



A Conversation with Students: How COVID-19 is Affecting their Educational Experience

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- Kate: All right. Welcome, everybody. Give me just one second before we begin here. Okay. So welcome everybody to a conversation with students, how COVID-19 is affecting their educational experience. This event is hosted by the Center for Education Equity at MAEC. And we are pleased to be joined by a couple of fantastic moderators and also a lot of wonderful students and I just want to walk you through a couple of things before we begin with that.
- When you logged in, your microphone should be muted. Please try and keep those muted throughout this event so that we can listen to the students and the moderators as they speak. Also, if you could keep your video camera off so that the students are featured on top, that's how they're going to be communicating and I know everybody is on here today to listen to them and to see them. Also in the chat box on the right side, I think, you'll see a little icon and it will appear on your right side. If you have questions, you can leave those questions in the chat box and we have a couple of wonderful chat box moderators that will attend to those.
- When the time is right, there will also be a couple of calls at the very beginning. They'll show up in the middle of your screen and if you can just answer those, wait for a few seconds, the answers will come up and then you just click. I think you need to click X to get out of it. I know I do. And then we'll read those answers out. I want to just introduce few people here. We've got our chat box crew. We have Paul and Nikevia. You'll see them in the participant list and if you want to message them directly, you can do that. And then you have myself, Kate, and Tanner helping you with technology issues. I think the next one goes to you, Daryl.
- Dr. Daryl Williams: So good afternoon everyone and thank you all for joining us for what we feel is a very important conversation as we are all experiencing this corona pandemic and the impact that it had on all of our lives. I'm Dr. Daryl Williams, Senior Specialist at MAEC. And also hosting, and I want my colleague to introduce himself.
- Sadiq Ali: Good afternoon, everyone. Sadiq Ali, proud Executive Director of Maryland Mentor, which is a statewide affiliate of Maryland for the National Mentoring Partnership. So we're all about relationships and increasing quality mentoring. Pleased to join you all today, signed for the conversation.

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Dr. Daryl Williams: Okay, so again, we are hosting. The MAEC is hosting this event. We have been founded as an education nonprofit, dedicated to increasing access to high quality education for cultural, linguistic, and economically disadvantaged and numbers learners. Our vision is a day when all students have equitable opportunities to learn and achieve at high levels. And when we say all students, we mean all students regardless of race, gender, language, national origin, income, disability, or any other characteristic that we may be identified as.

The mission of MAEC is to promote excellence and equity in education to achieve social justice. The center for education equity is a project of MAEC Incorporated. We're one of four regional technical educational assistance centers. We're funded by the United States Department of Education on a title for the Civil Rights Act of 1964. We work in tandem with-

As of 1964 we work in tandem with partners such as WestEd and A.I.R. to improve and sustain the systemic capacity of public education to increase outcomes for students regardless of race, gender, religion, and national origin. I want to take this time to give you the context of what we are going to do today. As you are aware, we are having a national conversation. They're in various different forums about education, about life, about this Coronavirus, COVID-19 and how it's impacting us all.

But particularly for this conversation. I want to share with you that just as recent as yesterday, I saw some statistics that... That really resonated and really resounding to me. Nationwide, there are about 30 million students, 30 million students that are not in school due to this Coronavirus.

There are 21 states and three US territories that have totally shut down for the entire school year. According to Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases, there is an expectation that schools will open, but no one knows when. So as we think about what this means for our youth, we wanted to hear their voices because there are a lot of conversations about online learning and distance learning, virtual learning and what schools are doing and when schools are open or reopen and what the new normal will look like.

But we haven't had an opportunity, from my perspective, to hear what the students who are actually experiencing the hardest this shutdown. So today we're giving you a chance to hear from students, students that are represented from various parts of the country and as you can see some of the areas in which our students are represented, Maryland, Oregon, California, Maine, New Jersey. And so we're going to open up a conversation with our students and allow them to introduce themselves. And I'm going to turn it over to my cohost Sidiq who may give some opening comments and then he'll bring our introductions for our students.

Sidiq Ali: No, thank you, good brother Darryl Williams, a.k.a Dr. Williams. And I think your summation and context for what sort of brought us all together I think was absolutely wonderful. And I'll just say it in simpler terms, right? That one of the other main objectives of this conversation as we say in many youth development circles, right? "Nothing about us without us." So we can't have a conversation about what is best for young people without including our young people, our young leaders. So that's just, again, I'm a lay person, right? Dr. Williams has a Ph.D. So I have, I have to bring it down a couple of levels, so... We're absolutely excited. I would just also like to call out before we introduce our students. Again, our student leaders, right, is that we have such a wonderful array of folks joining us from around the country.

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Even though M.A.C. E. represents the mid-Atlantic and those adjoining 15 states. I think it's just important for us to call out for the context, especially as we talk about being all in this together and just how important conversations like this are. In no particular order, of course, I'm representing the great state of Maryland, but we have Missouri, Florida, I saw in the chat box, Tennessee, California, Pennsylvania, Maine, and Maryland. I'm in Maryland, so I got to shout out Montgomery County and Prince George's County where I grew up, Washington State, Massachusetts, Alaska, I saw Arkansas, Kansas, Texas, South Carolina, and Alabama. Don't get upset, I said Pennsylvania too. Oaktown, we just saw there in the chat box.

So it's important just for context: this is not just an East Coast thing or a West Coast thing. Everybody, it's sort of going through this at the same time. And the more equipped we are with information and context, the better we can do our jobs, which is ultimately serving young people and being of benefit to young people. So without further ado, let's just go in order of the slide. So, Abby, just give us your name and do we want to shout out school? Is that okay, M.A.C. team? Show a little school pride?

- Dr. Daryl Williams: Absolutely. Let's just give them the mic and let them decide if they want to shout out their schools, or... We're going to give that to the young people.
- Abby: Hi everyone. I'm Abby. I'm a sophomore at Fort Hill High School in Maryland and I'm really excited to be here today talking for you all.
- Sidiq Ali: Nice. Thank you, Abby. Afton? I'll just give some trivia while we wait for Afton. The nickname from Maryland is the Old Line State. Just FYI. Oregon, the Beaver State. Afton, you there? All right, maybe she's having an issue on muting. We're going to move down and come back to Afton. Alicia.
- Alicia: Hi everyone. My name is Alicia and I am currently a junior in college. I go to Cal State University, Dominguez Hills and I'm from Los Angeles, California. I'm really happy to be here.
- Sidiq Ali: The Golden State. Thank you, Alicia. Ellie?
- Ellie: Hi, my name is Elicora, but I go by Ellie. I'm a junior. [inaudible 01:42:18]
- Sidiq Ali: Can we mute our lines, folks? If we're not speaking, can we please mute our lines?
- Sidiq Ali: Okay. Go ahead, Ellie.
- Ellie: So yeah, I go by Ellie and I'm a junior at South [inaudible 01:42:33] High School. Yeah, from Maine. I'm happy to be here.
- Sidiq Ali: Awesome. Thank you so much. Fiona, do we have Fiona? Did Fiona join? I think Fiona-
- Fiona: Yeah. Yeah, I'm here. My name is Fiona [Stowers 00:01:42:47]. I go to South [Boylan 00:01:42:50] High School with Elicora and I'm also a junior and I'm excited to be here.

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- Sidiq Ali: Awesome. And Maine, FYI, is the Pine Tree State. Let's keep rolling. Did Simone ever make it on? All right. Tenneal, Tenneal.
- Tenneal: Hello, everyone. I'm Tenneal. I'm from Los Angeles, California and I'm a freshman at Los Angeles Trade Tech.
- Sidiq Ali: Awesome. Thank you so much. And Toby?
- Toby: Hi guys, my name's Toby, and then I go to school... Winston Churchill High School in Montgomery County, so shout out to Sidiq. It's my first time presenting myself to all of you guys, like a lot of people. So I'm kind of nervous, but I'm really excited to be here.
- Sidiq Ali: Awesome. Toby, you're going to do wonderful. Maryland, representing Maryland, the Old Line State. Let's go. And William, round us out.
- Sidiq Ali: William, make sure... You got to unmute yourself.
- William: I'm sorry about that. I've been having a little bit of trouble-
- Sidiq Ali: No, it's all good. We can hear you.
- William: With a couple of things. I'm sorry about that. My name is William Rogers Owens. I go to Mergenthaler Vocational Technical High School in Baltimore, Maryland. That's mostly just about me. Did you ask us to say anything about ourselves, Mr. Sidiq?
- Sidiq Ali: No, I've got a nice icebreaker coming up for you. That's enough for right now. You're going to get plenty of airtime here in a second.
- William: Thank you, Mr. Sidiq. I'm sorry about that.
- Sidiq Ali: No, you're good, sir. Can we just give them a round of applause in the chat box please? Either type a number one or if you've got some emojis, let's just give these young people the round of applause for being here, courageously prepared to share. Can we just do that and get them some chat box love? Meanwhile, did... Was Afton able to unmute herself?
- Nikevia: She actually had to go so she's not going to be able to stay with us.
- Sidiq Ali: Oh, okay. Okay. Okay. All right. We're going to keep rolling. Y'all look at the chat box. You've got a lot of love for our young leaders, our young presenters in the chat box. So really quickly,

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additionally, just to sort of set the tone, because this is obviously a really, really serious time, but we also have to have a little bit of fun, right? So we have a quick chat box poll for everyone. Please participate. We want to know. What's been your favorite quarantine snack so far? What's been your favorite quarantine snack? No judgment, no judgment. Just type away. And our chat box moderators, can y'all please call some of those out please? Paul and [Nikevia 00:09:51]. We looking for your favorite quarantine snack.

Paul: [Bag of chip 01:45:54]-

Nikevia: Brownies, chocolate cake.

Paul: Ooh, a lot of Oreos. A little bit of wine.

Nikevia: Popcorn, chips and salsa.

Sidiq Ali: All about the wine.

Nikevia: A lot of peanut butter. A lot of cookies and candy.

Paul: Oh, Oreos keep coming.

Nikevia: Ooh, pierogies. Nice.

Sidiq Ali: Spirits. That's a technical term. I like that. Spirits.

Nikevia: Vegan desserts. Oh, wow. Doritos.

Sidiq Ali: That's great. Reese's. Yes.

Paul: Oh, Doritos. That's, there you go. Yep.

Sidiq Ali: Somebody said literally everything. That's... Just got to chalk that one up. That's great. Well listen, keep those coming. We got some Coke in there, some white cheddar, Ben and Jerry's. I'm a huge Ben and Jerry's fan. This is amazing.

So just wanted to shout out a couple more states that have joined us and I'm going to pass it over to Dr. Williams so we can get this conversation started. But shout out to Colorado, Connecticut, North Carolina, "North Cackalack," tobacco. That old Tobacco Road. New York, as well as Illinois. Just wanted to shout out additionally Mississippi. We just saw Mississippi. I saw you, Elizabeth. We ain't going to forget you like that. Indiana. Okay. We missing a couple. Okay. All right. I think I got the last couple. All right. DC. I'm from DC, born and raised in DC. Georgia. Okay. Virginia. Okay, that's it. Dr. Williams, it's on you. First question.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Hey, brother Sidiq, thank you. This is real exciting. I... You know everybody from all over the country you; you really have to understand how important this is going to be because you are actually going to get to hear the voices of these young people. They're representing your States, your localities. They're making it very clear what is the impact in their lives.

So we're going to start off with our first question and, and let me say this too, for those that are observing and watching, if you have questions, please put those in the chat room. Our chat

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room moderators will be going through those and from time to time we'll intersperse those questions to our participating students and make sure that we can get your questions or concerns addressed through this conversation. So let's start with the first question. I'm going to ask our students, what has been your experience so far, quarantined? And so we want our students to raise their hands and we recognize you as you go. Okay. Abby, from Maryland.

Abby: It's really different. I am used to leaving my house a lot. I'm really busy. I'm in a lot of activities with school and everything. So usually before this, if I was at home I was either doing homework or sleeping. So now that I have so much free time, it's kind of just like, well you just sit there and you're like, "Well, what do you do with yourself?" And then once the schoolwork came out, now in Maryland we've actually, for me, we've switched to Google Classroom. So we have one assignment per week that we have to do per subject. And now that that's come out, it's a little bit easier because I can always like do that schoolwork to keep myself occupied. But it's kind of crazy not being able to leave your house like you normally do and everything like that. So it's kind of... It's different, but we're getting along.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Okay. Other students. Let's see. Go ahead, Alicia.

Alicia: Hi everyone again, my name is Alicia and I'm in Los Angeles. I'm in a more busy part of Los Angeles. I'm in Koreatown. I don't know if any of you guys are familiar with that area, but it's, it's pretty busy over here so it's been kind of interesting. Like when I'll go outside and I'll still see people walking up and down the street, people in these stores. It's got... The traffic and stuff of just the people in the cars have gone down some but it hasn't been... There's still lots of people outside. It's just what I'm trying to say. So it's been interesting just to see everybody with their mask on.

Walking outside, I think that with all the schools in my area, I think that most of them are closed down right now. So it's... Yeah. Yeah. Most of them are closed now. I'm just talking about like elementary schools and high schools and middle schools, most of them are closed down right now. So it's been interesting like to see all the kids. I've been working with one of my neighbor's kids. That's just been my experience so far. And yeah, I've been getting to know my family a little bit better than I probably wanted to.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Great. And we're very happy to have students that are representing higher education because one of the things that's really important, and I'm going to go to one of our other students to respond, is that our students in the PreK-12 environment, you know they are thinking about, "So what does all this mean for me, this shutdown, this Corona issue? How am I going to continue on this pathway? Finishing public education and particularly for high school students, they're concerned about what college is going to look like for them or their pathway to college. So we have representatives, some higher ed, who are going to talk about the impacts at the higher ed level as well. And so we build this bridge, this connection between the two. Okay. Other students who will want to share what this experience has been like, quarantined? Go ahead, Tenneal. You're on.

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- Tenneal: Hello everyone. I'm Tenneal. In my experience I would say that I had to kind of become a teacher because I have siblings as well and the only person that's still working is my mom. Their schooling also switched online, so I also have to help them with their schooling. I feel like that was a big thing, kind of becoming like a teacher for elementary school kids. Not only teaching myself too, as well with my online classes in chemistry. So just helping the younger kids with their work and like just being at home a lot. It's kind of different but it's okay. It's not too bad but I... We're getting through it. I want to go back to school though. That's what I would say.
- Dr. Daryl Williams: Right. So we're going to keep moving if you... Everybody's going to get an opportunity to respond to questions. We've got a lot of questions. There'll be a lot of questions. So I'm going to throw it to Sidiq for the next question and some others an opportunity to share. Sidiq, on you.
- Sidiq Ali: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. So to our young leaders, what would you all say have maybe been your favorite or least favorite parts of quarantining so far? Salma, her hand shot right up. All right, I got to hear this. Salma?
- Salma: Hi. [crosstalk 01:52:53] Hi. I would say my favorite part is that now that we're staying home, I get to spend more time with my family, which normally before quarantine began I would be out of the house a lot. So I never really got to spend time with my family. But now we get to talk a lot, which I would say that's my favorite part. But my least favorite part would be that we... Normally I'm a person who likes to go out of my house a lot, and I like to hang out with my friends and do sports. But now that we're staying at home, that's my least favorite part because I don't really get to do things out of the house.
- Sidiq Ali: No, that's honest. Thank you so much. Toby. Toby, and then Fiona.
- Toby: Hi guys, I'm Toby. And then my favorite part of quarantine is actually building bonds with people. Because a lot of people say, like you're only staying at home, kind of losing this social interaction. But for me, I think, I'm actually getting to know people better because when we have Zoom classes online, when we have to still study some materials, there will be student that are not as good at... Like academically as the other ones. So the ones who are kind of good at academic will help the people who needs help and that really gives me a lot of power to stay strong in this entire situation. And so that's my favorite part. The worst part is probably not being able to go to gyms. All the gyms closed. Maryland's like in complete lockdown. So yeah.
- Sidiq Ali: Yeah. Thank you so much. Fiona, and then we'll allow Acton, who was able to join us, to introduce herself here in a moment. But Fiona, what's been your least and favorite part of this quarantining stuff so far? Unmute yourself, Fiona.
- Fiona: Sorry, I couldn't do it for a second. But my favorite part would definitely be I get to sleep more. I was super busy before, so like I was always up doing something. So I definitely get more time to, I guess, self-reflect and take care of myself and sleep. But my least favorite part is... I'm an extrovert, so I get all my energy from being around other people. And so when I'm just by myself and with my mom, it's just like, I don't know, I don't really get the same energy. So I'm not as motivated as I was before to do schoolwork or do anything else. But yeah.

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- Sidiq Ali: Well, thank you so much for sharing that. Afton. Welcome, welcome back. Welcome back. Can you please introduce yourself to the audience?
- Afton: Thank you. Thank you kindly. Hello, I'm Afton. I am a junior in high school and I'm from Portland, Oregon. I feel that my favorite part about quarantine is the opportunity to get to let go and to get to slow down in a society that is always go, go, go. And it's always fast-paced and it's always based on projects and based on timeframes. But this quarantine for me, personally, has allowed me to just relax, to take it easy.
- Sidiq Ali: Great. Great. Awesome. Awesome. Thank you so much. Was there any other students that wanted to weigh in on this one before we move on?
- Dr. Daryl Williams: I saw Ellie's hand.
- Sidiq Ali: Okay, perfect.
- Ellie: So yeah, my favorite is when I like got to like speak to my old friends back in my motherland. Like I got to FaceTime with them. Like we hadn't seen each other in a really long time, but I got closer to them. My least favorite part is like when I have to... I live in a really big family. It's always really, really [inaudible 01:57:05] this house, and I've got to babysit. I got closer to my siblings, but at the same time, it's not that easy. So... Yeah.
- Sidiq Ali: Awesome. Well, thank you so much. Thank you so much. I think we'll move on. We'll keep them... Excellent questions in the chat box so far. We're definitely capturing those and we'll try to incorporate some of that in later. Dr. Williams.
- Dr. Daryl Williams: Yeah, I want to sort of bridge on a little bit of what we've been hearing. You know, we talk a lot about academic development or what we need in terms of our education, but the young people that have talked about some very... A very important aspect of their development and that's this socialize. And so you get motivated by being with your peers, whether you are anticipating the school dance or the prom or homecoming or basketball game or whatever, theater activities. And so how are you keeping your social lives? I want to extend this conversation because that has an impact on your motivation to learn. So how are you really dealing with your social life outside of your home? I'm sorry, go ahead, Toby.
- Toby: So right now, my social life... I think it's like... I mean there's a lot of change in my social life, but I don't feel as distant with people than I was expecting. Because I was using a lot of FaceTime, Snapchat, so I can basically see my friends every day. We can chat through [inaudible 01:58:51]; we send messages to each other. So I think it's like a big problem for me, socially.
- Dr. Daryl Williams: Do you think that the personal, the in-person interaction has been impacted even though you've used social media to connect with friends? What about that in-person relationship?
- Toby: Honestly, I feel like this is actually an opportunity for me to actually know the other person better because in school where we only have five minutes' break and then we have a relatively

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short lunch break to connect with each other. Right now we have more time in general, so I get to know a lot about the other person and I form, basically, new bonds with others.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Okay. Afton, you spoke about that timeframe, that it sound to me, it can sometimes be very rigid. And so that being-away from this rigid environment, is that helping you in terms of connecting with your peers? With keeping that social aspect going? How is that for you?

Afton: Unfortunately with this pandemic I felt more separated and torn apart from my friends because people are prioritizing their family and prioritizing their mental health rather than being connected. And for me, in some aspects, I very much miss the way that things were prior to this quarantine because we were forced to interact on a day-to-day basis at work, school, the bus stop, et cetera. But now we're no longer obligated to do that.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Okay, great. Let me... Go ahead Fiona.

Fiona: Oh, I was just going to add on to that and say it does feel pretty isolating, especially like in Maine. Something about the community here, something about the environment; it can already be pretty isolating at certain times. And yeah, I feel like people, even though we do communicate via social media, it's not the same. It's like... You feel like you're missing a part of the relationship. Yeah.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Yeah. Okay. Alicia, you're in a different environment, you're in higher education. And so you're not in a building every day or the same classroom as a public school. You are... So what is that social aspect for you as a college student? And this [crosstalk 02:01:36] issue.

Sidiq Ali: It's also warm and sunny too, by the way. [inaudible 02:01:38] in California.

Alicia: It is. It is. It is. Yeah. You're definitely right. I'm going to take out one of these headphones so I can hear myself. You're right in the aspect that we don't have to... If you're a college student, you don't always have to be on campus or you don't always have to be in the same building. You can take online classes and things of that nature.

And so I think I just want to kind of say this first. I think that is the reason why me being at my university, all of our professors are, I'm sorry, all of our staff just made all of the classes to just be online. And it was just kind of this transition where they expected us to just kind of get used to it. How do I explain it? There isn't really much of them expecting us not to be used to it. They just kind of are like, "Okay, you guys can just take an online class. It's no big deal." You know? So there's not a lot of discussion about it. There's not a lot of, "How do you feel about it?"

And then as far as my social life, it's definitely hurting me because I am someone who... If I can... I'm not really an extrovert. I'm more of an introvert. So if I can stay inside, I typically will. But then I'll get moments where I'll need... I'll have to go outside just for the human interaction or I have to go see my best friend, and not being able to do that has been really hard for me.

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Yeah, I don't know, I think it's really just because she's my friend and all of my friends, I need their support. It's interesting because I am quarantined right now with my mom and my brother. So I don't right now feel totally isolated. This is just my experience. I feel like, I'm with people so I'm comfortable. But I definitely... I'm needing to be with my friends, because your friends and your family, they're two different... It's just so different the interactions you can have with your friends.

And so, yeah. I don't really have friends at my school. I don't know. I don't know why. Most of my friends are from high school and other places. So in that aspect I'm not really strained as far as social interactions with my school. I wish I had social interaction with my professors to be honest with you. But other than that, yeah, I'm coping, I'm struggling. I'm in a place where I'm like, I don't know. I don't know how I feel. I'm just trying to get to the next day, you know, and I'm... Fingers crossed that one day I can see my friend again and that's all it is.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Yeah. And you know that struggle is real. That isolation-

Alicia: Yeah.

Dr. Daryl Williams: ... Is very real when you're away from peers, people that you're close to, it's a little different with family. I understand that. So Tenneal, you had a question or you had...

Tenneal: Yeah, I just wanted to piggyback on what Alicia said. For college, I would say our relationships, like socially with peers; they're kind of the same. We have FaceTime and Zoom and all that, but the relationships with our professors, I feel like that's what struggling the most. Because it's different, when you go to class and you're in class, they see that you're in class, they see that you're engaged and that you're asking questions and that you want to learn.

But I feel like now, those relationships are suffering because it's online and not all the professors communicate back and forth right away or they don't communicate with you at all. So I feel like not my "friends social life" is kind of deteriorating, but my "professional social life" is not the same.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Okay. So for our other students, let's talk about that. What's that professional relationship like? You miss your teachers? Do you feel like you are... That they're... You can't connect with them? Let's talk a little bit about that part of this aspect. Go ahead, Abby.

Abby: So for me, there's only really one teacher who's really done a really good job with reaching out with us. And part of that is because he has always been really good with that. Even before this started, we communicated through like the GroupMe app and stuff like that, but he's really adamant in making sure... It's the only AP class that is offered to sophomores at our school, so it's the most challenging class that we can take, pretty much. And he really wants to make sure that we're still prepared for the AP test because it's a modified version of it, but we're still going to be expected to take it. So as soon as all of this started, he had a game plan. He was like, "I felt like this was going to happen" and he set it out. He gave us a two week calendar with live streams that we can join to talk to him about stuff.

So ultimately I feel like he's really the only one who's done a really good job of making sure that

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we're okay. I don't feel like I'm struggling in that class. But on the other hand, even though the other teachers aren't giving us that opportunity to talk face-to-face with them through some kind of FaceTime or something like that, they're doing a really good job with being thorough in explaining the assignments that we have to do each week.

So I don't know, I feel like maybe it would be more beneficial if the board said, look, you have to have an optional meeting with these students so that if kids have questions, they can join the call. They can ask you questions, whether it be on how to submit the work, like the technical side of it, or just how to do the work itself. That way the kids have an option that they can join and ask those questions. Maybe just like once a week or something like that. Because the work we're getting isn't that rigorous and we really need to meet every day. So I feel like a little bit more communication would be good on our part, but I feel like they're doing a decent job as of now for us.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Okay. Sidiq. Do you think we want to check in the chat room to see if there are any questions that... See what the chat room is saying at this point?

Sidiq Ail: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, the conversation I think is moving along really, really nicely, and thankfully I think a lot of the chat box questions reflect some of what we tried to capture via some of the questions, as well. But I think there's already been a little bit of this theme, but we can definitely grab one of these questions from the chat box, which was... Again, I think we've, we've touched on it already, but are you all doing anything special or in particular.

... anything special, or in particular, around your self-care or do you all have any particular routine around preserving your mental health? Is that a big deal, or not? But just talk to us a little bit about how you all are preserving, again, your mental health and just mental health, physical wellness. Just staying sane during this timeframe. Let's start with Fiona and then go to Toby and then Afton.

Fiona: So for me the first couple weeks I was struggling, especially the fact that I didn't create a schedule for myself. So I was waking up at like 3:00 in the afternoon and going to bed at like 4:00 in the morning. So my sleep schedule is totally off. Everything was off and I really didn't feel good. So, I put a schedule in place for myself and that's made me feel a little bit better. So that I at least I have like a... I don't know, having a thing to follow, it's been helpful for me and then this thing that I do when I wake up in the morning is... I normally journal a lot, but I added this thing where I do an intention for the day. So basically you say like, "I'm going to be productive, I'm going to be healthy, I'm going to be happy."

So you that have it in your head throughout the rest of the day. Then I do three things that I'm grateful for about the day. So it could be like, "I made cake last night, I'm excited to go for a walk," stuff like that. It can be really small things that you're excited about. So, I write three gratitudes and then... shoot. I can't remember what else I do, but... Oh, and then write affirmations. So, if you're feeling particularly down about something about yourself, write the opposite of that. Say you feel like you can't do an assignment, it's too difficult. You feel like you're not smart enough to do it. What I would do is just say, "I'm smart enough, I can do this," just positive affirmations, yeah. Sorry, that was a really long explanation.

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- Sidiq Ali: Oh my God, but Fiona you don't understand... we're going to go to Toby next, but you don't understand most of the adults on the line right now, myself included, just benefited from that response, not just potentially other students. Nothing to apologize for, that was amazing. Toby what are your thoughts around preserving your mental health, your physical wellness. How are you doing with that these days?
- Toby: Oh, yeah... I want to add on to Fiona's. She keeps like journal, and I do meditation usually because at first, at the beginning of this quarantine break, I kind of get overwhelmed with how much time we have to spend, and then I sometimes feel bored. I'm a little bit depressed. So at that time I started to meditate. I was trying to reflect what I can possibly be possibly doing in this period of time that can benefit me the most. And then talking to your friends, I basically had this idea of developing on your hobby, or habits. So I started to, learning different languages, started learning computer science. So that's benefited me the most.
- Sidiq Ali: Wow. Thank you so much. There was another hand that shot up as well. Afton and then Alicia and then we need to hear from William. William you up at the end of this. We haven't heard from you in a little bit. William, and then we're going to go to Ellie after that. I think I saw someone's hand too... we're going to go around the whole board. Go ahead Afton.
- Afton: All right, thank you. Well, I have noticed that my self-esteem has plateaued, and my self-confidence is very much plateaued with this break. I think that comes from spending too much time on social media, to where I feel that I'm ugly and I feel that I'm unattractive, and I feel that all of these people look so perfect and so glamorous. So, my routine, I have incorporated getting ready in the morning because before this specific quarantine I was feeling fine and I had a very normal self-worth. And, this quarantine has completely thrown that off because I wasn't getting ready in the morning and I wasn't putting on outfits or brushing my hair even for the first several weeks in quarantine. So now when I put on an outfit and I make sure to take that time for myself, I feel less down than I had been and I feel less ugly than I had been. So now I can kind of grasp a chance to just feel like myself again.
- Sidiq Ali: Wow. Wow. Thank you so much. Thank you so much for sharing that, man. Selma, did we see your hand Selma? Selma, and then we're going to go to William.
- Alicia: Oh okay- [crosstalk 00:05:29].
- Selma: So... sorry.
- Sidiq Ali: I thought it was Alicia, I'm sorry. Look, this question got us going, I love it. So Alicia, Selma, William.
- Alicia: It's okay, I'm sorry. I could've gone last. I'm so sorry. I just wanted you to know that I was still wanting to say something, but I just wanted to say Afton is speaking straight facts, okay? I feel the exact same way. Just kind of give you guys a little bit of background about me, somebody very, very, very close to me passed away a couple of years ago and I've been struggling with that a lot, and to be completely honest with you guys, I was... when that happened, when that person

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passed away, I was in a state of... like a break off of school. I wasn't going to school. I was just working, and her passing away like totally motivated me to want to get up and just do... I quit my job because I was working at Macy's and I hated it and I love going to school, I love getting my education. I was actually upset during that time being on a break.

And so that really motivated me to just go to school, do what I was passionate about. Do that, instead of just do the the worker bee, live the life, type of thing. I'm like, "No, let me go to school and do something that I love," to kind of make myself feel better, to make myself feel like I'm doing good for that person, you know? And so, it was also definitely a distraction from my emotions for sure. Going to school with something that got me up, to literally get up and get dressed and take a shower and brush my teeth and go outside. I wasn't doing any of that. And, going to school got me jobs, got me job opportunities... just going to school has totally been such a really big positive... just being in my life. Plus, I love getting my education like I said. And so yeah, not being able to do that, obviously it's just been very, very hard for me.

I don't really know exactly what I'm supposed to be doing as far as my depression and stuff, and trying to deal with that, and so what I've just been doing is just trying to do physical stuff, trying to make sure that I get my fruits and veggies and my water. Because I know that that makes me feel better day. I'll go days without eating fruits and veggies... I feel like crap. So I'm like, "Let me make sure I eat that," and stretching in the morning. Stuff like that. Just small things that I know will make me feel better, you know? Because sometimes all of the emotions and stuff will... I feel it all over my body, you know? So yeah. So, trying to eat fresh foods and trying to stretch. That really helps me with dealing with this.

Sidiq Ali: Let me just tell y'all, y'all taking everybody to church. Fruits and veggies and hydration? Listen, again, this is actual factual for everybody on the line. Young, old, or in the middle. Man, thank you all so much. Let's keep rolling. We had a Salma and then William on his question and then we'll keep rolling.

Selma: All right. So, I feel like for the very first week or so I was sleeping a lot. I was waking up late; I was on my phone almost all day. So I feel like I wasn't really doing anything productive, but ever since the very first week I tried to wake up early so I don't mess up my sleeping schedule because it was really messed up. So I try to not sleep that late and wake up early. I try to do some stretches in the morning. I try to even do some exercises sometimes, if I can. I try not to spend that much time on my phone because I was starting to spend so much time, and I'm trying to not do that anymore. And sometimes I even just walk around my house, so I try to just do something productive if I can.

Sidiq Ali: That's awesome. That's awesome. Thank you so much. William, how you've been dealing with all of this, again, physical wellness, mental health, wellbeing. Talk to us. Unmute, unmute.

William: Oh, I always get that messed up. I'm so sorry. I'm sort of new to the Zoom thing.

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Sidiq Ali: No, you're doing great.

William: Yeah, so first I'd like to shout out to Afton. Yeah. Yeah, because it's really, I think, anatomically really difficult for humans to deal with things like this since we're not really used to being in a situation where you're away from your other human counterparts in a sense. So this is very challenging. You know, our physical and our mental health is really impacted by this. Like Afton said, I really did like your words Afton on this because it can become really inadequate for us, and unsustainable for us as people when we're not socializing, when we're not doing the things that we used to do. You see the really key part about this is that, us as humans, we are not in the position, really, to adapt quickly and really, in a sense, mentally to different changes.

And then that changes different stimulus in the body and then we're all out of whack. That happened to me and I'm not ashamed to say that. And, it has kind of really affected in a sense how I perceived the world and how I perceive even waking up in the morning, you know? Doing things that I used to do.

Like even my Johns Hopkins internship. I mean since they stopped that because of the public health concern for the program that I was in, it really did affect me. And, I didn't know until I really did some inner self talk and say, "Why am I feeling like this? I'm not really feeling the way that I used to, I'm feeling very solemn, I'm not feeling like I used to. So I really had to reassure myself, but I also had to acknowledge it first. But it has been hard and challenging but the key piece that I think really helped me is the reassurance that this is okay, and that even though good and bad things come into stage all the time, you really have to look at the good outweighing the bad for what's going on.

Sidiq Ali: Awesome. Awesome. Thank you all so much. And again, just FYI to our student leaders, you all are getting some major, major, beautiful words and reinforcement in the chat box. I'm so glad I joined this conversation today. I've been emailing and texting and Facebooking and colleagues telling them that they need to join and listen to these amazing students. They could school a lot of adults. They are so insightful. So shout out to all of you... and that's just one comment in the chat box. So if y'all have a chance, just scroll through the chat box a little bit.

Dr. Daryl Williams: honestly, this is so powerful. I mean it made me think, and it was a comment in the chat room... I'm paraphrasing, is that schools fill so many aspects of our young people's lives. It's not just that academic that we... we as educators, maybe we're taking for granted that our students just come to school and they want to learn and they get into class and they do whatever. But, the young people talking today, not just for themselves but representing others, and sharing this real impact that has disrupted their lives, and there are so many things that it impacts their self-worth, their motivation. We've got to find a way to build a better system so that these young people can get back to a place where where their lives are fulfilled again. I see your hand Ellie, go ahead. Share with us.

Ellie: So yeah, I'm going to go back to the question of how my mental health is going right now. For the first weeks it wasn't really that great because I was really struggling to balance home life and

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school and online classes. So because I'm living, like I said, in a big family and I'm more like the second oldest. So, it's a lot of responsibility. I have to help my mom with a lot of stuff and I don't get that much time for myself. That only also... I don't have that time to get my work done. It can be sometimes hard to focus with all the noises and the kids all around the house. So I like to-

Speaker 8: [crosstalk 02:23:01] wash your.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Someone said something? Go ahead Ellie.

Ellie: Yeah, so I had to... a schedule I guess, where I try to sleep early so I can be able to wake up early in the morning and get all my work done before the kids wake up and stuff, and I get all my school work done and at noon or at 1:00 that's when I go take care of the kids. And before setting that schedule. It was really hard to balance everything but I'm doing pretty good right now. Yeah because I've been... [Crosstalk 02:24:06]. Sorry.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Yeah. That's important, and let's talk about that with some of you, if not all of you, you've had to now adjust the way you are managing. So you've got new responsibilities, perhaps at home.

You... [Crosstalk 02:24:22] helping to take care of siblings. You may be [crosstalk 02:24:25] doing more around the house. There are certainly those responsibilities that now you have to balance with a new kind of an academic environment called distant, or virtual learning. And so, let's talk about what are these new responsibilities, how this is impacting your learning? Do you think your learning is falling behind or do you think it's remaining the same or somewhere in the middle? What do you think? And I'm going to call on Abby. I just want to hear... I want to start with you Abby, and then we just move around. Okay?

Abby: Can you repeat the question for me?

Dr. Daryl Williams: So the question is, with the added responsibilities you may have to take on... I'm sorry; my video went out, being at home and now trying to adjust to a new way of learning that's called distant or virtual learning. So, what is that balance like for you? To take on these new things at home where you are... for many of us we are confined, and we've got all these extra things we have to do and now we've got to try to keep our engagement in our academic stone. Let's talk the balancing act you have to do with that. Does it impact your learning? Is it hurting your learning?

Abby: Not for me. Not particularly, no. For me, it was harder for me to do my schoolwork and everything like that before the quarantine because it was so hard for me to find time to do my homework and then also have a social life and stuff outside of doing that, because I would go to school, get up in the morning, come home... well I wouldn't even go home most days. I would go straight to practice, didn't get out of practice until six o'clock maybe, and then my parents worked in everything so sometimes it would take a little bit for them to be able to leave work to come get me and take me home. So some nights it would be eight, nine o'clock before I would get home at night and then I would still have two or three hours' worth of homework to do and not be able to go to bed until 1:00, then get up at 6:00.

So that was really rough for me when we had school. But now even though I have responsibilities at home, like I have to keep up with the chores, sometimes help the siblings with

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their work if they need it. I have more to do at home now, but it's easier for me to balance what to do because that eight hours of my day where I was previously at school, now I'm at home.

So it's easier. I can sit down, do a lot of my work and the workload has actually backed off for me in most of my classes because now, as I said, we're doing Google Classroom, so we only have one assignment a week. Whereas I would be in school doing a different assignment every single day and then whatever they gave us for homework as well. So in addition to my workload being backed off, the fact that I don't have to get up and go to school every day, and be there for eight hours, has really opened up my day and given me more time to work on the assignments that they gave me. So I feel like it's easier to balance my work.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Sure, but I think you shared earlier too that... at least from your vantage point, that the rigor of your instructional assignments isn't at the same level when you're in your physical school.

Abby: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

Sidiq Ali: So that balance, it's easier because there's not enough rigor in the assignments that you're receiving?

Abby: Yeah. I would say, yeah, definitely.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Okay. What do some of the others feel about this balance? Go ahead. I see you Alicia, and then Tanelle.

Alicia: Yeah, for me it's been actually hard, I would say, on my... just on my learning. I struggle with motivation, I'm sure most of us do, and so sometimes it's like I have to be in the classroom in order for me to be present and learning, just being in my bedroom, having my bed two feet away, having the fridge two feet from me, like I have so many more distractions, I have Netflix, and so it's just a little bit more difficult for me to focus sometimes. And like I said, that's all an internal motivation. That's how people focus and do their work, and so for me, sometimes, education... occasionally I need external motivators, which like I said, it is just being outside and being face-to-face with the professor or having obligation, because of attendance. If you don't show up they kick you out, stuff like that.

Like some of those little... are motivators for me, sometimes. So I won't say that my grades have been slipping or anything like that. I have been able to keep a grasp on it right now, but we've only been in this quarantine... being for a few weeks. So I don't know what that looks like for the end of my semester or for next semester or whatever. So I'm just trying to find ways to not be distracted at home because that's the place where I'm being most distracted. So, that's, that's what I've been struggling with.

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- Sidiq Ali: I just want to say, big ups to you and the refrigerator comment, shout out to whoever in the chat box was like, their favorite snack was everything. They felt that one. I'm just bringing that up. All right, Tanelle.
- Tanelle: Wait, can you repeat the question?
- Dr. Daryl Williams: So the question is about the balance with the responsibilities you may have now at home, added responsibilities, and how's that impacting whether or not you feel your learning is falling behind?
- Tanelle: I would say I'm not falling behind, but I'm not learning anything new. Definitely... I don't know, during this quarantine, when you first wake up you're not like, "Oh I got to go to online class." It's definitely not on your radar, it's kind of... Like Alicia said, it's more of a motivator when you have to go to class and you have assignments due. Online class, you still do have assignments to do, but it's not... you don't have to go. So, I totally feel Alicia with that internal motivation, it's definitely needed, and then also I feel like I just do... schoolwork when my... I help my other siblings do their schoolwork. That's kind of like our time to do our schoolwork, because my mom is still currently working, so it's just me and my siblings. And the also I kind of have to take care of them all day until she comes back. So it's definitely not like, "Oh, I'm just want to do my schoolwork all or you forget about your schoolwork, and then an internal motivation is definitely needed because when it's lost, it's definitely hard to get back and... it's hard when you fall behind, especially in an online class, you got to stay on top of it... the readings and everything. So, yeah. I get [inaudible 02:31:20].
- Siddiq Ali: So [inaudible 02:31:22] No. Awesome, awesome. I got it, I got it, I got it. Right, so we're going to slowly... This has been an amazing conversation. Let me just say that one more time. You all... I just got an email from my colleague, he's like, "Man these students are killing it," and we couldn't agree more. So, I got an interesting question here in the chat box that I want to lift up that I think is... will be pretty interesting for you all to address a few can. But they said that they're wondering how you all as families, and again, I think you all have alluded to this a little bit, but again, it goes directly in line with the thought that you all aren't just students by yourselves, you all are in families, are in communities, are big sisters, are big brothers, et cetera. But the question is, they're wondering how you and your families are dealing with basic needs like having enough food, or are your parents and guardians still working, and then may be transition that it's also a technology issues. How is all you all's tech situation, and how has that impacted your ability to learn and to be engaged, et cetera? I know that's a lot, but feel free to take any piece of that. Abby, then Toby.
- Abby: For me, my family isn't really struggling a lot with the food and everything. My stepdad has been off work since the state of emergency was declared in Maryland, actually a couple of days before that, because he actually works at to casino and they closed all the casinos in the state. So he is paid salary though. So I think he's still getting a paycheck even though he's supposed to be... I don't really know exactly how it's working. I haven't really asked him all the details about

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it because I don't really feel like it's my place to ask him what he makes and how that's working right now. I don't feel like that's really respectful of me.

So, I know though that my mom, she's actually a tax repairer so she's considered essential in the state of Maryland. So she's still working right now until... I think today's her last day because I think it's the end of tax season, but up to now we haven't really had any problems. We're still allowed to leave our houses and go get food and everything, so we do that a couple of times a week, make sure we have food and right before my mom thought that the state of emergency was going to be implemented, she actually went to the market and bought a lot of extra food just in case something would happen. So we have that to rely on.

As for the tech issues and everything, it wasn't really an issue for me. My laptop is actually really, really old. I was going to have to get a new one in a couple of months, but then as soon as this started and I found out that class was going to be online and everything, it's still works for me to do my assignments and everything. But the video camera and the mic on it don't work. So I actually ended up having to... my grandma who lives right up the road from me, she has a better computer than me, so I ended up borrowing it for a little bit because she doesn't use it. So it actually worked out for me, but my concern is those students that don't have the technology that they might need to be able to participate in the live streams, if their classes are doing it or anything like that. That don't have a grandparent or someone else that they could... it worked out for me, but what about the kids that it doesn't work out for, you know?

Sidiq Ali: That's right. Do you happen to know any of those students or have relationships with any students that happened to be struggling with any of those?

Fiona: Yeah, actually. My best friend, she lives out in a more woodsy part of town. It's kind of far away from in town. It's about a 20 minute drive from her house to the nearest grocery store. So, she kind of lives out there and it's hard for them to get good Wi-Fi service out there. So she has the technology and everything she needs. She has an iPad, she has a laptop. Her parents were really good and making sure that she has the devices that she needs to do it, but they can't get a good internet connection where they are. So, it'll take her two hours to submit an assignment that should have maybe taken her 20 minutes to do, and I'm trying to help her out with that.

So I told her, "If you can get on and write your answers down on a piece of paper, then send it to me with your login, I'll log into the thing and put your answers in for you because she can't get it to go through and I feel so bad for her because it's so frustrating. She'll sit there, have everything filled out, then hit the submit button and then then her Wi-Fi will go out and she'll have to go back through and do everything again. It's just... I'm so happy that I don't have problems like that at my house, but I feel so bad for the people that do.

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Sidiq Ali: Wow. Thank you. Thank you for that response. Let's go Toby and then Fiona.

Toby: Yeah, I was trying to add on to the point about this old technology issue. I was actually volunteering for the food distribution services for my county public schools, but the county I live in is [inaudible 00:28:10] county, so there's the Southern part has a lot of resources and then Northern part is... relatively have limited resources. So the student who goes to school in the Northern part, actually, a lot of them needs the food distribution from the school. So a lot of people does not have the access to have the laptop or the correct facilities to... schools. So what my school does is, they basically distribute the public owned Chromebooks to people who in need, but the thing about Chromebook is I think there's a lot of trouble with Chromebook opening Zoom chats, and there's also an issue with running Flash and Java I think. So it's really polarized and I know a lot of people in my county that does not have Zoom opportunity as people... live in like probably more affluent Neighborhoods.

Sidiq Ali: Thank you so much. Thank you so much. We have Fiona and then Afton.

Fiona: So, I'm on my school district's school board. So I heard them talk about how they're dealing with the technology situation, and so they're doing basically the same thing that Toby's district was doing. They figured out ways to distribute all the technology to the... We have like 3,000 students in our district which is probably pretty small compared to... in other states, but we've been able to distribute technology out to the families who don't have it. High school students already have... and I think middle school students, already have all the technology that they need. But I think the big problem was Wi-Fi.

There's certain communities which... this is kind of not sensitive, but a large portion of our people of color in our community live in one area. And so I don't think there was Wi-Fi and a couple of those... in a lot of homes in those areas. So I don't think students could connect, and I think there's some students that have been able to connect, so we're trying to create these mobile hotspots where students can go and connect to the Wi-Fi and do stuff like that. But yeah. For me the technology piece has been fine and I think our community is dealing with it. But, yeah.

Sidiq Ali: Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. And we have Afton, what'd you want to add? Please. Afton then William.

Afton: Thank you. I just wanted to address a question, and a concern, that was mentioned earlier and that tied into being motivated for school. Unfortunately this whole quarantine situation has completely derailed my ambitions to get a diploma, to be quite frank with you. And I am still debating even to this minute whether to get my GED next year or to continue pursuing a diploma because... I felt like a train on a track that was just zooming towards graduating and I was motivated and I was completing assignments and doing my best in school. And I... to be completely honest with you, have not sat down and touched a school assignment for a month now, and I am kind of lost in what to do and I don't feel motivated because it's kind of

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confusing-

... loss and what to do. And I don't feel motivated because it's kind of confusing to know when the teachers want to meet to chat. So I'm just doing the most I can with communicating via email and text to get some answers and to get some ideas on how to get back to how I was and how to continue to complete assignments and how to continue to try to get educated and to address the whole technology situation. I have been very blessed to have a Chromebook at home and to have access to very speedy internet. My mom is an essential worker because she works for DHS and I'm very grateful that she has money to buy me food and buy our household food. I don't know what life would be like if my mom got laid off or my mom isn't able to work right now. So I'm just very grateful.

Sadiq Ali: [Afton 02:41:06], there's a followup question in the chat box if you would. Again, folks are just sending you all sorts of just encouragement and reinforcement. We appreciate you-

Afton: Thank you.

Sadiq Ali: ... but Debbie asked, what do you think it would take for you to feel motivated again? What do you think that support could look like?

Afton: The biggest question I have to be motivated again is, if the state of Oregon can [inaudible 02:41:33] give me an idea of what the requirements are now. Because the requirements to graduate have been adapted since before this cancellation of school. I would like to know how many credits I need to earn, what career requirements I need to complete to graduate because it's different than how it was. I'm a person who likes to plan out my work week by week and then look at a bigger picture of months and quarters and years. So for me not to be able to do that right now because I don't even know what I will need to graduate, leaves me just curious about how hard I'll need to work per week to complete assignments.

Sadiq Ali: Wow. Wow. So I'm hearing again, specific, timely, feedback would be super helpful for you right now?

Afton: Yes, it definitely would be.

Sadiq Ali: Wow. Thank you [inaudible 02:42:34]-

Dr. Daryl Williams: Sadiq, I think you were going to go to William, I think William was going to share something? Just-

Sadiq Ali: Yeah, please.

William: Yeah, I just wanted to emphasize on the point about ... Your internet connection is unstable. Oh, I'm sorry, that was just my internet connection. It said on the top that it was a little bit unstable, but I think I'll probably ... I hope I'll be fine.

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- Dr. Daryl Williams: We can still hear you. We can still hear you fine.
- William: Yeah. I wanted to emphasize on the point about like health disparities. Of course we talked about it just a little bit but it's really interesting what I've been hearing from the news. I like to watch CBS. This morning, they were talking about the real disparities for either minorities or even a portion of a certain population and a demographic to really be, in effect, targeted by a virus inadvertently and not by their own doing of course. But it's almost like it comes on and it really goes after and it looks for the virus, like for the weak and either like the ... I mean it goes after the weakness really in us, and especially like minorities. And it really disproportionately really affects everyone and especially of course those communities as well that have been affected. Like I heard a lot about Detroit this morning. It was terrible to hear that.
- Also I heard a little bit about Chicago, this mayor is dealing with a couple of problems down there and troubles for the community. It's really amazing to see how the responders really get out there and stay motivated to do what they do every day because I don't think I could do it.
- Sadiq Ali: Awesome. Thank you so much. Brother Daryl, do we want to address a couple more chat box? And [crosstalk 02:44:49]-
- Daryl: Yeah, let's go and see what's coming out of the chat box. We have chat box motivators, I mean moderators. Share a few things with us, what's happening in the chat box. Then I see Abby and Alicia's hand and Athens hand also. Paul-
- Paul: [inaudible 02:45:08].
- Dr. Daryl Williams: What's going on in the chat box?
- Paul: Hey, a lot of people would love to know just how important is school right now? That's-
- Sadiq Ali: [crosstalk 02:45:18].
- Paul: ... one question and the big picture. So that's one question. Then how can districts and schools do better at this point in this new territory of online instruction? [crosstalk 02:45:31]
- Daryl: And be specific. Be specific, right? Give us some concrete ... because this entire place is filled virtually with principals and educators and bosses in charge of education from again, the almost 20 something states that we listed earlier. So give us some big time takeaways, that right now you can fix something, what would you tell these adults on the line to fix?
- Sadiq Ali: Let's going with Abby.
- Abby: I think the big thing for me is, like I said earlier, just the communication with students. I know that, like I said before, that my teachers have done a good job explaining like the directions and stuff even if they're not being like my one teacher and communicating with us through like live streams and everything like that. But I'm really adamant about, maybe in

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my district at least, I would like to see like at least one optional, like the board require this teacher to do at least one optional live stream or something like that, like a Zoom call or something, so that students could join if they wanted to, to ask questions. Because they provide us with their emails and stuff for if we have questions, but there are some things like a math class I don't think that can really be taught. Questions can't really be answered through email. Some kids need someone to sit, like do it out for them so that they can see it. So like math classes especially, I feel like email is not going to be sufficient for that.

Then another good point for that would be like if one student has a question, I'm sure another one does. So if all of you were there together, I'm sure like someone might ask a question that someone else had and was too afraid to answer. Because a lot of kids that I know have never really had experience emailing professors or teachers like that and being in that professional state and they're afraid to. They're afraid to reach out and ask questions so they just don't.

I saw in the chat box earlier, someone had asked how, like I mentioned that my one professor does a really good job communicating with us, he uses an online, it's an app, but it's also a website. It's called Canvas. That's what he uses for us. He can put our assignments in there and we'll get notifications when they're graded. The assignments that he puts in are automatically put into a calendar on Canvas for us so that we can go into the calendar and see when everything's due in a calendar for the month. Then you can also sync that calendar to your iPhone calendar so that your iPhone will send you notifications like the day before something's due or something like that. That's really helped me keep everything in track.

Also on Canvas, there is a conference part which is kind of like Zoom. I think they partner with a couple of different teams like Skype and stuff like that to make it possible, but it's actually in Canvas and you can have live streams through that. So that's what he uses to talk to us.

Then in addition to that, he also uses apps that are like group chats. So like before the quarantine, we were using GroupMe, but after that he decided to use an app called Slack, and we've been using that a lot. That's really good for us. So I think that if they had some type of group chat or something like that where it was all the students and the teacher at once, if someone asks a question kids wouldn't be so afraid to out and ask questions. Because email me at this email address, that sounds scary to some kids. They're just afraid to ask questions and then that leaves so much confusion. Then they're texting each other and everybody else's confused because no one wants to ask. So I feel like if the board made a better push to the teachers, I feel like if the teachers came to us instead of putting it out there and being like, "If you need it, come to me," I feel like it would be better if they really advocated to the teachers, "No, you go to the students and be like, 'Do you need something?'" Don't expect us to be like, we need this because we're scared. A lot of kids aren't going to.

Dr. Daryl Williams: No. Great, thank you. Thank you, Abby. Alicia? And then Afton.

Alicia: I'm sorry, I was thrown off just a little bit because I was going to respond to the last question, but I can move on. But this question I think is really important. I mean, pretty much everything Abby said is like how I feel. I feel like if the professor was reaching out to me a little bit more, then it would just be so much more helpful. But in the sense like when she brought up the fact of, or the idea of having a meeting that students could join if they wanted to. Like for example,

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my professor just emailed me this morning and said, "Hey, call this number if you need help or email me if you need help." Like she said, it can be very intimidating for a student to reach out to the professor only because when they don't ... Okay, if I don't know the material, one, there's an insecurity that I don't want the professor to know that I don't know the material so that might be a reason why I won't ask the questions.

Speaker 10: [inaudible 02:50:46].

Alicia: Another reason is maybe I don't know if this question is-

Speaker 10: [inaudible 02:50:53].

Alicia: ... a good question to ask. Some people feel like, "Oh, is this a stupid question?" I've also reached out to professors and they kind of address me back as if it was a stupid question. That's happened to me before. Like, "It's clear you haven't read" blah, blah, blah, and that's what she said to me. Of course, I'm a very good student. I read from top to bottom. I would not have emailed if I didn't read every single detail before I have this question. So there are some teachers that are being combative. They're teachers that are expecting the student to come to them first, which is not going to be effective whatsoever. If you had a video just going every Tuesday or whatever and kids can jump into the videos, that would be so much more effective I'm sure for students to reach out for help, because they won't reach out otherwise.

Then I just want to piggyback on the Canvas. I had canvas when I went to one of my community colleges. I'm on ... What am I on right now? Blackboard. I don't know if you guys have heard about Moodle. There are tons of these online virtual, I guess, hubs where teachers can administer their schoolwork. So that should never be an issue in my opinion of how teachers are going to be getting this work out. I think that's just like [inaudible 02:52:19] in my opinion, I think it's just pure laziness if you're a school and you're not able to get your material out to the students. Now, I understand students not being able to get online, but there are tons of ways that you can get that material online for sure.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Thank you. Great. Fiona, and then Afton.

Fiona: I just want to say some things really quickly because I have to go to another meeting. But yeah, I definitely think that group chats like with a class would be super helpful, including with the teacher. So like for our school, we've used Hangouts in between just students, but if a teacher administered a Google hangout, that would be really good. Having the administration or your school do fun activities, like we just had a online spirit week. It was pretty cool, but two of my teachers did a lip sync battle, cute stuff like that. It's fun to see. We have this thing called Culture Club at our school and we are going to be creating a dance video and a fashion show video and [inaudible 02:53:30] like that. So I feel like when I have opportunities to share and be creative with other people, that's really fun. So if schools can create those opportunities for students, that's really fun, and also to see funny videos, that's awesome.

Fiona: Our librarian is sharing out these funny resources. He'll send out a letter to us and he'll give us movie recommendations, book recommendations, and then funny videos. So all that stuff is

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really fun and then maybe like one-on-one videos. I was talking about this with some other people and I think some people would find it helpful if their teacher reached out to them to ... or even guidance or social workers reached out to them to be like, "Oh let's have this meeting one-on-one," face-to-face and they talk about how you're feeling. Not face-to-face, I mean like via like camera or whatever. So I think those will be really helpful to have.

Sadiq Ali: Great, thank you.

Sidiq: Ali: This is amazing. I think we got top of one more question.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Afton. But Afton wanted to share and then we'll kind of ... I think we've got to move to a wrap up, Sadiq?

Sidiq: Ali: Yeah, we've got to send out the survey so hopefully not too many ... Folks, stick around. We need your feedback on the survey [crosstalk 02:54:47] we wrap this thing up but thank you all so much for tuning in. Afton.

Afton: I just had something really quick to address from the chat box. So somewhat asked, there a lot of students now debating on just getting their GED rather than following through with their diploma? And I can speak for myself. I know that I am seriously, seriously debating on getting my GED. Before this whole pandemic happened, I was already behind the [inaudible 02:55:22]. I'd had issues with school. I've always had issues with school throughout my life, but before this time, I had had some setbacks and things of that nature. This is just another one of those and [inaudible 02:55:40] I'm put even further back [inaudible 02:55:45]. So for me personally, I'm really thinking I'll get a GED. As far as other students, I think they're probably just going to get their diploma. However, I've not talked to a lot of my friends about that topic.

Dr. Daryl Williams: So what we want to do, we want to encourage you, Afton, to make that best choice that's for your future. I know many of us would have an opinion one way or another, but people don't walk in your shoes and people don't know what you feel. So I want to encourage you to really go deep into your spirit and think about what's the best pathway for you, and what can be done, who you can connect to, to motivate you for the pathway you decide. It's not going to be something that you're going to be looked down upon if you go GED or traditional high school diploma, but it really has to be about a self-fulfillment, fulfilling your soul and your purpose.

So if I can take the liberty just to ask one more question, if the audience doesn't mind, I really want to ask our young people this final question. I know we've got to do a poll, but what have you learned about your ability to adjust and or be resilient during this pandemic? What have you learned about yourself in terms of your adjustments?

Siddiq: Ali: Great question. Great question. Abby, and Alicia.

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Abby: For me, I've learned that I'm not really someone who deals with abrupt change very well. For the first week or two, I know I'm not the only one that said this, but the first week or two was kind of hard for me to get by just because it was so abrupt and I wasn't really expecting it. I didn't really know what to do or anything, but now that we've gotten into it two or three weeks, it's a little bit easier. So I figured that out about myself.

But I've also realized that I like this better. I like online schooling a little bit better than going to school. I mean don't get me wrong, I miss going to school every day and seeing my friends, that part of it kind of sucks. But I like being able to wake up when I want to in the morning and be able to do my assignments on my time and not have eight hours a day taken away from me. Because there are some classes where we don't really do anything in school. So it's like I'm sitting here, this is an hour and a half now that I could have been at home doing part of my homework that's going to take me three hours to do. Like I'd rather do my homework at noon rather than at 1:00 o'clock in the morning and then have to be up at six again. So I don't know. I don't know. It's been strange, but I like being able to do things on my own and not have to worry about like timeframes I guess. I mean, you still have timeframes, but it's so much more broad whenever they give you an assignment and say, "Have this turned in by that," and then you have your whole day to decide when you want to do it, you know?

Dr. Daryl Williams: Yeah. Okay. Alicia, and then I want to hear from Selma.

Alicia: Yeah, I actually ... I'm used to like dramatic changes. I've had so many in my life. My life has been challenging, [inaudible 02:59:23] it's ridiculous. But it's been hard for me to ... Well, okay. So it was easy for me to change from going outside all the time to staying inside all the time because I am inside. If I don't have to go to work or school, I'm inside. I'm not really hanging out with my friends anyways. So in that aspect it hasn't been really that difficult. But what I have noticed about myself is that I've learned how ... I'm learning how to ... How do I say this? How to, I guess, think more instinctually or more quickly.

Having to go outside and try to find food. I live in a kind of a busy area, like I said in the beginning, and so grocery stores for me, I don't know, are completely wiped out. I don't know how it is on the east coast, but we can't find any food anywhere. It's really kind of scary sometimes. There's no masks or sanitizer anywhere. There was no bleach anywhere. There's just all of the ... like the ... I don't know, off-brand stuff. Sometimes me and my mom are worried, does this really have antibacterial properties in it? We don't know. You know? So it's been interesting to see that we're still trying to get by every day. It kind of feels like we're in an apocalypse a little bit. I don't know. But I'm surviving. We're getting by. So it's just been really cool to see that that we're getting by, we're staying strong and I'm happy that we're together.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Okay. Great. What do you have? Share a few thoughts with us, Selma.

Selma: I feel like I can adjust to things, but it just takes a little bit of time because like I said earlier, the very first week or, so my sleeping schedule was messed up. I was waking up late and it was just kind of a little bit strange because it was different. But then now I feel like I do like the fact that I get more time to do my work and assignments. Normally during school, I would have to wait until like after 9:00 PM or 10:00 to start doing my work, so I didn't really like that. But now that

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we're at home, I like the fact that I can, like Abby said it, I can do my assignments on my own time and it's not really rushed. So I do like that part. But I do miss being able to go to school and actually see my friends and talk to teachers if I have questions and have them help me if I'm confused.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Wow. This again has been rich, powerful, very powerful conversation. We're going to have to do this again, Sadiq. I think there are so many topics that we could really extend, and even take to smaller topics, and this panel of young leaders I think have just been amazing in sharing some very personal feelings, but also giving some advice [inaudible 03:02:30] that are listening.

Sidiq Ali: We predicted that, we predicted that.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Yeah. I can't thank them enough and I know our time has run out in terms of what we dedicated and [crosstalk 03:02:45]-

Sidiq Ali: Give them some chat box love. Give them some chat box.

Dr. Daryl Williams: Come on. What's going on now Paul? And [inaudible 03:02:49], what's in the chat box? What's up?

Sidiq Ali: I don't know. I mean just clapping up for these young-

Dr. Daryl Williams: Just clapping up for them? Okay. Okay. Oh man, I would love to extend this conversation with our young people. Every one of you had an amazing testimony for us to learn. I want to share with you that what you've said today we've recorded and we're going to take this information and we're going to share it with school leaders all across the country, the leaders in your districts, in your state. I wish we could have had governors on this call. I know I sent out a call to a TV station, a colleague that I know and I wanted some television airtime dedicated to us. So we're going to keep pushing your thoughts and your feelings out because the world needs to hear. The world needs to hear how your lives have been impacted, what this means for you taking an SAT. What does it mean for you having the credits to graduate, having a prom, that's important. Graduation ceremony, being promoted to the next grade, the quality of your instruction, the quality of grades, a pass versus a numeric grade. All of those things are very important.

Then your mental health, your ability to be resilient, to adjust and the support you need when we go through these things. The world may have another crisis like this one day. We want to be able to respond better than we are. [inaudible 03:04:19] I just want to say thank you to you wonderful, wonderful student leaders, and be sure that you connect with your peers and let them know that the Mid-Atlantic Center is here. They can email us at maec.org, email me directly at daryl@maec.org so we can continue this on.

We do have a poll, a survey for our participants. It's SurveyMonkey. You should see that when you clicked on. Please fill that out and give us that real quality feedback that we will need to extend to the next opportunity that we do this. Again, we want to do another one for our students. We'll do one for educators in the future. I can't thank my brothers Sadiq Ali enough.

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Man, man, man-

Sadiq Ali: [inaudible 03:05:18], peace and [inaudible 03:05:19].

Dr. Daryl Williams: Yeah, my brother.

Sadiq Ali: This was my honor. This was my honor and such a pleasure to do and I just look forward personally to crossing paths with each and every one of these young leaders who again spoke up so courageously, so authentically and I think thousand percent left a very, very indelible mark in terms of the gravity of the comments, the richness of the content, the thoughtfulness of the suggestions I think was just beautiful to behold. So I'm just excited and again, thankful to the MAEC team for putting this together, and I'm looking forward to subsequent conversations.

Shout out to all you student leaders. Keep pushing. There's some, again, beautiful words of encouragement in the chat box so please take a moment to soak those up. To everybody in the audience, take a moment to complete the survey and let us know what additional sort of thoughts, comments, and future conversations that you'd like to see.

Dr. Daryl Williams: And to our team behind the scenes, Paul, [inaudible 03:06:18], Kate, Tanner. Oh my gosh, you guys are awesome. Thank you so much for the work behind the scenes of just helping us pull this together.

To our students, Toby, Abby, [inaudible 03:06:30], Alicia, Ella, Ellie, William, Afton. Who did I miss? Did I miss anybody? Wonderful, wonderful. Selma, wonderful people. Thank you so much. Let's stay in touch.

Dr. Daryl Williams: All right. Fill out those surveys. Thank you very much, and you all have a wonderful, wonderful day. Thank you for your participation.

Sadiq Ali: Awesome.

Speaker 13: Thanks everyone.

Speaker 14: Thanks. Nice meeting you guys. See you guys later.

Speaker 15: Thank you. [inaudible 03:07:03].

Speaker 14: Thank you.

Speaker 15: Thank you.

Sadiq Ali: Thank you. Stay in touch.

Speaker 15: Thank you.

Speaker 16: Bye guys.

[03:07:23]