[https://anchor.fm/cozette0/episodes/Government-Final-e24gnd2](https://anchor.fm/cozette0/episodes/Government-Final-e24gnd2%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) - link to interview

[Introduction]

The current juniors ended 8th grade with virtual school and started their high school experience with the same. Just this October we returned to virtual learning for a month after the school shooting. The purpose of these interviews is to explore the effects of self-isolation on learning and connecting with peers. The first interviewee is Chloe Roy, who is part of the National Honor Society and plays soccer for collegiate.

[Cozette]

Did you get interested in any new topics or activities during virtual school?

[Chloe]

No, I've always played soccer before virtual happened and I was part of national Junior Honor Society before virtual happened as well. So, I don't think that really changed after virtual. but it definitely like impacted my experience with those clubs afterwards.

[Cozette]

OK. And then how did you feel about like the learning aspect during virtual school? Do you think it prepared you for your sophomore year?

[Chloe]

No, I absolutely hated virtual school. It was like I struggled a lot. I don't think I can learn online just with all like the distractions in my house. Just like I couldn't like connect with anyone either because the school is like my main social outlet, so it was very frustrating and difficult for me.

[Cozette]

That is actually my next question was like the social aspect, like how did that affect kind of I don't know, your mental? During that time like not having...

[Chloe]

I mean, I had no friends at all during like the virtual part because all of my friends when I was in 8th grade, which was right before we went into virtual, either left the school or moved to like a different part of the state. So, I was kind of like hopping around friend groups for a while and I didn't really click with anyone, so it was really hard because I was like really alone during virtual because I had no one I could connect with. And then I was really looking forward to high school and making more new connections. But just with being in virtual for so long, I didn't really get that.

[Cozette]

Do you think whenever school started in person, being alone for that long made you like more excited to connect with people? Or was it like harder after that?

[Chloe]

I was definitely really excited and I think like, with our school, they were like constantly, like, oh, beginning of freshman year, like when school starts, we'll be in the building. And then it was like, OK, in October, we'll be into the building. That kind of just like kept me going knowing that we'll be back soon in the building. So I think like it definitely helped me through the virtual part and just made me more excited to like, connect with people.

[Cozette]

Yeah, that's good. Was news about COVID and police violence constantly on your mind, like during that time?

[Chloe]

I don't really know. I mean, honestly, it kind of feels like a dream now looking back at it, I was like, it doesn't feel like it actually happened. But it definitely was like on my mind just because like, that's what all like, the social media sources were like constantly like posting about where like all these COVID updates and stuff. And it has definitely brought up interesting conversations with people who I was in contact with, like our neighbors and stuff, who we saw a lot during, like the virtual times, and like topics in our classes. It definitely made for some interesting conversations and like other people's point of views about it. But other than that, I didn't really think about it too much on my own.

[Cozette]

OK. And then whenever we went back to school after the shooting in October, did your feelings toward virtual learning change? Like were you still like ohh I can't really learnthat well?

[Chloe]

Oh I still, I still absolutely hated it. I could not wait to be back in the building and it was extremely stressful during that time too, because I was in a lot of AP classes versus like my freshman year. I didn't have any AP's and it was like more easier classes and not having that big stress versus like now. Like in October like I had three or four AP classes and a lot of other really difficult classes, so it was very stressful because it was like, what are we supposed to do? like we're missing like a month of school work, and like our test is in May and like I can't do anything about it. So that was really frustrating.

[Cozette]

Did you come up with any like new like learning methods on your own or anything like that?

[Chloe]

No. Besides getting back to the building as soon as possible, no.

[Cozette]

OK. And then with all of like the stuff surrounding, the big events surrounding ritual school, like the shooting and COVID and everything like that, what was your lasting impressions kind of about like that period of time? Like when you think about virtual learning and stuff?

[Chloe]

I just remember in virtual learning, just sitting on my computer, bored out of my mind, not paying attention, and then trying so hard to focus and it just wasn't there. Like I just couldn't. And I even tried sitting in, like, different parts of my house, to like try to like implement some sort of like “when I'm in this part of the House I'm in school mode,” but it just wouldn't help because then my dog would come and jump on my lap and like “Oh my God, my dog!” and it just was very frustrating because then like parents would walk in and stuff like that, when normally your parents aren’t in your school. It was just, I just absolutely hated it.

[Cozette]

No, I did too. So, last question: What is your favorite memory from virtual school, like something good about it?

[Chloe]

My favorite memory is probably like my dog just randomly coming on camera and then the whole class being distracted by like someone's like cat jumping on their computers. It was just amazing when, like animals interrupted, because then it was like a funny thing. And like, Oh my God, like I would definitely pay attention if someone’s like cat was walking in the background like that's the only reason I was paying attention.

[Cozette]

OK. That's it. Thank you.

The next interviewee is Catherine Stanish, who is a part of the National Honor Society and plays tennis.

# Did you get interested in any new topics or activities during virtual school? These don’t have to be nessecarily related to the ones that you do now.

# [Cathy]

OK. During virtual school? Honestly, not really. I feel like having online school I just was like, alright, I'm just going to do the absolute bare minimum to like, just get the grades that I need and like be satisfied with. Because like, I wasn't in the building. I didn't really have that much motivation and I was doing more stuff outside of school like I was more focused on, like, my music and like, extracurriculars, that weren't school related because those were all like in-person or like semi-in-person things. Where I was just like at home all day because of school, and so I was just like, really bored and was like basically doing the bare minimum just to get the A that I needed to move on.

[Cozette]

How did you feel about virtual learning, like did it prepare you for in person school?

# [Cathy]

I don't think that it prepared me for in person school. If anything, it made me super unfamiliar with like being in a learning environment again, because I was so used to just like being like waking up like 5 minutes before class started and like brushing my teeth and like, keeping my pajamas on and then just like sitting on my couch all day to like do a zoom call, and then like do the assignments I needed to do, and then like take a nap, and then like do the next zoom call and then like finish those assignments and then like go play the piano and like it was just like clockwork. My siblings were also at home, so it was just like we basically just, even though we were all in the same space, none of us talked to each other for like the whole day. And then we're like, done with all our like mandatory like “be at school time” and then it was just like I didn't think about it for the rest of the day. You know what I'm saying? So, I kind of hated it, but I kind of loved it at the same time because it was absolute minimum effort put into, like, getting 100’s on things.

[Cozette]

Did you like, come up with any new learning methods on your own to help you through that?

# [Cathy]

I basically just like made sure that I kept my methods from like middle school. Like, you know, systematic, and I tried not to start anything new but I didn't try and break any old habits of studying, because I was like I still need to be prepared because they were always like, “oh, we're going to go to school soon. We're going to go to school soon,” so I was always like keeping myself prepared to like have to go back in the building. And so, I didn't really start anything new, but I didn't exactly like drop any old habits.

[Cozette]

And then how like connected did you feel to your new peers during the freshman year?

# [Cathy]

It was mad disconnect to be honest, because like, I wasn't in a public school prior to, like, coming to collegiate. I was at a private school where I knew no one that was going to be at Collegiate. So, first day was like very awkward because I was like, I have no idea who these people are, and it was very obvious that like they were coming to high school with their friends from middle school. Maybe not all of them, but like a good majority of them, or they at least like, recognized some people. And so it was like, “Oh my gosh, I have no idea who any of these people are, but like everybody knows everybody else.” And so I was like, oh, this is going to be like extra hard to, like, make friends, and like, you know, build connections again. Because it's like, you're at home for, like, a whole year, more than a year and you don't have to, like, push yourself into social situations. And even, like I consider myself an extrovert, I just have a social battery, so it's like, at a certain point, I'm like over it, but like being at home, it just decreased my like want to be in social situations because I was so content at just like being with myself the whole time. So like, it definitely took me a bit to figure out how to like, you know, navigate social situations again, because like I was so comfortable in not having to do that, you know what I'm saying?

 So it was just like really awkward and low-key kind of stressful, because it's like, I didn't know what to prepare myself for because, like, the transition going into high school is already, like, such a big deal for students because it's like, oh, it's a new chapter of your life, you're like finishing middle school, you're going to school with new friends, you're like growing up, like you're going to become an adult soon. And that on top of like I haven't seen another person outside of my direct family in a year and a half, you know? So it's like, it was just odd.

[Cozette]

So, I know you already like sort of answered this, but whenever you got back to in person school, were you more eager to connect with people or were you like I don't really know how to talk to people anymore?.

# [Cathy]

I, it was a little bit of both. Because I was like really excited to like finally be out of the house because I felt like I was in hibernation, but I still had to do the work of like not at school, So I just like, wasn't having a grand old time there. But I was really nervous at the same time because it's like, I don't even remember how to like introduce myself anyway.

Online school for us was like last semester of 8th grade and like first or all a freshman year, so it was like you're so used to all the middle school kids and interacting with them online, but now all of a sudden you're in a completely new environment. You have no idea who these people are, but you've been in class with them while you were in the comfort of your own home, and now all of the sudden you're like at school with them and it's like, “I don't know who you are, and I don't know how to talk to you either.” So, it was a little bit of, oh, I'm excited to, like, make new friends, but also it's like, oh, how do I go about doing that though? And that's like where you get the anxiety and like the, “Oh my gosh, I don't know what I'm doing.”

[Cozette]

Was news about COVID and police violence constantly on your mind during this time?

# [Cathy]

Yes and no. I mean like, I'm lucky enough to be living in a neighborhood that I don't need to worry about police violence. Like, one of the families that like lives on our block she's like a police officer and like, we've been over to their house and like, had dinner and she was like a nice lady. So like, it wasn't really like something that we thought about a lot, mainly because also it's like my family and I aren't really, we don't really spend a lot of time thinking about like American politics. Especially during COVID, because it was like we were more worried about our family at home in India because India was handling COVID a lot differently than the US and it was a lot more dangerous and a lot more risky to, like, get sick being in India rather than in the United States. So like, we weren't as worried with the American social situations during it because like, we were at home and we were like, we're taking precautions that we need to like protect ourselves from COVID and like getting other people sick and spreading it more. But like, our family doesn't have the luxury of like having a government that was putting certain things in place. Also, we’re at this weird transition from middle school to high school, so I wasn't really too worried about anything else other than myself, which is high-key selfish, but like it is what it is.

So, it wasn't really like on my mind constantly, but some of it was like aspects of like, oh, making sure you're vaccinated and wearing a mask and like, following precautions and things like that were definitely there.

[Cozette]

OK. And then whenever we returned to virtual learning for like a month or so in October after the school shooting, did your feelings toward virtual learning change?

# [Cathy]

Honestly, they did in the sense that I liked it a lot more, like doing in October. Because a: none of us wanted to be at school and it was like, oh, I don't want to be at school, I'd much rather be at home to do this. And it's like junior year, so like I knew that I needed to get my work done and I was just happy that I could still be productive and not in the building, you know what I'm saying? I didn't like it because like the situation that we were in wasn't an ideal situation to be online, you know what I'm saying? So it's like that's where it was, like uh, this kind of sucks that the like things happened and now we're here. But actually, doing online school in October was a lot more enjoyable because like obviously, I have made friends since freshman year and I know people. And so like, you know, having friends come over to do, like, online school and like, doing it together, it was less of like “ohh, I'm doing online all on my own again like freshman year.” But I was like, “oh, I'm doing it with, like, all my friends and like my junior class now.” So, it's like a bigger sense of community doing online school in October even though circumstances were not ideal.

[Cozette]

OK. And then what was your favorite memory from virtual school overall?

# [Cathy]

Favorite memory for virtual school? This is going to be like controversial, but the one class where Mr. Holtmeyer like just left. We were online. So, OK, listen, let me set the scene. So it's like the second day of like having an A day class and he was like talking and then he just left the call, and so I'm just like in PLTW with a ton of freshmen that also don't know what they're doing and the teacher is gone. So then like someone unmutes and is like, “did he just leave?” and I was like, “I think so?” And then we all just started asking each other like how our day was and like, things like that. It was just like, oh, people are initiating conversation all of a sudden. But then he just, like, popped back in and was like, “gotcha guys! I was here the whole time!” And it was just like, really awkward and like strange, but probably my favorite memory because it was like the one class where like a random kid was just like, “Hey, how are?” So, it was just like silly and goofy and a good memory.

[Cozette]

Well, that’s it.

# [Cathy]

Thank you so much Cozette!

[Cozette]

Thank you so much Cathy.

[Conclusion]

Overall, these students hated virtual school. Starting freshman year with no friends greatly affected their experience during this time, as in junior year, virtual school felt a little bit better with friends. There was a struggle to learn new concepts with constant distractions and work required little effort to complete. Meeting animals and having normal class interactions were the highlights of virtual school for Chloe and Cathy. However, they did not feel prepared for in-person school sophomore year due to virtual learning. Thanks for listening to the juniors at collegiate talk about their experiences of virtual school freshman year.