

the TALON

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John Paul Stevens High School 600 North Ellison Drive San Antonio, Texas 78251

COVID-19 IMPACT

*No student's life
left untouched.*

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Our duty on The Talon is to present the truth on the topics that we print, with all sides equally represented.

We hope that when we make mistakes, our readers will inform us, so that we may make the corrections accordingly.

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Distance Learning *harms* education

By Christopher Meeks
Editor-in-Chief

Students started off this school year attending classes virtually because of the COVID-19 outbreak, and the result is a decline in learning among those students taking classes

POINT

from home.

Virtual learning clearly does not offer the exclusive social interactions and benefits that in-person school has to offer students, and this factor creates many obstacles between students and their ability to learn.

Comparisons between online and in-person classes show that online classes are not as effective as in-person classes for most students.

Jessica Heppen and colleagues at the American Institutes for Research and the University of Chicago Consortium of School Research assigned students who failed the second semester of Algebra 1 randomly to either in-person or online credit recovery courses through the summer. The success rate of students who completed the online course was lower than those who completed the in-person course.

Though some maintain that distance learning provides students more confidence to communicate with their classmates and teachers, distance learning may actually be harmful to a student's future and may be ineffective as well.

Though most of society is interacting virtually, the

truth is that in the future, social interactions will take place in person, and virtual learning does not prepare students for that. Business men and women, for example, are forever going to have to show up for work, attend important meetings face to face, and discuss real life situations that are only to be gone over in person.

Students' learning styles are also very diverse, as some students learn through sight, hearing, social interactions, and by completing hands-on activities. Virtual learning only offers two types of learning, through sight, which is not the best quality through a screen, and by hearing, which also is difficult through the small speakers on a computer. Many students are facing

difficulties learning through their computer screens for this reason, because everybody learns differently. When students do not get their traditional, diverse teaching that in-person school offers, education may not be as effective.

Research shown by Karl Alexander at Johns Hopkins University presents that students, especially those who have fewer resources available at home, learn less when they are not at school. Many students are facing this issue at home, because virtual learning does not come with resources once offered by in-person school, which may be vital to one's academic success.

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Distance Learning *helps* education

By Grace Pfoutz
Staff Writer

Virtual learning is a big part of life right now and is more effective and beneficial to students than in-person school.

Virtual learning has many benefits. Think of this: Teachers have been teaching, and students have been

COUNTERPOINT

going to online school for a long time. Even before the pandemic, virtual learning was available as an educational option.

Research of online courses shows that learning online may actually be more engaging to students. Virtual learning boosts retention rates up to 60%, according to a study by The University

of the Potomac. The study showed that the students and teachers also have an enhanced virtual relationship because using technology, such as the webcam video and audio, are known to also create stronger interpersonal connections.

Students' overall performance in a virtual learning environment is phenomenal. Better communication and collaboration among students has been shown, and, in most cases, the students are doing better academically. For many students, their overall grade point average in online school goes up, and virtual learning helps with their communication skills.

Trying to communicate with other people over the internet can be a challenge. Students must find the information first to contact another student or teacher.

Students must then reach out and ask questions electronically, instead of going up to someone in person. Virtual learning can give students more confidence because communication is over the internet, and people are not really face to face, which can be more intimidating.

Virtual learning also stretches around the world. Meaning, virtual education has WiFi connections everywhere, providing everyone and anyone the possibility of doing school. Some students, or even parents, might not have time to go to in-person school, or, in some cases, going to school in person might not be safe.

Although the computer and internet connection may be slow at times, virtual learning allows students to do class work from anywhere and at any time. This also gives them the freedom

and time to study more. After a test or an assignment, if a student is the kind of person who likes immediate feedback, they can get it.

Yet to every good thing, there is a downside. Take into consideration that students can cheat more easily and find answers on the internet. Teachers may tell students they are not allowed to use notes on a test or an assignment, but they cannot really see what students are doing, can they? Students may not be aware that some teachers use an online examination software where if a student opens another tab, it sends the teacher a notification.

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BLM movement takes center stage

By Zoey Madrid
Assistant Editor-In-Chief

The phrase Black Lives Matter (BLM) has gone from a hashtag to becoming a global battle cry dedicated to fighting racism and anti-Black violence.

The death of George Floyd, a Black man who died after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee to his neck, sparked nationwide protests and lent momentum to a variety of social changes.

One change in San Antonio is the ban of no-knock warrants by police. San Antonio police chief William McManus issued new orders on Sept. 11 for the San Antonio Police Department to prohibit the use of no-knock warrants.

The people participating in the Black Lives Matter protests were warned by President Donald Trump on Twitter when he posted, "When the looting starts, the shooting starts," referring to when protests turn violent, then police have the right to shoot someone participating in the violent protest.

A report by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, a non-governmental organization specializing in disaggregated conflict data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping, reported that nationally approximately 5% of Black Lives Matter protests have involved violence, but 93% of protests have been peaceful.

National media coverage has focused on the violent protests, altering public perception.

"In the news business, the unusual event gets the focus," journalism adviser Dr. Christine Keyser-Fanick said. "While the data shows that 93% of protests nationwide have been peaceful, the protests that the public sees on television and social media are violent. That coverage distorts reality."

Students have strong views about the Black Lives Matter movement.

"The protest should never stop until the killings stop," sophomore Jaloni Jackson said. "Protest makes our voices louder. It makes the

public hear us, which makes them want to listen to us, and make change."

Police brutality against Black Americans was much higher than any other ethnicity, standing at 31 fatal shootings per million of the population as of August 2020, according to Statista, a German company specializing in market and consumer data. Since 2016, a total of 90 people have been shot by members of law enforcement agencies in Bexar County, of which 18 of those people are Black, according to state records.

"This statistic is ridiculous, not just because of what it says but the fact that people see things like this and still choose to tell their minds that everyone is equal," senior Chiamaka Umeh said. "They still choose to blame it on how the person of color was walking, dressed like, or even talking. It's disappointing to learn about slavery and all the types injustice people of color went through in the 60s, and see that times haven't changed since then."

Discrimination against people of color (POC) happens in society, but civil rights leaders and advocates are demanding an end to systemic racism, a reference to the systems in place that creates and maintains racial inequality for people of color.

Math teacher and organizer of the Black Student Union, Erika Walton, suggests that the "Black Lives Matter Movement is the modern day Civil Rights Movement."

Walton said she hopes that students in the Black Student Union learn that, "We are not choosing race; we are choosing the lives



BLM Movement. A group of people protest in a Black Lives Matter demonstration in Denver, Colorado. The movement grew nationwide popularity after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Photo by Flickr; an American image hosting service.

of our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, best friends, doctors, lawyers, artists, athletes,

associations between racial bullying and negative mental and physical health in students.

"Hopefully, our world will start educating themselves on what's going on in the world today. We need to start reading on the significant amount of contributions that people of color have made to this country. When it comes down to it, people love our music, food, style, sports, and just love to act like us as well, but when it comes to actually supporting our lives and picturing themselves in our shoes, they start to alter back."

-Chiamaka Umeh

mentors, therapists, entrepreneurs who are Black. It is important to understand this, so we don't lose sight of the value of our Black lives, instead of conducting a race war."

Historically, Black students have been mistreated through racial segregation in schools, for many years prior and after the Civil Rights Movement. Black students are still being discriminated against and mistreated in schools, according to DoSomething, a global non-profit organization with the goal of motivating young people to make positive change both online and offline through campaigns that make an impact.

In one U.S. survey, 15.8% of students reported experiencing race-based bullying or harassment. Research has found significant

Jackson said she has been treated differently because of the color of her skin in school.

"I'm pretty sure every Black student has gone through racism throughout their whole school experience,"

Jackson said. "Some students think being racist is a funny joke, but it's brushed off easily sometimes. I mainly blame it on how they were raised."

Umeh said she believes that the Black Lives Matter movement will affect everyone, no matter their skin color.

"Hopefully, our world will start educating themselves on what's going on in the world today," Umeh said. "We need to start reading on the significant amount of contributions that people of color have made to this country. When it comes down to it, people love our music, food, style, sports and just love to act like us as well, but when it comes to actually supporting our lives and picturing themselves in our shoes, they start to alter back."

Sophomore wins national recognition

A sophomore debater won national recognition at the Bellaire Debate Tournament on Oct. 3, which was hosted virtually by Bellaire High School, near Houston.

Ethan Wilkes, a transfer student to Stevens this fall, qualified for the Coolidge Cup Tournament the week of July 4, 2021, when he placed in the top six in Congressional Debate.

Wilkes' trip will include airfare to Boston, bus transportation to Vermont, hotel and meals, paid for by a grant/scholarship from the Coolidge Presidential Foundation of Plymouth, Vermont.

The Coolidge Cup Tournament offers more than \$15,000 in scholarship prizes.

Wilkes also won a bid to the Tournament of Champions for the Texas Forensic Association/National Speech & Debate Association Nationals in June 2021.

Junior Sabrin Abdalla made the finals in Congressional Debate, and senior Xavier Rangel and sophomore Juliet Sencion both had winning records in debate but missed advancing to finals.

Art teachers give free art supplies

Students received free art supplies at the start of the semester to use for their art projects in all levels of art classes.

Art teacher Ambra Hernandez worked with other art teachers to obtain donations and funding for art supplies, so that art supplies could be given free to students.

Hernandez set up an Amazon Wish List, where friends and other Facebook users could donate art supplies for Stevens students. She was also chosen by the law firm of Thomas J. Henry to clear what was left on her list. Money from last year's budget was used to purchase remaining supplies.

Students were asked to pick up their free art supplies by driving through the bus loop on designated days after the start of school. Instructional Assistants provided support for the pick up process.

Lead art teacher Maria Rancangan and Hernandez delivered supplies to students who were

unable to drive through for pick up.

The supplies made it possible for students to continue learning as they would in the classroom.

Library offers curbside pickup

The library is offering curbside pickup for virtual learners to check out books and other library materials while off campus.

To take advantage of the service, students access the following link to reserve their books: <https://search.follettsoftware.com/metasearch/ui/5116>

Once the books are reserved, librarian Zinnia Bayardo will send students an email, notifying them of when the books or materials are ready for pickup.

Students pick up their materials from the library if they are on campus. Anyone that is virtual can pick up and reserve the book from the curbside.

When filling out the form to get a book, students may choose how they would like to pick up their books. All safety protocols apply, including wearing a face covering and social distancing.

Bayardo said the curbside pickup is offered for student convenience.

All students receive free lunch

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on Sept. 14 ratified free lunch and breakfast for all students enrolled in NISD. All students, including virtual and in-person, are eligible to receive the free meals.

Any parents or legal guardians picking up the meals without a student present with them must provide proof of the student's enrollment, such as Student ID card, student's report card, student's attendance records, student's birth certificate, or an official letter or email from the school verifying the student's enrollment.

Safety precautions when picking up food include: all students will use hand sanitizer; all meals will be served on disposable plates; all students will wear face masks and gloves; and all students must wash their hands frequently. All staff and students are required to complete

an online health screening before entering any NISD building.

Students with virtual learning may pick up the meals from 65 different NISD locations, which are posted on the district website: www.nisd.net.

Students must maintain social distancing during meal pickups. The USDA Free Meal Program ends Dec. 31, 2020.

Senior wins All Star Award

Senior Isa Celine received the KENS5 All Star Student Award on Sept. 16.

Being in front of the camera is nothing new for Celine, she said she felt really calm and collected while receiving the award. The only thing that made her nervous was adjusting to the new faces that she was around.

Celine's schedule consists of being on the Falcon AV Production team, dancing with the Sky Dancers, and working a double shift every weekend at Whataburger. With a packed schedule, she still manages her time and always gets things done.

Even with ADHD, Celine stays focused on her tasks. She said she tries to make things more fun, so she can stay focused and interested.

Celine encourages others to gain support from those around them.

"Things may get hard, and at times you'll feel like your all alone and nobody truly understands what you're going through, but just remember that there are people out there that love you and want to be there for you."

Celine said she wants to attend

the University of Texas at Austin or the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Cross country runners qualify for regionals

Two Falcon cross country runners qualified for regionals at the Oct. 28 District Cross Country Meet.

Senior Sierra Ramirez qualified for regionals for the third time as an individual runner, placing fourth at district.

Placing ninth, senior Landon Blankenship also qualified for regionals.

Cross country coach is women's athletic coordinator Tracy Hesson.

Wilkes advances in Student Congress

Three debate students competed in the UIL Student Congress District Meet on Nov. 12.

Sophomore Ethan Wilkes qualified to advance to state competition.

Junior Sabrin Abdalla was just one point away from making finals after preliminary competition, and freshman Jeremiah Perales also competed at district.



ALL STAR. Winner of the KENS5 All Star Student Award, senior Isa Celine is interviewed on the front steps of the school for the evening news. Photo by Michael Randolph

New UIL rules change student lives

By Christopher Meeks
Editor-in-Chief

The University Interscholastic League (UIL) has introduced many new rules and changes this year to students regarding COVID-19.

The changes involve 2020-2021 UIL athletics, music, athletic calendars, COVID-19 risk mitigation guidelines, and no pass no play eligibility rules.

The 2020-2021 UIL COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Guidelines, updated Sept. 1, has introduced a new executive order for face coverings. All employees, parents, visitors and students ages 10 years or older must wear face coverings or face shields while entering into an area where UIL activities are being conducted and when not participating or being active with the contest.

Exceptions have been made to wearing face masks and shields, which include any person with a medical condition or disability which prevents wearing face covering, when a person is eating or drinking, while someone is in water (pool, lake, etc.), when a congregating group of people are maintaining a distance of six feet, and any other reason listed under Executive Order GA-29.

General Operational Guidelines are enforced, requiring screening before attending or participating in activities. Parents are instructed not to let their students participate in UIL activities if they have COVID-19 symptoms. These symptoms include fever, loss of taste or smell, cough, fatigue, chills, and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

Individuals confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 are to stay at home throughout the infection quarantine and may return to school when all criteria are met: at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first began, improvement of symptoms is shown, and at least one day has passed since recovery.

Performance areas such as band halls, locker rooms, and other populated settings are to practice

safety precautions as well. These rules include disinfectants to be offered throughout the area and school, all congregate areas, and materials are to be regularly cleaned and disinfected each day prior to student use. Staff and students are to wear face coverings in locker rooms, training rooms, band halls, and other areas where students may congregate. Schools are to consider monitoring these areas to ensure the students are following safety protocols.

“This changes the way we perform because we are not used to having to be this far away, as well as the process leading up to our performances,” junior Angelica Huerta, wind ensemble drum major said. “They have affected me in the sense that we are not used to functioning this way, and it is out of our control.”

Practice and rehearsal activities also share the same UIL rules, followed by equipment being cleaned, during and after practice sessions. Schools may provide food, water or other drinks with proper manner and assurance that students are not sharing these items.

“The other thing, too, is the UIL regulations about safety protocols and making sure we’re working with our coaches and our sponsors in helping them and creating a system that is safe for kids,” Principal Ryan Purtell said.

Spectators, audiences and fans are allowed to attend UIL events with a maximum capacity of 50 percent, while following social distancing and proper protocols.

Protocols for those attending these events include wearing face coverings, denying permission of entry for those who have symptoms, who have been in close contact with, or who are infected with COVID-19.

“The changes made by the UIL are extremely necessary during these times regarding COVID-19 because they help keep us as safe as possible while participating in sports,” senior varsity wide receiver, Ian Riles said. “It all happened kind of fast, we just had to adjust as we were hit with changes.”



TWIST AND TURN. During color guard practice on Nov. 9, sophomore Kiana Simpson flips her flag while social distancing and wearing a mask. The Falcon Color Guard performed with the band during halftime shows for the football season. *Photo by Annmarie Overton*

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Stay active during quarantine

By Cory Gibson
 Feature Editor

Staying active should be a priority during quarantine because exercise can help with students' physical and mental well being.

The World Health Organization recommends 150-300 minutes of physical activity weekly to stay active and healthy.

Some students may not be able to continue their normal activities because of the closing of gyms. Many activities at parks also are cancelled because of social distancing.

All is not lost. There are ways to stay active from home. Students can adjust their schedules and set some time aside for physical activities.

Activities recommended by the World Health Organization include pacing from one side of the room to the other, while sending messages to others or while on a phone call to get the blood pumping a little.

Students may also consider getting some workout equipment for home use. Some affordable workout

equipment includes dumbbells and resistance bands.

If students decide to get dumbbells, 15 bicep curls, 15 shoulder presses, 15 lateral lifts, and 15 concentration curls will strengthen muscles and get the heart moving.

Simple toning exercises while talking on the phone or watching television are also good conditioning.

Other activities include going outside to go for a walk for a little calisthenics, or if students have a dog, playing catch with the dog for about an hour a day will get them much needed stretching and muscle movement.

Recommended exercises for a moderate workout include 10 push ups, 15 squats and 30 second planks. The workout routine can be adjusted to make it more manageable for students unable to complete all sets of exercises.

Make sure to routinely do these workouts to see health and physical results. When students find an activity they enjoy doing, they can incorporate these activities in their



normal lives after corona. Staying active during the pandemic will also ward off unwanted weight gain. Staying active and setting goals is important. Goals give students

something to work toward and can help with students' mental health and occupy students time with healthy physical activities.

8 Easy Steps to Virtual Success

- 1 - Get out of bed.
- 2 - Eat breakfast.
- 3 - Ditch your phone.
- 4 - Sign on in time for each class.
- 5 - Turn on your camera.
- 6 - Participate in class.
- 7 - Do your work on time.
- 8 - Enjoy your success!

Top 4 Internet Providers In San Antonio

Spectrum Internet

No Data Caps
 Connection: Cable
 Download speeds up to 940Mbps
 (Wireless Speeds May Vary)

EarthLink

Multiple Service Types Available
 Connection: DSL and Fiber
 Download speeds up to: 1000Mbps

AT&T

Good Value
 Connection: DSL and Fiber
 Download speeds up to: 1000Mbps

Suddenlink

30-Day Money Back Guarantee
 Connection: Cable
 Downloads speeds up to: 1000Mbps

Source: HighSpeedInternet.com

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR

ONLINE STUDENTS



1 Always Plan Ahead

Know when your classes meet and be prepared to sign on at the appointed time. Keep a calendar of assignments and when they are due.

2 Avoid Multitasking

Focus on attending class and doing school work, without looking at your phone and trying to text at the same time. You will be less stressed and more successful if you stay engaged with what is happening in class. Socialize later.

3 Look Ahead into Future Assignments

Start assignments before the due date, to get a jump start and add more time for yourself in the future.

4 Speak Up

Always speak up when you do not understand a concept or assignment. If you are lost on a subject, prevent falling behind by asking for help.

5 Prioritize Your Classes

If ever caught falling behind, prioritize what needs to be done now and what can be done later.

6 Avoid Distractions

No social media, streaming videos or texting during school hours or while school work is not complete.

7 Reward Yourself

When you have finished an online bucket list, reward yourself. Lay back, enjoy a stress free day of no work on the weekend, then continue to manage your work and time the next day.

8 Wake Up Early

On school days, wake up earlier than needed to better prepare yourself for the rest of the school day.

9 Get A Good Night's Sleep

It is important to always get a good night's sleep if possible. A good night's sleep will give you more energy for the day ahead of you to get things done.

10 Create A Good Work Area

Create a good work space to check into online classes and complete work. Clearing a designated area will help you better understand and focus on online school with fewer distractions.

Former dance teacher wins award

By Destiny Girela
Feature Editor

Tiffany Burrell, former dance teacher now administrative intern, received the KENS5 ExCEL Award, along with a \$1,000 award on Sept. 24.

Burrell has been a teacher for the past 10 years and started her journey as a Stevens administrative intern in September 2020.

The award was given over a Sept. 15 Zoom meeting joined by Burrell, Stevens Principal Ryan Purtell, NISD Assistant Director of Fine Arts Elizabeth Sanchez-Lopez, NISD Superintendent Dr. Brian Woods, and representatives of Credit Human and KENS5-TV. The award was publicly announced on Sept. 24.

The ExCEL Award, jointly sponsored by Credit Human and KENS5, recognizes teaching excellence in the San Antonio area.

Burrell said she was honored and humbled to receive the award.

“The recognition was such a tremendous honor,” Burrell said. “There are thousands of amazing

teachers working hard to make a difference in our students’ lives, to even be considered is humbling.”

Some of Burrell’s biggest inspirations were fellow staff members, colleagues and Stevens students.

“My colleagues at Stevens always inspire me to be better,” Burrell said. “Our students are always my biggest inspiration. They deserve our very best each day.”

Burrell’s former student, junior Selma Contreras, had Burrell as a dance coach both sophomore year and the beginning of Contreras’ junior year before Burrell became an administrative intern in early September.

“I felt happy for her,” Contreras said. “She has always said she wanted to accomplish something more beyond being a teacher, and she did when she became an administrator. Ms. Burrell was always full of laughs, and she had a way of filling the room with joy, hard work and laughs at once.”

Burrell has inspired many students in the years that the students took her dance classes.

Senior Chasiti Martinez had



Former dance teacher and administrative intern Tiffany Burrell received the EXCEL Award for teaching excellence, presented by KENS5-TV and Credit Human in September. The award came with a \$1,000 check. *Photo courtesy of NISD Communications*

Burrell for her junior year for Dance 2 and senior year before Burrell became an administrator. When Burrell was awarded the ExCEL Award, Martinez said she felt happy about the former dance coach being awarded.

“I was beyond happy that she got the award,” Martinez said. “I feel she got the award because she was a great teacher and always made sure her students were taken care of, no matter what.”

Though saddened by the news of Burrell starting her journey as

administrative intern, Martinez understood why Burrell made the switch.

“She was such a great teacher, and every time she was teaching us you could always see in her eyes how much she loved and cared about us,” Martinez said. “When we found out she was going to be an admin we were saddened but happy about this news. She had told us it was time to retire her dancing shoes.”

COVID-19 pandemic yields positive results

By Grace Pfoutz
Staff Writer

The COVID-19 pandemic has complicated and limited life activities.

Adults and children are admitted to hospitals every day, and death rates continue to rise, topping 250,000 in recent reports.

Still, not all of the news is bad news.

Consumers are using their phones to order food and packages to limit in-person shopping and possible contact with the virus, resulting in increased profits for delivery companies.

Many businesses are thriving according to a recent Metlife poll.

“Perceptions of cash flow and revenue have also improved.

56% feel comfortable with their company’s cash flow situation, up from last month’s low of 48% and similar to late March (59%).”

For some, exercise and healthy eating have improved. To take a break from online activity, individuals go for a run, a bike ride, or even just walk their pets. They have more time to cook healthy meals.

The coronavirus pandemic also resulted in improved air quality because people are working from home and driving less, reducing emissions in the air.

Local news reporter Patty Santos published an air quality report on July 13.

“In the nitrogen dioxide block, you can see January, February, March and here we go, a sudden

drop in mid-March. That continues throughout until today, and that drop could be attributed to less vehicles on the road,” she said.

More studies are needed about air quality changes during the pandemic, but Santos said air quality impacts during the pandemic may help cities plan for their future, which includes infrastructure, public mass transportation, shift changes and more.

COVID-19 and the safety precautions surrounding the pandemic also have resulted in increased profits for cleaning companies and manufacturers of products like disinfectant wipes and sprays, isopropyl alcohol and toilet paper.

Drive-in movie theaters have also made a come-back during the

pandemic. With standard movie theaters seeming less safe and the fear of contracting the virus, patrons have stopped attending movies in person and have retreated to home viewing on services like Netflix and Disney+. Some in-person theaters have closed their doors temporarily, while others remain open, with limited traffic and sales.

Drive-in movie theaters have sprung up at places like Fiesta Texas, where patrons can view a movie from their cars, while accessing sound through a radio channel.

Many churches modified services to include online worship and outdoor services, and most grocery and other consumer product businesses offer curbside pick up or home delivery.

Pandemic devastates air travel

By Amara Cruz
Staff Writer

Peanuts or pretzels? A question that was hard to answer the moment a passenger stepped onto a plane.

Now, the main questions passengers ask themselves are more likely one mask or two? Or should the family drive or fly? Or, maybe just wait until all this goes away and it is safe again?

COVID-19 has put the entire world on alert, and every step requires careful thought and planning.

Travelers perceive flying as risky and avoid airline travel. However, some people cannot avoid air travel and are required to travel for business or for personal reasons. With fewer people choosing to travel by plane, ticket sales have fallen dramatically.

From March 1 to March

16, ticket sales were over a million tickets sold. Mid-March, when COVID-19 was declared as a pandemic in the United States, ticket sales started to decrease dramatically overnight.

Southwest, American suffer dramatic losses

The top two airlines in San Antonio have taken a dramatic loss. Southwest Airlines reported a \$915 million loss in the second quarter, and American Airlines reported a \$2.1 billion loss in the same quarter.

To reduce costs, airlines cut the number of flights available, offered employee buyouts, and encouraged early retirements to avoid involuntary job cuts.

Under the \$25 billion federal aid package, airlines could not cut jobs until after Oct. 1. Soon after, major

carriers announced job cuts needed to reduce costs and to survive the COVID-19 downturn.

COVID-19 also is affecting businesses, large and small, with many closing their doors after months of pandemic restrictions. Restaurants and bars have been especially hard-hit by city-imposed capacity limitations and outdoor dining requirements designed to curb the spread of the virus.

The Mexican Manhattan restaurant, which served downtown San Antonio for more than 60 years, closed its doors Oct. 24.

The Texas Restaurant Association predicts that 25-30% of independent restaurants across the state will close as a result of business and revenue losses caused by the pandemic.

Continued from page 2

Distance Learning *harms* education

Students also may struggle due to the lack of a quiet place to work, adequate WiFi, school supplies, or one-on-one assistance from the teacher.

Though right now virtual learning allows students to access lessons and activities safely online during this current pandemic, now is also a good time to improve and

embrace virtual learning so that teaching and education is more effective for students.

Parents should be more involved with their students by monitoring their students' grades and participation in their online classes. More teachers should be hired and available to students so that they can be split into separate learning

groups as well, so that each student is given more focus and attention.

Parental involvement, along with these simple changes, will offer more individualized educational experiences for students which will help students succeed in this virtual learning environment that is essential until the pandemic ends.

Continued from page 2

Distance Learning *helps* education

Although there are some reasons why virtual learning is frustrating or hard, there are many statistics and studies that show this way of learning is better for a student's education. Virtual learning is a way to get students to engage. Students

learn to communicate and collaborate online.

They earn higher GPAs, and they can work on their school work/classes from anywhere.

Virtual learning builds skills that will serve students well both now

and in the future.

Students should embrace virtual learning as an opportunity for growth and learning. The benefits will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

Talon Staff

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High School

Varsity football features bright, young stars

By Michael Martinez
Staff Writer

As the Falcons' season took off with a hot start, fans could not help but notice those gems on the field. With the Falcons at 4-3, fans noticed those players who have asserted their dominance and are making their names known.

Brashears, QB

Kevin "K.K." Brashears, the starting sophomore quarterback, has been everything the Falcons have wanted and more.

A young, versatile QB, Brashears can run the ball like a running back and throw the deep ball with ease.

So far this season, with six games on the record books, K.K. has thrown for 718 yards, with three touchdown passes while completing 49 passes out of 112 attempted.

On the rushing end, Brashears is just as good, while rushing 135 yards and four rushing touchdowns. Brashears may be one of the younger guys on the team, but he has definitely cemented himself as a leader for the Falcons.

Gonzales, WR

Another offensive threat on the Falcons roster is starting wide receiver junior Ethan Gonzales. Gonzales is a quick receiver with amazing hands, and he has all the components and potential to be an amazing receiver for years to come.

So far this season, Gonzales has caught 26 passes for a total of 454



PASS COMPLETE. Quarterback Kevin "K.K." Brashears (#7), spots a receiver to pass for first down. The Falcons went on to defeat the John Jay Mustangs 20-7 on Oct. 16 at Gustafson Stadium. Photo by Annmarie Overton

yards and three touchdowns. He is currently ranked 12th in the city for receivers and for a good reason. Defensive backs know they are in for a long game if they are lined up against Ethan Gonzales.

Schrom, K

When it comes to special teams, the Falcons have one of the best kickers if not, the best kicker, in all of NISD. Senior Jackson Schrom is the kicker for the Falcons and has proven himself as one of the most dominant kickers the city of San Antonio has to offer.

This season, Schrom has

attempted and made all 14 of his points after touchdowns (PATs) and has punted 23 times for 820 yards, with his longest punt being 58 yards.

His stats are unreal for a high school kicker and has all the potential in the world to do big things in the sport of football. Everyone is on the lookout for number 89 on the field. His ability to kick a football is unbelievable.

Without a strong offensive line, a football team's offense can not be successful. When it comes to the Falcon O-line, they have one of the toughest.

Neal, OT

And, one of the toughest on their line is senior offensive tackle J.B. Neal. This senior is one of the most hardworking and determined players the Falcons have on their roster. Game in and game out, Neal puts 110% into his blocks, and his speed and strength is unmatched on the offensive line.

Standing at 6 feet and 220 pounds, Neal is a scary sight for defensive ends. This being his

senior year, fans can expect the best out of Neal on the field every night, with the Falcons growing potential to make a deep playoff run this season. Big number 65 is just one of the many gems the Stevens Falcons roster has to offer.

With the Stevens Falcons asserting their dominance early in the season, fans have gotten to see many players make names for themselves throughout NISD.

These four guys are just some of the many young stars the Falcons have. But, in every game these guys play vital roles in the Falcons' success and are definitely some of the best on the team.

As the season progresses, be on the lookout for these young stars as they continue to assert their dominance in this year's 2020 football season.

The Falcons play their Homecoming game against the O'Connor Panthers Dec. 3 at Gustafson Stadium. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.

The Homecoming king and queen will be crowned at halftime, accompanied by the court.

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Major league sports work around COVID-19

By Michael Martinez
Sports Editor

Despite all the obstacles that COVID-19 has caused this year, sports has been providing entertainment to people around the country in quarantine.

When COVID-19 first became a big issue in the United States, athletes who were in season would start to contract the virus which would have everything shut down for a while. Although the pandemic continues, all sports have taken precautions to bring back their teams and give their fans what they want to see, with some adjustments.

National Basketball Leagues offer safety regulations

The NBA and WNBA have created what they call "The Bubble," which is how they advanced their seasons. All players and teams went to Florida, where teams stayed in hotels, and they would play their games in one place, instead of traveling to various field houses around the

United States and Canada.

This was a big move for a lot of the teams and players having to leave their families and continue playing through the pandemic. Of course, some players decided to opt out of going to the bubble, but others would stick it out in order to finish what they started and give their fans what they wanted.

No fans were allowed in the bubble, but during the playoffs a certain number of family members for each player were allowed inside.

No COVID-19 cases reported

At the end of the NBA and WNBA seasons, neither reported any positive COVID-19 cases, which reflects major success for both associations finishing their seasons safely by enforcing these precautions.

Major League Baseball (MLB) and the National Football League (NFL) had different approaches to playing through COVID-19.

Both leagues opened their seasons, keeping things at home. Both leagues would have their teams play in their stadium and travel as well.

MLB allows no fans, at first

For MLB, they decided that no fans would be allowed in the stadiums in order to keep players and staff safe, while also providing the fans with what they were waiting to see. In the playoffs, they allowed a certain reduced number of fans at the games, but never at full capacity.

NFL opens at 20% capacity

Opening with a different model, the NFL started their season opener with 20% capacity at the stadiums.

The season opener Kansas City Chiefs vs. the Houston Texans was a shock for many, seeing that fans were allowed in the stadium because other sports at the time were not allowing fans to attend games. The season opener led to a fan testing positive for COVID-19 after attending.

As the MLB and the NFL seasons continue, both leagues allow a certain number of fans to be present in the stadiums, but are taking strict precautions in order to keep players, staff and fans safe.

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LET'S GET FIRED UP. Before the game against Marshall at Gustafson Stadium on Nov. 14, wide receiver Ivan Smith (#82) and tight end Jeremiah Mestre-Elliott (#86) get hyped to beat the Rams. The Falcons beat the Rams 38-34. *Photo by Sami Gonzales*

BATTLE OF 151. The Falcons, led by senior Joshua Gonzalez (#99), take the field to face off against their rivals, the Warren Warriors in "The Battle of 151." The Falcons went on to win the game 45-14 on Oct. 8 at Farris Stadium. *Photo by Sami Gonzales*

Falcon football plays through pandemic

By Michael Martinez
Sports Editor

The year has been a roller coaster of events due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As society tried to get things back to normal, the return of Stevens football was inevitable.

Due to COVID-19, this year's football season is a lot different than those before.

Head varsity football coach Anthony Boykin said COVID-19 has affected his second year and

coaching football at Stevens and has affected his team.

"It's been impacted drastically," Boykin said. "In my 26th year of coaching, this season is totally different. Everything that we have done before, we pretty much threw out the window as far as our protocols, use of the locker room, even simple things like how you take your water during practice."

COVID-19 has changed and affected many plans that Boykin and the Falcons had for this football season, but they have adapted the

best they can to the changes.

Boykin has high hopes for the Falcons.

"Despite the obstacles and adversity before us, we can accomplish the goals we shoot for," he said. "We have a lot of guys that are experienced from last year's playoff team with my first year here. Although everything changed in the spring time due to the virus, it changed for everyone in the district, so now it's a matter of how you react and respond to this change."

UIW commit and starting

defensive end on varsity, Joshua Gonzalez, said the team has adjusted.

"COVID-19 hasn't affected us as much as we thought," Gonzales said. "A lot has changed though, like how we can't shake our opponents' hands, and we have to bring our own water bottles to practice and the games."

The Falcons are 4-2 in the district going into next week's game against Taft on Nov. 27 at Gustafson Stadium. Game time is 7 p.m.



INTENSE COACHING. In the fight against the Harlan Hawks, coach Tommy Carrillo discusses the offensive line play with Richard Price (#64), David Garcia (#50), and J.B. Neal (#65). The Hawks defeated the Falcons 37-34 in the last seconds of the Nov. 6 game. *Photo by Sami Gonzales*



DRAWING BACK FOR THE KICK. Kicker Jackson Schrom (#89) winds up for the kick off after the touchdown in the Nov. 15 district game against Marshall. Schrom has a reputation for accuracy and distance in his kicking game. *Photo by Sami Gonzales*