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## Students keep connected while discovering distance learning

By Ania Keenan

Students on March 13 received an email verifying the Acalanes Union School District's decision to close schools through April 3 in response to the coronavirus, which came shortly after the Orinda Unified School District and many other districts around the state reached similar conclusions. "The Board and staff understands how immensely disappointing this is to many of you as your school, activities and social world has been completely disrupted. For that, we are profoundly sorry," AUHSD Superintendent John Nickerson stated in his email to students, expressing his remorse.

Without access to classrooms students began transitioning to online schooling in the weeks leading up to spring break. The two-week period between March 16-27 was used as a trial run with the understanding that teachers would apply more interactive teaching platforms to reach their students if the closure was extended to meet public health needs.

A few weeks into online schooling most of the AUHSD students have been receiving a majority of their lessons through Google Classroom and other online platforms with some teachers using YouTube to post virtual lectures. Miramonte Sophomore Natalie Kurtz says that she gets most of her class assignments from Google Classroom with limited use of Zoom or other virtual communication tools.

"I'm learning, it's just not like learning at school. I'm learning different ways to do my work but not necessarily learning a lot of new material," Kurtz said. This is a sentiment shared by many other students who recognize the difficulties of the situation but hope that the school can improve their strategies.

"While their communication hasn't been the best, it's been adequate enough to get us through the past week without too much issue," Miramonte Senior Harry Burnick said. "But I think if they just sent out a mass email, with a schedule for Zoom classes that every class has to follow, rather than the 'every man for themselves' approach the school is currently following, that would help this go a whole lot smoother."

Despite lack of connection on campus many school leadership programs are continuing to reach out to their students during the closures. The Miramonte leadership program continues to post on their social media accounts, as have other schools in the district, and have floated the idea of virtual spirit days in the chats they send out to the student body.

"Currently, Leadership at Miramonte is actively planning a spirit week that can still occur virtually. This would include fun daily social media events that everyone can take part in," Miramonte All-Student-Body president Erik Johansen said. "My class, the junior class, is looking into potentially having a grade-wide Zoom call along with a variety of other ideas."

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

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