



Great Vision Great Coverage

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Franklin Students Prepare to Vote for the First Time

By Logan Dubel

The 2020 election is just days away, and several Franklin High School students will be among those casting their ballots for the first time. With so much at stake for both sides, young people are more enthusiastic than ever to voice their vote.

This year's contest has been dubbed one of the most consequential decisions in our nation's history. It appears as though Marylanders are getting the message. According to the State Board of Elections, more than 64,000 people registered to vote in September. That is nearly 53% greater than the number of registrants in September 2016.

If young people choose to participate, they will surely be represented in the final vote tallies. Eligible millennial and Generation Z voters could account for 37% of the 2020 electorate.



Turnout is expected to increase in the 2020 election. Courtesy of Blogspot.

Voting for the first time brings excitement to many. Concurrently, it carries a sense of civic duty and responsibility.

Senior Jillian Freyman is anxious to cast her ballot but recognizes its significance. "It's intimidating to vote for the first time, but also exciting because you feel like an adult," she said. "I think it's important to vote because that's how your voice is heard and how you make an impact on your future."

While young voters may be passionate, they are not the most reliable. The most often excuse pushed by young people is that they feel like their vote does not matter. However, Freyman points out that it is extremely important. "It's important to vote as a part of democracy so that each person feels represented," she said.

Massive voter outreach efforts are underway across the country, and many of those campaigns are happening right on social media. This comes as no surprise, since the majority of high school students spend a considerable amount of time browsing Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and other apps daily. These platforms have become the center of the political firestorm and are

helping to get teens involved. It has become commonplace to see your friends posting their thoughts on the latest debates and showdowns happening in Washington, D.C. It is the keyboard warriors of Generation Z that both sides of the aisle are relying on to either show up at the polls or send in their ballots this November.

Ruben Amaya, a recent FHS graduate and former Baltimore County Student Councils (BCSC) President, believes that members of Generation Z must realize the impact they can have on society. "Young people have a level of influence in this electoral process that they have never had before. Politicians are listening to students," Amaya said. "Everyone is really passionate on social media, but the only way to influence the government is through your vote. In order to talk the talk, you have to walk the walk. Follow through with it and vote."

Despite our politically polarized society, a substantial portion of the population still holds that not just their vote, but the entire political system simply does not matter. Amaya feels that this is a misconception of great proportions. "I hear people say all the time that they don't like politics or that it's not important," he said. "When you talk about tuition, education, grants, and infrastructure, that's all determined by politicians and their policies."

Another common argument from supporters of both parties against voting in the State of Maryland is that it is worthless, since there is no question that the democratic party will dominate the presidential race. When looking solely at the numbers, they are not wrong. In 2016, the Democratic candidate took more than 60% of the vote, compared to the Republican candidate's nearly 34%.

Ms. Amos, who studied political science in college and teaches United States History, does not deny the data, but still believes that it is paramount to vote. "Maryland is not a swing state; in fact, Maryland has voted democratic in every presidential election since 1992," she said. "However, many Marylanders use this fact to justify their lack of voting. This is a slippery slope- if we all start to believe each vote doesn't count for anything, we will have a government that is not representative of or responsive to the people. Additionally, voting in state and local elections is often neglected, when in reality, decisions made at these levels might have an even bigger impact on your everyday life."

Amaya echoes Amos' comments about the importance of small-town elections. "There are also local races that can turn out to be really close," he said. "Do you want to be the one person who didn't vote when a candidate loses by a razor-thin margin?"

Casting a ballot also carries the weight of history. This year marks a century since the passage of the nineteenth amendment, which granted women the right to vote. Many find it hard to believe that just one-hundred years ago, the rights we are all afforded today were not granted to women, nor people of color.

Ms. Amos understands the gravity of the act of voting. "I think we should all be thankful that we have the right to vote, and we should take advantage of this opportunity, given the historical context," she explained. "Women couldn't vote until 1920, and many citizens of color couldn't truly exercise their right to vote until the 1960s or 70s, and beyond. Some groups still struggle to vote today. Being appreciative of our rights and being active in our democracy is a necessity."

Given the move to both a mix of in-person and mail-in voting, it is unclear when we will know the results of each contest. Regardless of the outcomes, those who cast their ballots will be reassured and comforted, knowing that they were a part of the democratic process.



Voting in person looks quite different in 2020. Courtesy of Al Jazeera English.

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Back in Session: How BCPS Plans to Reopen

By Kiersten Jones

BCPS has released a school reopening plan. By implementing social distancing and CDC guidelines, along with frequent sanitation of facilities and transportation services, they are showing that they are putting the health and safety of their students and staff first.

Virtual learning is projected to end by January 29, 2021, and if it is safe enough for staff and students, parents will choose a hybrid education plan or an all virtual education plan for their children.

ous groups. By including a plan of equity in their reopening plan, BCPS lets students know that they are not alone during this time, that mistreatment and discrimination towards students will not be tolerated during virtual or hybrid learning, and that all students will receive support throughout the school year.

When in-person instruction resumes, safety drills will occur. Face coverings will be mandatory in order for students and staff to participate in in-school learning. Outside



Bus driver and student wearing face coverings.



Different aspects of hybrid learning

BCPS reopening plan strives to achieve equity among students. The Board of education has stated that, “achieving equity means implicit biases and students’ identities will neither predict nor predetermine their success in school.” This means that all students will be treated fairly and impartially throughout distance and hybrid learning. BCPS will provide students with what they need in order to help them reach their full potential and prepare them for college and a future career. BCPS plans to provide services and supports to ESOL students, students with disabilities, students living in poverty, students who are homeless, and many more students of vari-

ous organizations, such as childcare vendors, and parent teacher associations (PTAs), will not be authorized to use BCPS facilities. School safety will be of the utmost importance as BCPS transitions into hybrid learning.

Currently, those who receive meals from BCPS, obtain them from mobile meal sites. Those who distribute meals wear face coverings and gloves in order to keep everyone safe. When in-person instruction resumes, meals will be provided in the classroom and at mobile meal sites, in order to meet the needs of those who won’t be present for in-person learning. In order to maintain social distancing practices, there will be a

reduction in the amount of staff working at all times. All food items are going to be individually wrapped and packaged. Food temperatures will also be taken to ensure food safety. Disposable containers, trays, and utensils will be used to serve food to students.

Many families have been wondering how safe transportation will be offered to students. Students, bus drivers, and bus attendants will all be required to wear a mask/face covering. Bus drivers will be required to have additional face coverings in case a student(s) forgets their own face covering. Students who have medical conditions along with documentation that explains why they cannot fulfill face covering requirements, could potentially receive a waiver. Bus drivers will be required to clean and disinfect surfaces that are often touched. BCPS transportation plan shows their concern for the health and welfare of their staff and students.

BCPS has worked hard to ensure the safety of families, staff, and students throughout their reopening plans. Their plans show that they want the best for students and their education. Providing services and support for students, and safety requirements for transportation and food distribution, will help to ensure that students’ health and wellbeing will come first.

The Effect of Covid-19 on Teens' Mental Health

By Olivia Turner

As social distancing, online school, and zoom birthday parties become the norm, it is crucial to look at the impacts Covid-19 has had on the mental health of teenagers. The ROX Institute for Research & Training conducted a study, and the findings are concerning. The study highlighted that 80% of teenage girls reported to be lonelier or isolated since Covid-19. Ellen Rome, MD, Mph, a pediatrician and head of the center of adolescent medicine cited stressors that could lead to worsening of mental health. Those being "disrupted routines, separation from friends, and worry about world events, all of which corona causes to occur." Another expert, Dr. Maria Loades, clinical psychologist from the department of psychology at the University of Bath stated that "children and adolescents are probably more likely to experience high rates of depression and probably anxiety."

These effects are not only in the hypothetical; it can be seen with many kids from our Franklin community. For example, junior Noveen Awan said, "I miss being



able to do small fun things like going to Chick Fil-a after school or attending school football games." Covid-19 is uncharted territory for everyone, and of course, it brings with it new emotions. Some emotions can be positive. Junior Claudia Lovo, she proclaimed Covid-19, specifically quarantine, has "allowed more time to focus on myself and make positive changes," demonstrating that it is essential to remember something as large as Covid-19 is going to have a different impact on everyone.

Though findings around the negative mental health effects of Covid-19 may seem worrisome, the best course of action is to try to help one another. To do so we must

know the warning signs. According to Ellen Rome, warning signs consist of troubling thinking or concentrating, change in eating habits or sleep patterns, and emotional changes. Though these behaviors may be no cause of concern by themselves, put together it could be a part of a larger issue. So, do not be shy to check in on your friend and ask them to talk on the phone if they have been more distant lately. Everyone has the power to make anyone's day.

After reading this article, one has to remember to not shy away from topics that can be hard to talk about such as mental health. Remember that things may feel low right now, and the person you want to help may take time. However, nothing lasts forever, and everyone has the power to make it through. For anyone in our Franklin community who wants to talk, there is always a teacher or guidance counselor there to listen, so do not be shy to ask for help.

Politics and Friendship: A Disaster in the Making?

By Simone Tillman

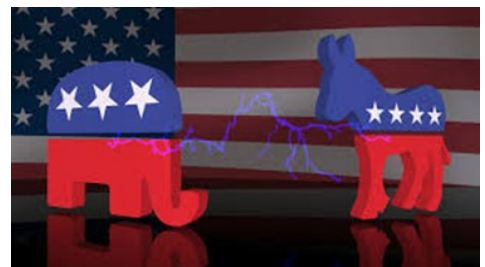
With the presidential election approaching, and a political environment in the United States that political analyst Bill Schnyder would categorize as "the worst divide since the Civil War," it's hard to avoid the controversial topic in our personal lives. Relationships across the nation, from co-workers to family members, have been tried oppressively by the political pressure of current conditions.

Money, politics, and religion are known to be taboo topics of discussion, but there's no avoiding it when both the news and meme-culture refuse to take a breath from the subject. Even children and teens who used to have the benefit of ignorance are now forced to acknowledge and understand the current state of our politics. Junior Claudia Lovo spoke out on her stance of the weight personal views can have on a friendship. "I haven't had to end a friendship because of my political views because many of my friends share the same ones as me. If it's capitalism versus socialism, there's no problem, but once you support

"All Lives Matter" or refute abortion, that's where I draw the line." A simple difference in opinion isn't always enough to break the camel's back, but once a major view is conflicting, the relationship might be in danger.

The presidential election on November 3rd has brought up many oppositions in the American people. These problems and viewpoints are nothing new, in fact issues such as racial inequality and abortion control can date back to the origins of this country. Yet the argumentative aspect of modern culture highlights these problems so much that they can no longer be avoided, even in professional environments. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), about "twenty-six percent of Americans admit to talking politics in the workplace on a regular basis." While seemingly harmless, once political issues cause a disagreement in a professional environment, it could be consequential for the employees and those surrounding them.

Personal relationships will always be impacted by external factors. But the extent of which our politics have weighed down or changed people's outlooks on those they hold close is something rather recent. There is no way to avoid political disagreements, in fact, discussing our differences is highly encouraged, but there is a way to do so. As long as people can remain respectful when debating their personal ideals, then perhaps the impact politics has on our culture isn't a bad thing at all.



U.S. party logos in regard to the 2020 election. Majority parties from needpix.com.

Back to the Classroom: What It's Like to Teach in the Covid-19 Era

By Bari Weinstein

School is where you can relax with friends. It's where you can get help on your homework or work from your teacher. My mother is one of those educators who must endure the stress of being a teacher in Covid-19. I interviewed her to understand more about what it is like. From new protocols such as wearing masks and face shields, to keeping the kids more socially distant, there are certain aspects of school that have been adjusted or are not allowed to be used like cloth material items like gym uniforms.

What is it like to be at school with face masks, shields, plexiglass, etc?

"It is nice to be back with the kids in person and the teachers, but it is difficult to teach through a mask with kids distant. The cleaning procedures are a lot as well. It is hard not to spend time with other classes. We are in our own pod, and each class does everything by themselves."

Do you like being back?

"For the most part. It is very different and strange."

What are some things you do differently this year, than last?

"We can not have soft cloth things, such as baby dolls, pillows, and dress up clothes. Each child has to have their own supplies, no sharing. The kids are more spread out."



Three times a day, teachers clean items that students have touched.

How do you keep the kids away from one another, like without touching the other kids and the teachers?

"Two kids are allowed to play with these toys at the same times. We have plexiglass to let them play with each other doing art or playdough. And we tell them to stay farther away, like not too close to the other kids, when they are on the carpet. So, more spread out than usual."

If you could change one thing about the situation with school, what would it be?

"Less cleaning involved because it was a hassle to clean when Covid-19 was not around, but with Covid-19, we have to clean more times a day".

If a kid uses a toy that day, do you have to take it to a sink and clean it later for the next day?

"It depends. Because if they are not wearing their masks and sneeze, then yes, it would have to be cleaned right away. But the toys get cleaned three times a day to ensure the safety of the kids and staff".

Is there a protocol for if someone like a kid or adult is not wearing a mask?

"The kids do not have to wear masks, but if an adult is not wearing a mask, we would tell them to put a mask on. And if they refuse, the teachers are not allowed to work. But with the parents, they do not come in. They stay in the car."

Student Perspective

A Look Back at the Spring 2020 Lockdown

By Shenandoah Wolf

A wonderful song called "Everything Ends" says something that applies to this situation very well: "You can't hold on to what's gone, don't try to fix it, just move on." That is what the students and graduates of Franklin High are attempting to do in the wake of the 2019-2020 school year, each in their own way.

Covid-19 has affected how students treat school for both the students still attending Franklin High and for the class of 2020. Students have different feelings about the pandemic and how they would have prepared for it if they knew it was coming. Some students simply said that they were sad and would have spent more time with their friends while others said they would have changed how they handled the entire high school experience.

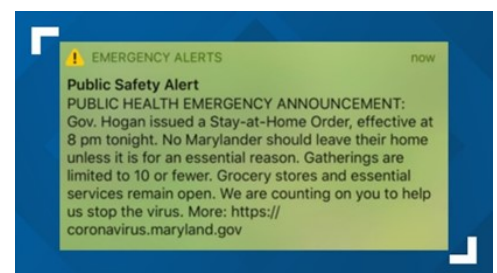
Students who were involved in different activities responded in distinctly contrasting ways. Many who were seniors in spring 2019 like Lilah Henderson were excited because, as she put it, "It was an early spring break, and we all

thought it would only be the two weeks." Students who shared this sentiment looked forward to two weeks off. Students involved in time sensitive activities were more cautious but still believed that the activities could be rescheduled when the two weeks were up.

But then the two weeks came to an end and everyone was still at home. As the county extended the lockdown for an indefinite period, the students' views on virtual learning changed. Some students were mad because it had taken so long for the world to acknowledge the danger that Covid-19 posed. "The idea of a pandemic was scary and made me mad that even when we saw it starting to get bad, people didn't treat it seriously," said junior Anna Surine. Other students were disappointed because they were missing out on major high school events like prom, senior musical, and graduation.

Graduate Chiedu Chika said, "Senior year was supposed to be the one last bang, and it got taken away." Most students said that they would have spent more time with their friends

and tried harder in school to do well if they knew what would come in the spring of 2020. One message is heard from all the students: they would have changed at least something about how they handled the 2019-2020 school year if they had been able to see Covid-19 coming.



March 2020 stay at home order from Gov. Hogan. Courtesy of wusa9.com.

What Lies Ahead for the Class of 2021

By Linnie Ulick



Seniors embarking on their last year of high school have internal questions to address as they figure out what values, interests, and expectations they want to bring with them into their futures.

Future: just one word that encompasses so many different aspects of someone's life. Many of us probably have varying feelings about leaving high school, but after graduation, life won't be spoon fed to us anymore. It may seem a little bit daunting to think about what our lives will look like after we leave the comfort that is high school, however, we can be assured that this is happening to all of us at the same time. Similar to this pandemic. Making their way through the rigor that is junior year, students who are now seniors had to kind of stop in their tracks—or so it would seem. You'd think that this structureless time of being at home, unsure of what to do, would hinder students' abilities to figure out their future, that they'd just have to wait it out. That's not the case though.

Three FHS seniors were interviewed on how the pandemic affected their future plans. Although not specifically firm on what their plans were, they are confident that they will have a bright future. Their outlook on life is not only inspirational, but reassuring.

In early March 2020, senior Nick Thorn thought he'd be getting his license soon, deciding on which college experience he wanted, and how that would affect what classes he'd take senior year. As school closed and all of that wasn't doable or foreseeable for the time being, he realized that

you can't take as much stuff for granted. During this time at home he has changed a lot but not in a way to try to find himself, rather, to change the way he views things and therefore being present. "I'm not worried, I know that I'll get to a place where I want to be. I can have a happy life without stressing out about something [in the future] that isn't currently happening." Nick is grateful for simple things in life and those things will carry him through times of uncertainty without strain.



Does the word "future" have to involve academic accomplishment and its' affect on the next stage of your life? Not necessarily. While school is important, try to also focus on the here-now to better your own understanding of yourself.

Senior Navara Syed had her future aspirations prepped and ready before the pandemic struck, so instead of worrying about what will happen, she wanted to concentrate on herself, on her hobbies, and things she didn't used to have time for while focusing on school. So much of knowing what you want is knowing who you are, "I've noticed that you have multiple versions of yourself, and the version of you that is the most true is the version when you're alone." Navara has been devoting time to understanding herself and her emotions, finding the things she likes rather than the things people expect her to

like. There is never a time where you should stop learning about yourself.

Senior Evan Jones is not only looking forward, but also learning from the past. "I definitely know myself and a big part of that was self-reflection during quarantine." Evan is on the school wrestling team, which took up a lot of his time so it was difficult to balance working hard in wrestling and school. After looking back on this, he began to move ahead by focusing on bettering himself in all aspects. "All of this time away from the masses helped me reflect on myself and adjust my priorities. Creating great and healthy habits will ensure a bright future." He ends on a determined note: confident in his abilities in wrestling, school, knowing himself, and navigating through what lies in his future.

If you ever are stuck and unable to see the future, it is important to know that discovering who you really are will guide you. Living presently can help push you forward, and it might even allow you to end up in a happier place than if you were only focusing on what lies ahead. These seniors are all people we should learn from as they teach us to work hard but not to stress yourself out all while living to your own standards. It seems as though they'll go pretty far in life with this mindset.



Passions are what motivate us to constantly work on ourselves. Evan Jones and Navara Syed spent this structureless time prioritizing the things they love to do.

Invest for Success: The Benefits of Investing at a Young Age

By Grace Warfield

Who doesn't enjoy an early retirement and a better economically supported lifestyle? Investing at a young age makes life easier because investing accumulates wealth which can be used to prepare for the future.

If a young adult decides to invest in the stock market and can contribute money to a Roth IRA early on, it helps them in the long run by preparing for retirement. Since you can never have too much money for retirement, saving is beneficial. Starting to invest early on makes securing funds for retirement much more beneficial because of compound interest. Compound interest involves time and money, and the more time one has, the more money they can generate. Even Albert Einstein said, "Compound interest is the 8th wonder of the world. He who understands it, earns it; he who doesn't, pays it."

Younger people who invest in the stock market can afford the risks involved because, if there is a stock market crash or if they experience any other loss with their stocks, young investors have much more time to recover. Jim Cramer, the host of the CNBC show Mad Money said, "Young investors can take more risk...if you make a mistake in your 20s, you have the rest of your life to fix it." This is true because af-

ter a stock market loss, the best way to recover is by investing again and waiting for the better investment. Not every stock will be at a low all at once, so watching the market and striking at the best moment is a waiting game. But not only is time beneficial for buying stocks at low prices, but for learning from mistakes. Relating to high school students, teachers always say mistakes are important for growth. Not only does this ideology apply to school, but to investing as well.



Percent returns of stocks, image from Getty Images on fool.com

Since young investors are better fit to afford the risks of the stock market, they can take them. Risks allow investors to benefit from higher returns in the stock market and young investors have much more leniency to take risks in the stock market compared to older investors, as Cramer said, "There's absolutely no reason for someone who's in their 20s to have bond exposure

when that money could be invested in stocks." When the time is right and investors get closer to retirement, they should lean towards bonds which are a lower economic risk. But this is why young investors should utilize the time they have to get familiar with the chance involved in the stock market.

Not only does successful investing generate money, but it also helps people save. Instead of spending money on unnecessary things, investing in the stock market can "trick" investors into saving their money. Cramer notes, "Investing stocks can be a lot of fun, whereas leaving money in a savings account...feels really joyless for a lot of people."



Image of Jim Cramer from cnbc.com

Early investing can be very beneficial in both the short run and the long run because young investors can learn how to manage their money and begin to prepare for the future so they can live in comfort.

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