super often and when I do I don't let the opinion of others get to me,” said Mormando.

When used in moderation, social media can have benefits, but too much time spent on these apps can harm a person's health, and cause unhealthy ties with the app.

On the flip side, social media allows people to make and maintain friendships and relationships. It may allow people to feel connected to one another.

Use of social media may also have an impact on a person's grades and education.

“I don't necessarily think social media itself takes away from learning. It depends on the way a person's using it, and what platforms they use,” said Ani McHugh, an English teacher at DHS.

McHugh noted that problems that spill over into school can affect students' time in school. Joseph Zobel, a guidance counselor at DHS, agreed with McHugh.

“Absolutely, I would say social media is constantly involved in student issues,” said Zobel.

Zobel offered some advice as well to help determine what's acceptable to post.

“Don't post anything that you wouldn't want your parents, your principal, or your teachers to see.”

Many students said they were mindful and careful before posting something to social media.

“I'm not trying to get in trouble over something dumb I posted the night before,” said Kenny Howley, a DHS senior.

*...too much time spent on these apps can harm a person's health.*

## We asked. You answered.

What is your favorite social media platform?



“Probably Snapchat because you can talk to your friends, and you can make a lot of new friends,” said Alyssa Irons, grade 10.



“My favorite social media network would probably be Instagram, because a lot of my family members use it, so it is a good way to communicate with them,” said Maddie Spiegel, grade 9.

## We asked. You Answered.

What has been the biggest challenge about applying to college during a pandemic?

“The biggest challenge about applying to college during the pandemic for me was not being able to do in person visits as well as not being able to do some of the activities that would’ve made my application look ten times better,” said Taylor Hamlin, grade 12.



“I think the most difficult thing about applying to college during this pandemic is having to communicate virtually with our guidance counselors and teachers. Also, staying on top of deadlines and managing my time effectively has been a new adjustment.” said Shreya Parikh, grade 12.



## Remote learning poses a number of difficulties

By KYLIE PEREZ  
Staff Writer

This year many schools, including Delran High, have gone hybrid with students only attending in person classes two days a week and spending the remaining time learning remotely.

With virtual and hybrid model learning experiences, many students wonder when they will go back to 100 percent in person learning. Several students and staff members said they miss the days of in-person instruction.

DHS senior Angelina Mencarini finds learning remotely to be difficult. Mencarini, a Rancocas hybrid student, felt virtual learning was ineffective and offered advice for her peers.

“Kids need to speak to their teachers in order to get a better understanding of

what to do,” she said.

Sitting at a computer for seven hours viewing lessons and presentations and learning asynchronously isn’t motivating enough for some students.

“There are specific questions that when you’re on the computer you can’t ask them[a teacher],” Mencarini said.

She explained that her preference is having face-to-face interaction and being able to ask her teachers questions during class.

Senior Gabriel DeSilva is a full remote student in the Delaware cohort. Unsurprisingly, he agreed with Mencarini that virtual learning isn’t as effective as in-person education.

“I think that it’s good in some cases, but it isn’t effective in how kids receive assignments and having to do it

at home...,” he said.

An article in *The New York Times* presented similar information,

“What we’re finding in the research thus far is it’s generally harder to keep students engaged with virtual lessons,’ no matter the content,” said Jered Borup, an associate professor in learning technologies at George Mason University, who was quoted in the news story.

DHS English teacher Mary Nutter also believes that remote learning poses difficulties.

“I believe in my heart that students learn best with face-to-face instruction. As teachers, within class instruction, we see if our students understand what they are learning that day,” she said.