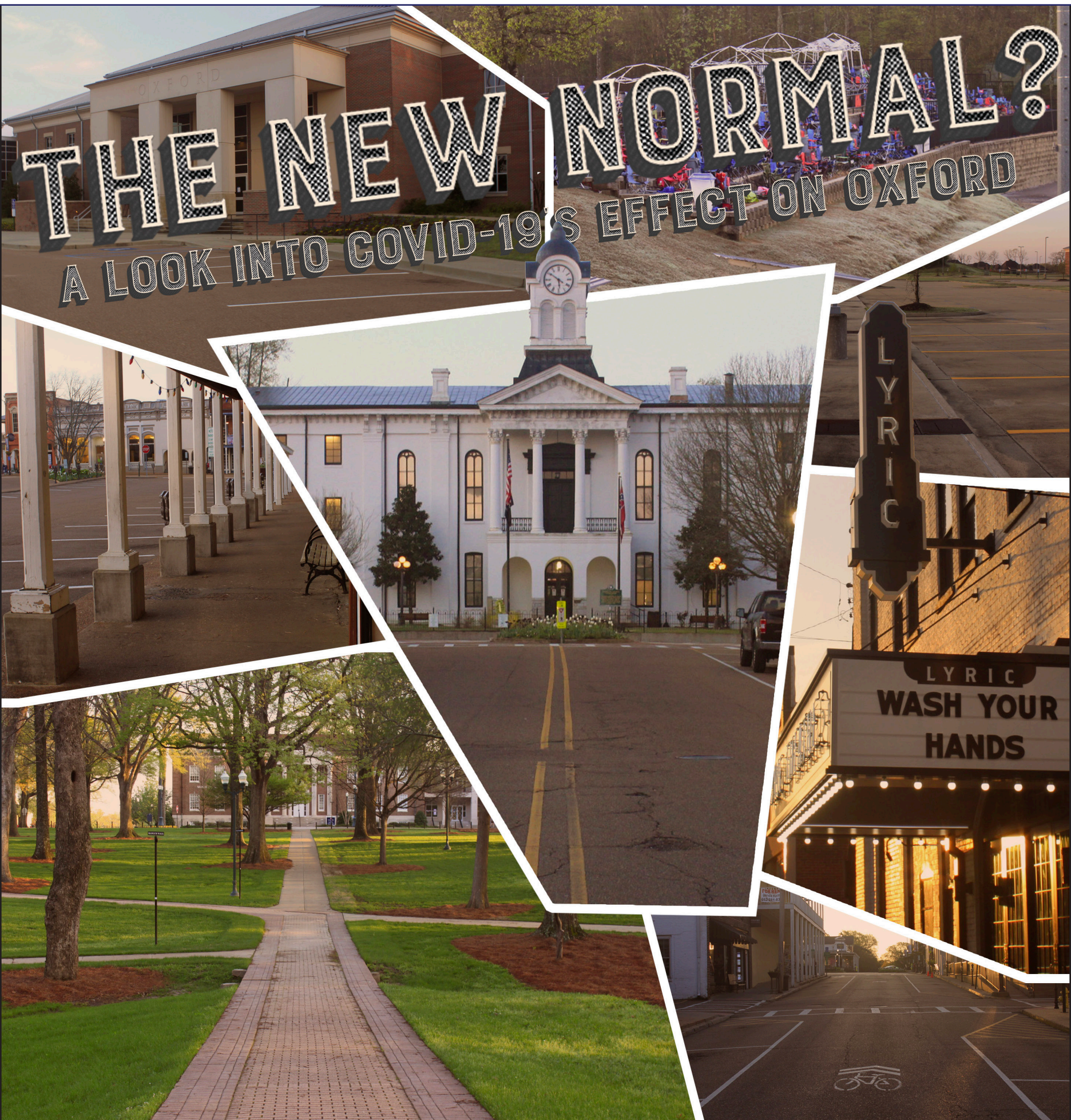


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Governor orders shutdown of all Mississippi schools

By Karina Patel

news editor

All public schools in Mississippi have been required to close until Friday, April 17 due to Governor Tate Reeves's executive order on concerns regarding COVID-19.

OSD had initially closed the two days following the end of spring, before extending the period of closure until March 27. Following Governor Reeves's executive order, OSD schools have been closed until April 17.

"The safety of our students, teachers, and parents are of utmost importance. The district administrative staff met regularly leading up to the decision to close Oxford schools. We had already discussed the possibility of closing Oxford schools for a longer amount of time prior to the governor's decision," Assistant Superintendent Bradley Roberson said. "We decided to take the approach of reassessing the situation on a week-by-week basis."

In order to combat the amount of in-person class time that is being missed due to the closure of schools, OSD has decided to switch to online classes during this time. Over 2,000 devices have been given to students in grades Pre-K to sixth in order to make sure that these students are able to keep up with their coursework. Additionally, online websites such as Zoom, Schoology and SeeSaw are being used in order to make sure that students have all the resources they need to continue class.

"Students in grades 7-12 already

possessed a MacBook Air computer. The framework for online learning, student expectations, and teacher exceptions were developed using the best practices," Superintendent Brian Harvey said. "Teaching and learning is a partnership between the student and his or her teacher. Both have responsibilities and it is important that teachers plan for learning of students at different levels and that students put in the necessary time and energy to be successful."

Students were meant to enter their fourth nine weeks upon returning from spring break, but this period of closure will not cause problems with grading periods for students and teachers.

"The grading periods themselves will not change since we transitioned to an online learning system. The third nine weeks ended the Tuesday after spring break; therefore, the last quarter of the 2019-20 school began Wednesday, March 18," Roberson said.

Due to all public schools in Mississippi closing until April 17, the Mississippi Department of Education has waived testing requirements for

Sorry WE'RE CLOSED

this school year.

"The waiver of state testing requirements was initiated by the Mississippi Department of Education," Harvey said. "The ED [Education Department] approved our state's waiver of all ESEA [Elementary and Secondary Education Act] testing requirements, which removes the requirement for student in grades 3-8 to take the MAAP [Mississippi Academic Assessment Program] and students in grades 8-12 to take the SATP [Subject Area Testing Program] in Algebra I, English II, and Biology. The U.S. History test is not a federal requirement but a state requirement. It has been waived as well."

While it is unsure whether or not the period of closure for OSD schools will be extended or not, according to Harvey, the first step towards getting back to school would be for President Trump and Governor Reeves to lift the states of emergency that have

been declared for the nation and the state of Mississippi.

"District administration is reassessing the situation weekly while monitoring recommendations from the Mississippi Department of Education, the

governor's office and Mayor

Robyn Tannehill," Roberson said.

During this time of closure, students are encouraged to stay safe, make a schedule for themselves and continue their education according to Roberson.

"It is important for all of us to follow the guidance we have received from local, state and national governments. Secondly, please continue to invest time in your learning. The absence of learning for an extended period of time will have an impact on the rest of your educational journey whether you are a first grader or a high school senior," Roberson said. "Check for communication from your teachers daily and create a schedule for yourself so that you have adequate time to complete assignments. Lastly, we are here for the students and parents of the Oxford School District. If you need assistance of any kind please reach out to your teacher, principal, or me personally. We are all glad to help."

Oxford School District provides meals to students in need

By Hayden Walker

staff writer

Following the announcement that all OSD schools would be closed until at least April 17, administrators quickly worked to create a program that would allow students to continue receiving meals for free while schools were closed.

Beginning on Tuesday, March 17, seven locations opened around Oxford that continue to provide meals on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Currently, the locations are Oxford Middle School (222 Bramlett Blvd.) the Wayne Johnson Apartments (2223 Delores Dr.), Brittany Woods Subdivision (off of state Highway 6,) C.B. Webb Townhomes (900 Molly Barr Rd.) Oasis Church (861 MS-6 W.) the Western Hills area (near Anchorage Road) and the Springhill Area at Our Store Grocery (71 CR 105.) The locations are subject to change. Updates can be found on the Oxford School District website.

The meals will continue to be provided for the foreseeable future. According to Superintendent Brian Harvey, OSD had to act fast in order to keep handing out meals to students in need.

"Our team came up with this idea because we

knew our transportation systems would be shutting down," Harvey said. "We are prepared to serve meals to students as long as necessary."

Because the regulations concerning public gatherings continue to change, OSD has had to adapt.

"Our team came up with this idea because we knew our transportation systems would be shutting down. We are prepared to serve meals to students as long as necessary."

Brian Harvey
Superintendent

"As the restrictions for the number of people who can work in one place went from 50 to 10, we had to adjust to preparing meals out of one site to three," Harvey said. "This week we have asked the community if there is another site that could be located. We feel with our current work force we could support one more site."

Despite roadblocks regarding the amount of people that can work in the same location, the seven sites still managed to produce almost three thousand meals last week. This week, they were able to prepare one thousand meals in a single day. For Harvey, this program is just one

of many ways that OSD contributes to the community.

"We are honored to be able to serve our community," Harvey said. "Helping people is the mission that we have chosen. This is one of the ways that we fulfill that mission."



Hayden Walker • theCharger

Oxford Middle School is currently one of the seven locations where students can pick up meals free of charge. The locations are open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Oxford enacts stay at home resolution, supports self isolation

By Rosie Frugé

staff writer

On Sunday, March 22, the Oxford Board of Alderman had a special meeting regarding the Stay at Home Resolution. The resolution went into effect immediately.

Because of the situation at hand with COVID-19, the resolution states, "The City of Oxford requests that all citizens stay at home except for essential needs. This intent of this order is to ensure the maximum number of people self-isolate in their places of residence to the maximum extent feasible."

Effective until at least April 6, the only open places are essential needs such as: grocery stores, gas stations, banks, and others of that sort. Oxford Mayor Robyn Tannehill has spoken on the issue in many places, including on a livestream by Oxford University Methodist Church on Sunday.

"I just want to share with everyone where we are, and we are trying to be as much of an open book as we can. In the beginning of February things were changing by the week. They have been changing by the day,

but now things are changing by the hour to say the least," Tannehill said.

As of Wednesday, March 26, Oxford has eight confirmed cases of coronavirus, and is steadily continuing to prevent the spread, according to Tannehill.

"I hope we are getting to the point where we are in this community. I have

"I just want to share with everyone where we are, and we are trying to be as much of an open book as we can."

Robyn Tannehill
Mayor

truth of it. For every younger person that may contract this virus, you may never know you had it," Tannehill said.

These measures are also put into place to look out for the ones most in danger. The elderly, those above age 60, are more at risk than the rest of the population.

"But, perhaps you sat by someone in a group or you walked through the grocery store or you went about

doing your business as usual and not thinking of others and not social distancing. You could cause one who is actually 75 to not make it. That sounds dramatic, but it is true. That is real. We have been taking every measure we can. Yes, we did start on these precautionary actions on 27th

of February because even in a pandemic, the trash still has to be picked up; emergency responders still have to respond," Tannehill said.

There are many ways to help the community in this time of need. For more information, go to the City of Oxford Twitter at @cityofoxford.



Edward Brown • theCharger

The usually busy Oxford Square is near-empty following the enactment of the Stay at Home Resolution. The Stay at Home Resolution was put in place to encourage self isolation to the greatest extent possible, recommending people to only leave for essential tasks.

Students, faculty affected by coronavirus, forced to change plans

By Heath Stevens

staff writer

Around the world, many precautions are being taken to try to stop or slow down the spread of the coronavirus. These precautions have disrupted and affected many students lives at Oxford High School.

Among those affected the most by the coronavirus is former OHS student Paula Serrano. Serrano was a foreign exchange student at Oxford from Spain, but due to the coronavirus she was sent back early.

"I was supposed to leave U.S. on the first of June. It might not seem that much time but it is definitely almost a quarter of my experience," Serrano said.

Like most students at OHS, Serrano woke up thinking she was going to have to stay home and social distance, but she wasn't expecting the drastic measures that were being taken as she was asleep.

"I found out that I have to leave America [March 26]. I woke up ready to start online school and when I checked my emails, my scholarship sent me one saying that all the participants need to be back on Thursday," Serrano said.

According to Serrano, she is mainly sad that she had to leave so abruptly, not even getting to see many of her friends before she left.

"I always knew that it was going to be hard but I always imagined it [another way, having a party with friends]," Serrano said. "Now I have to leave without even saying goodbye to most of my friends and leaving a lot of my plans undone. I had so many plans such as prom and the musical that I've been waiting on for so long that will never happen."

According to Serrano, even though her time in America was cut short, she still took away many life lessons and is thankful for her time spent in Oxford.

"This time in America made my personality change completely," Serrano said. "It taught me to not judge anyone and from this experience, leaving unexpectedly, it showed me that we have to enjoy life as it comes, we don't know when is going to be 'our last' day of school or our last day hanging out with friends."

Another group of students affected by the coronavirus was the spring break trip to England, France and Spain. Their trip was cut short after President Donald Trump issued a travel ban on most of Europe.

"We found out about the travel ban when Mrs. Arizaga knocked on our doors around 6 A.M. and told us we needed to be ready to leave the next day," junior Brennan McInnis said. "We left on Friday, March 13 and we were supposed to leave on Saturday, March 14."

The group was still able to make it to all three countries and most of the sites they were supposed to visit, but due to some areas having a higher concentration of coronavirus cases, some places had to be avoided.

"We were able to go to London, Paris and Barcelona. We had to switch from Madrid to Barcelona because there was a spike in cases in Madrid," McInnis said. "We were worried that the Louvre museum would be closed but luckily, they reopened in time for us to go."

According to McInnis, there were no worries with getting home before the travel ban took effect because EF Tours was prepared and worked hard to get them on flights home quickly.

"As a precaution in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, President Trump announced a restriction on travel to the U.S. from Europe, effective Friday evening, March 13. As a result of this updated guidance, we are bringing our groups in Europe and the UK back to the U.S., and we have been in contact with all impacted travelers and their families. We are also postponing tours in March and April at this time," EF Tours said in a statement regarding bringing the tour groups home.

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Classes, AP exams go online to prevent spread of coronavirus pandemic

By Nadeen Al-Ostaz

features editor

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, many have gone into quarantine in order to slow its spread. As a result, universities and schools across the country have been forced to go online. Among those schools is OHS, which is currently set to be out through April 17.

As the administration tries to sort what this will mean for future events and AP testing, junior Ellie Baker says that the uncertainty of not know what will happen next is the scariest part.

"I don't want any of the work that all AP students have put in for the past year to be put to waste. I also am concerned with how our cheer tryouts and future practices will go," Baker said. "I know that other sports for seniors is postponed and could be canceled and that is really upsetting as well. Testing in general is also a little concerning because I have no clue how that will look."

The AP Board released on Mar. 20 that AP testing will still take place but with a few adjustments. Among them being that exams will be shortened to a 45-minute online free-response exam. Only units covered before schools went out for spring break will be tested. According to the AP College Board website, other changes include that portfolio due dates have been extended to May 26 at midnight eastern time for all students, and Music Theory and AP Calculus BC subscores will not be given for this year. New test dates are set to be released on April 3.

"Some students may want to take the exam sooner rather than later, while the content is still

fresh," the AP College Board website said. "Other students may want more time to practice. For each AP subject, there will be 2 different testing dates."

Teachers will also be given free-response questions previously only available for in-classroom use so that they can assign students example questions to better prepare them. Concerns of cheating were also addressed.

"The exam questions are designed and administered in ways that prevent cheating; we use a range of digital security tools and techniques, including plagiarism detection software, to protect the integrity of the exams," the AP College Board website said. "Scoring at-home work for an AP Exam is not new to the AP Program. For years the AP Program has received and scored at-home student work as part of the exams for the AP Computer Science Principles and AP Capstone courses."

As testing goes online and students adjust to their classes, teachers are also making adjustments. Art teacher Amanda Gullledge asked her students what supplies they have available to work with from home and says many projects will be digital. She has high hopes for what is to come.

"I personally love technology, so I am excited to take on this new challenge of teaching art online to my students," Gullledge said. "All teachers and students are in uncharted waters. We are all learning and adapting to this change."

Senior Sarah Jane Yerger also believes that taking classes online can provide benefits from her past experiences.

"I have taken virtual school classes through OHS in the past and think online classes can be beneficial. It does take a lot of self-discipline, but it

teaches you to prioritize your time in a productive way," Yerger said. "There are lots of online course options in college, and I think this will be a good way to be prepared to take those courses."

Baker is thankful that OHS already provides many of the resources online. Teachers will be communicating with their students through an app called Schoology and Zoom, an app for video chatting. However, time will be more limited.

"I hate that the time frame doesn't allow for teachers to give full classes and lessons through the video chat," Baker said. "But, I am thankful that there is at least face to face time for any questions or needed review."

Yerger, among other seniors, is concerned about many senior events that are set to take place in the spring that will most likely be affected by the pandemic.

"I want to speak to my fellow seniors when I say that we are all in this together," Yerger said. "Though it seems like everything has been taken away from us, we are strong and we will get through this together, like we have in the past."

She also says that she understands social distancing is tremendously important in inhibiting the spread of the virus and keeping everyone safe. Despite her concerns about the virus, she believes that there is a way out of this.

"Though I would rather be in school with my classmates and teachers, I am hopeful that online learning will be effective in getting us ready for graduation," Yerger said. "I am worried about not having a senior prom and graduation ceremony, but I hope and believe the administration will find a way to make it up to us. No one is to blame."



OHS Prom rescheduled April 18 due to COVID-19 concerns

By Ada Grace Perry

staff writer

On March 16, it was announced that a decision was made to postpone The OHS Prom this year. Prom was originally scheduled to be April 4, but due the global situation regarding COVID-19, prom has been postponed to April 18.

“Based on the OSD decision to close school, initially, this would have had us out until the week of the prom. I felt like that was not enough time to handle everything that needed to be done. It was going to be stressful for everyone and I was concerned with needing more time,” OHS Principal Noah Hamilton said.

Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves has also passed an executive decision to close all Mississippi public schools until April 17, which could possibly push back the date of prom once more.

“I am afraid that it will [affect the date of prom]. Especially with the possibility that this is going to last longer than the timeframe that has been set,” Hamilton said.

Senior and Student Body Presi-

dent Don Fruge agrees with the decision to push back prom and hopes that prom will still end up happening.

“I feel like prom being pushed back was the best move that the school could have made for the students, specifically the juniors and seniors,” Fruge said. “Now that we are out until April 17 and prom was scheduled for April 18, I am still hopeful that prom will happen but also realize it might not happen.”

Prom being postponed causes lots of emotion from both senior and junior classes. Prom is something many students look forward to and not only hearing that it is delayed, but knowing it could be potentially canceled, could be upsetting.

“A lot of the seniors are upset. We could’ve never pictured anything like this happening, and just the thought of losing potential memories hurts,” Fruge said. “More than just prom, a lot of the future is uncertain right now, and that is what many of the seniors are thinking about. I know that the juniors are upset too, because of a missed memory as well.”

Hamilton emphasizes the importance of safety and of following

guidelines for students and their families during this time.

“This is a very difficult time for everyone. You don’t know who has come into contact with whom. The best thing to do is to follow the guidelines that have been suggested, and implemented. It is important to stay home unless you have to go to work or essential errands, like grocery store, doctor, etc. And when you do have to go out, practice social distancing. Stay at least six feet away from others,” Hamilton said. “How long this will affect everyone is dependent upon if everyone follows guidelines. The more unnecessary interactions, the longer this pandemic will grip us. Right now, the focus is April 17. Only time will tell.”

During this time of uncertainty and quarantine, Fruge gives a message of positivity and hope to the student body.

“I want all of the student body to know that this will all be okay, and eventually we will return to normal. Sure, we may not have a prom, and for seniors, graduation is up in the air too, but it will all be okay. Underclassmen will have the opportunity to

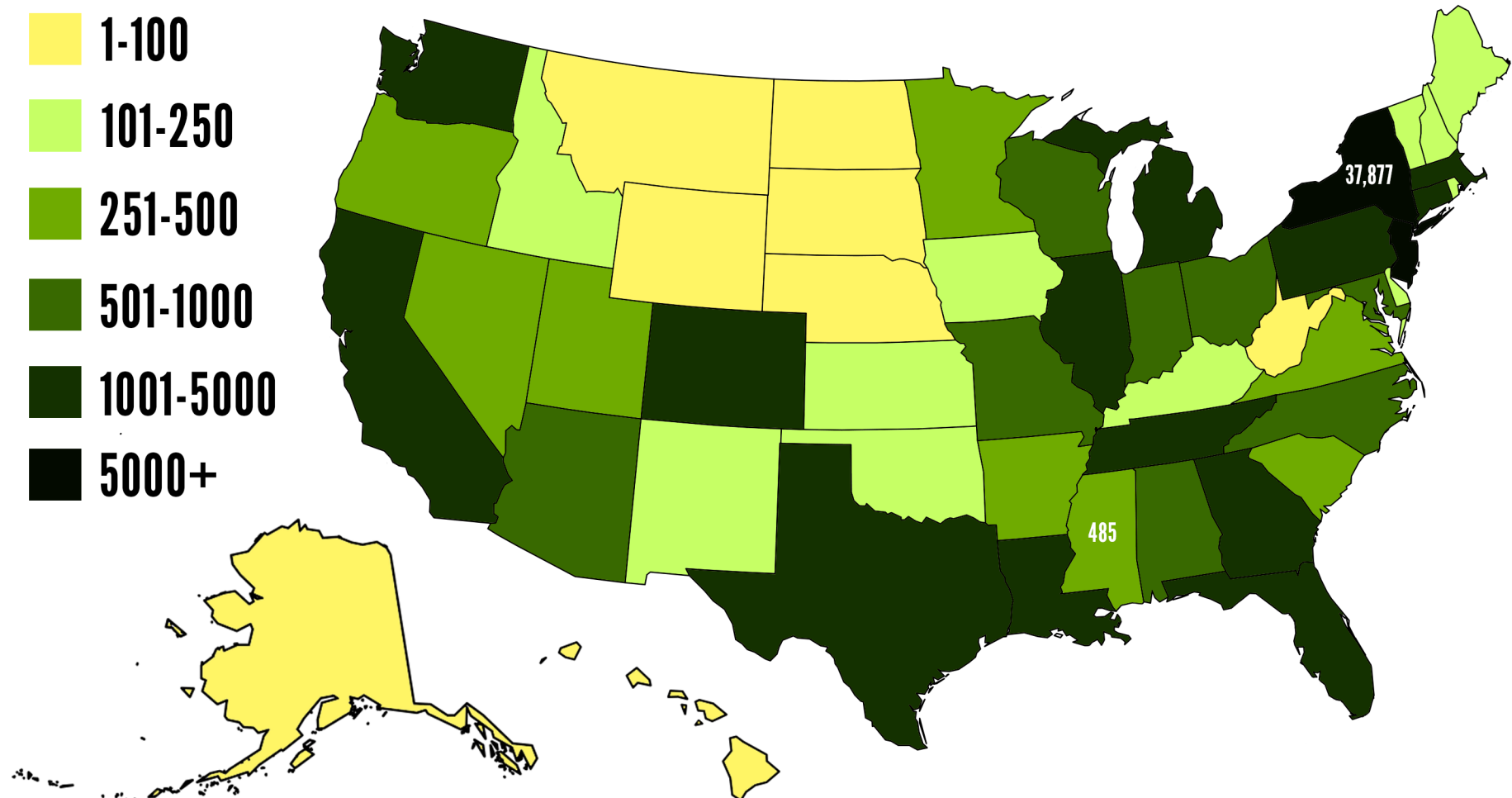
experience their proms in the future even if we don’t have one this year, and seniors will move onto college, work, and life after high school next year,” Fruge said. “I hate that this is happening, and I really hate that it is happening during the class of 2020’s senior year, but at the end of the day we will get through this and it will be okay.”

While students may still be adjusting to the changes that are being made during this time of closure, Hamilton gives advice on how to react to this abnormal situation and encourages students to make a routine while using the resources that are available to them.

“Practice guidelines and stay safe. Do not put yourself in unnecessarily risky situations. Try to get into routines. Work on school work at the same time every day. Use the Zoom Office Hours for getting help or asking questions of teachers. And be kind. We can easily get into a critical mindset,” Hamilton said. “We need to remain positive and be caring and compassionate with our neighbors and all of society.”

CONFIRMED NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES BY STATE

*AS OF 3/27/20



Trump administration has shortcomings during COVID-19 pandemic

By Lauren Bial

opinions editor

At the beginning of this month, it seems like none of us could've predicted the hell storm we now find ourselves in. Toilet paper is gone, businesses are shutting down and we've all been told to social distance. Even our small town of Oxford has released a stay at home resolution with consequences of fines or jail if one goes out for a non-essential activity. It seems to have escalated so quickly, and the situation is only predicted to get worse. So can we trust our government? Could we have predicted this pandemic?

In January, it seemed as if we could trust our president. He assured Americans that the situation was under control, and a pandemic was not a possibility. Up until the first week of March, Trump did not seem concerned about COVID-19, even stating he wasn't concerned. However, a little over two weeks later, we are all confined to our homes watching Trump declare war on coronavirus, or as he calls it, the "Chinese virus." He has even gone back on his previous reassurances and claimed that he knew it would be a pandemic all along. So, if that was the case, why wasn't anything done sooner?

There is evidence that a task force created to handle such pandemic situations was disbanded in 2018, leaving the US without key specialists to help mitigate the situation. It seems as though the White House aimed to play the situation down by leaving out important health figures and assuring

the public that the virus was being overplayed by the media. These slow starts to taking on the coronavirus is what has allowed it to grow into what it is now, a pandemic.

However, we can not be blind to some of the successes Trump has made while handling the coronavirus. He has put Vice President Mike Pence in charge of the "war," as Trump calls it, against COVID-19, which seems to be working. Pence has been diligent in updating the public by briefings and has more of a professional, presidential attitude when put in front of the camera. The same can not be 100% said for Trump, as he still calls coronavirus the "Chinese virus," but this is not surprising for him at all. The situation we are being faced with currently is unlike anything our country has seen in recent history. Although there have been pandemics, nothing has spread as fast and affected such a majority of the population. Trump has been effective in providing help for parts of the country that need it. He has deployed the National Guard for three states, California, Washington and New York, and he has also directed FEMA to donate medical stations and beds to these hotspots.

The availability of getting a test for COVID-19 has also been problematic. During the unfolding of this pandemic, Trump announced that everyone who needed a test could get one. He even stated that there would be a search engine developed for those who thought they had symptoms. This was not true, as it was something in development for the west coast, not the whole country, and the abundance of tests is the opposite of the current

situation. Tests at the beginning of the virus in America were sparse, so our numbers seemed a lot smaller than they were. The virus grew and it became apparent the need for more tests. The lack of availability of the COVID-19 test has led to many people with symptoms not being tested. Recognizing the virus in an infected person is crucial to flattening the curve. The more people who go undiagnosed, the more opportunity for the virus to spread.

Trump has seemed to go back and forth on what he says, and it is apparent when he is reading off a script at White House briefings. It is important for him to be honest with the American people right now. If he downplays the situation, then Americans will not take it as seriously as they need too. This has proven to be true as NYC parks are still filled with people despite New York's large proportion of cases. Although the virus is stressful and unknown, everyone should take every precaution they can to ensure the virus is contained as quickly as possible. Hospitals are already overwhelmed, and scientists are predicting the peak of the virus has not arrived yet. That being said, it is not just on our government to protect us from the virus, but also on ourselves. It is our job to listen to the suggestions given to us. We should stay home, we should not hoard groceries and we should practice social distancing. This is unlike anything we've ever seen, and hopefully something we never see again in our lifetimes. However, if we want life to return to normal, we must focus on containing, which means drastic measures.



WAYS TO STAY SAFE:

- Wash your hands with soap.
- Practice social distancing.
- Avoid all nonessential trips and visits.
- Self-quarantine for two weeks if you have come in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF MENTALLY:

- Stay educated, but don't be afraid to turn off the TV.
- Find a new hobby, or learn a new skill.
- Stay home, and practice social distancing.

WAYS TO SPEND YOUR FREE TIME:

- Learn to bake.
- Learn a new skill, such as knitting.
- Binge a TV series on Netflix.
- Catch up on any chores or work that you have put off.
- Paint.

WHAT THE VIRUS IS:

COVID-19, or Coronavirus, is an infectious disease that is caught through contact with an infected person or a contaminated surface.

HOW IT IS SPREAD:

- Contact with an infected person.
- Contact with a contaminated surface.
- A cough or sneeze from an infected person.
- Large crowds of people are ideal for spreading the virus to many people at once.

SYMPTOMS:

- Dry cough
- Body aches
- Headache
- Fever
- In some cases, loss of taste and smell
- Difficulty breathing

COVID-19 hits Hollywood, films delayed, productions halted

By Ellis Farese

entertainment editor

Since COVID-19 has swept through the United States, communities have been completely altered in only a few mere days. Social distancing, shelter in place orders and guidelines from the CDC are all new terms that have sparked the uncertainty this pandemic has brought to our nation. It is unknown what overall damage will be done to the economy or what social impacts will result from this unprecedented occurrence, but it is clear that lives from here on out will be disrupted. Schools, universities and most non-essential businesses have been closed, and many Americans have been ordered to work from home. Movie theaters are amongst business being closed worldwide, and studios have been following the global market and using that information to determine what will be the most financially beneficial decisions. Since it is clear that the theatrical marketplace will be struggling for the next couple of months, many producers who have already wrapped their films have decided to delay the premiere dates in order to help ensure box office success. So, to be clear, these measures are not all based on containing the coronavirus, but also to ensure the economic success these films were intended to bring. For films that have not yet wrapped, their production is being halted, as COVID-19 is proving that Hollywood is not invisible and that celebrities are not exempt from the social distancing efforts needed to help contain this pandemic. Overall, coronavirus is taking its toll on the

entertainment industry, as film premieres are being postponed and crews are halting production as a result of the virus.

Daniel Craig's highly anticipated farewell to the James Bond series, "No Time to Die" has been postponed to release in November 2020 instead of April 2020. After thoughtful and strategic consideration, MGM, Universal and Bond producers, Michael G. Wilson and Barbara Broccoli made this decision- one that can be credited more so to the economic benefit of the postponement. Being one of the most iconic and successful franchises in movie history, Bond movies are not meant to fail at the box office, and they require worldwide excitement to receive the response expected, so it was a no-brainer for this premier to be rescheduled. On Instagram, "A Quiet Place Part II" director John Krasinski announced the postponement of his sequel to his 2018 "A Quiet Place" which was set to release internationally on March 18, 2020. Along with the "No Time to Die" postponement, Krasinski's decision was a move based on ensuring the film brought box-office success, as the initial release date fell at the start of the crisis in America.

Walt Disney Pictures has made announcements delaying multiple films. "Mulan" was set to release in the U.S. on March 27, and was recently postponed due to coronavirus concerns. A new release date has not been specified for the film. The release date for Scarlett Johansson's seventh appearance as the Black Widow in "Black Widow" has also been postponed by Walt Disney, as it was originally planned for rollout April 29. No new release date has been

specified for this film either. Production for Disney's live action musical "The Little Mermaid" starring Halle Bailey was supposed to begin this month, but due to government mandated social distancing measures crews and casts cannot work in their normal large groups on set, and production has been delayed.

Although some fans are disappointed by these highly anticipated films being delayed, the health of humans across the world takes precedent over anything else. It is important people recognize no one -not even Hollywood- is stronger than the unexpected evils that mankind combats. Not only do these delays help promote the safety restrictions people need to obey during these pressing times, in order for these crews and casts to receive the appreciation deserved for their efforts put into these films, the postponements were necessary. Box-office hits deserve to remain box-office hits despite the world's current situation. The marketplace is currently unstable and its future is eerie and uncertain, and studios will wait for it to gain stability before launching more franchises. The threat of coronavirus unfortunately overthrows premieres, but for the health and wellbeing of all citizens delays in the entertainment industry were inevitable under these circumstances. On the bright side, after these challenging times pass, the world will be able to come together once more- packing theatres full with people coming together to view the same story, and to enjoy one of the most uniting things human nature has brought thus far- the art that is a film.

SOME CELEBRITIES TESTED POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS



MHSAA suspends all sports seasons due to COVID-19

COVID-19 EFFECT ON SPORTS QUICK INFORMATION

MHSAA OFFICIAL STATEMENT

As of now, the suspension of competition is until April 17.

"In concurrence with Gov. Tate Reeves' decision to close all public schools in Mississippi due to the Coronavirus, the Mississippi High School Activities Association on Friday extended its suspension of all competition and practice in athletic and fine arts activities until April 17."

CANCELLATIONS

Only three events have been officially cancelled.

- MHSAA State Archery Championships per AIMS Director of Archery in Mississippi Schools
- Mississippi Choral Arts Festival and State Choral Performance Assessments per the Mississippi Music Educators Association
- MHSAA Concert Band Championships per the Mississippi Band Directors Association

PRACTICING AS A TEAM IS NOT ALLOWED

Following the protocol of social distancing, teams are not allowed to meet.

This includes spring football practice, however the executive committee is working to add an extra week to preseason practice before the 2020 season begins.

THIS IS AN ONGOING SITUATION

Statement by MHSAA Executive Director Don Hinton

"Like many State High School Associations around the South and throughout the nation, the MHSAA will continue to monitor and evaluate this situation as we move into the month of April. But as long as schools remain closed on a statewide basis, return to competition and practice will not be an option."

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY MISSHSAA.COM

By Grace Logan

sports editor

With a global pandemic, every aspect of life has been affected, including sports. As world leaders set guidelines for the public, sports across the world have been cancelled and postponed. This includes Mississippi high school sports.

In a statement by MHSAA, executive director Don Hinton said, "as long as schools remain closed on a statewide basis, return to competition and practice will not be an option." Oxford athletic director Mike Martin expanded on the statement saying "all competition is suspended."

"We are hopeful that the spring championships are not going to be cancelled as well," Martin said. "There could most certainly be a 'practice period' of a couple of weeks before team competition resumes."

With the state and city in self-isolation protocol, the outcome of spring sports is in the air.

"No specific date has been given [for reevaluation]," Martin said. "We should hear from the MHSAA round April 8-10 that outlines the rest of the season."

When COVID-19 began to affect daily life, Oxford spring sports had just begun. Baseball, softball, tennis and track started their seasons without the expectation of a sudden conclusion. Senior pitcher for the baseball team Eli Wicker said the email that notified him about the suspensions crushed him.

"I just had a feeling in my gut that I might've played my last baseball game ever," Wicker said.

With his senior season potentially over, Wicker took the news hard.

"As a senior, I'm devastated because I've played with these guys since I can remember and we have made some unforgettable memories together," Wicker said.

According to Wicker, the team is remaining hopeful.

"The team is trying to be about as optimistic as possible but at the same time realizing that the situation is serious and it doesn't look like it's getting any better," Wicker said.

For the Oxford athletics community, Martin believes it definitely has had an impact on the community.

"So many parents and fans build their free time around the games both home and away," Martin said.

"I'm sure everyone misses the fun and excitement that athletic competition brings to their life. I certainly miss it."

Eli Wicker
Senior

To respect the protocols set by the city, Oxford athletics have used technology remain in contact.

"Students are trying to stay in shape for their respective sports by exercising at home," Martin said. "Some of the teams are using 'Zoom' to stay in contact with the players. Coaches are utilizing the extra time by completing online courses for professional development."

For Wicker, he has not completely processed the entire situation but is trying to remain positive and appreciative.

"It hasn't really hit me yet that I could've played my last baseball game ever," Wicker said. "The whole situation has taught me to not take anything for granted because it will get taken away from you in a instant."

Similarly, Martin added that the athletes and students should stay positive during this pandemic.

"This can be a great time for reflection and for charting a course for the future," Martin said.

theCharger

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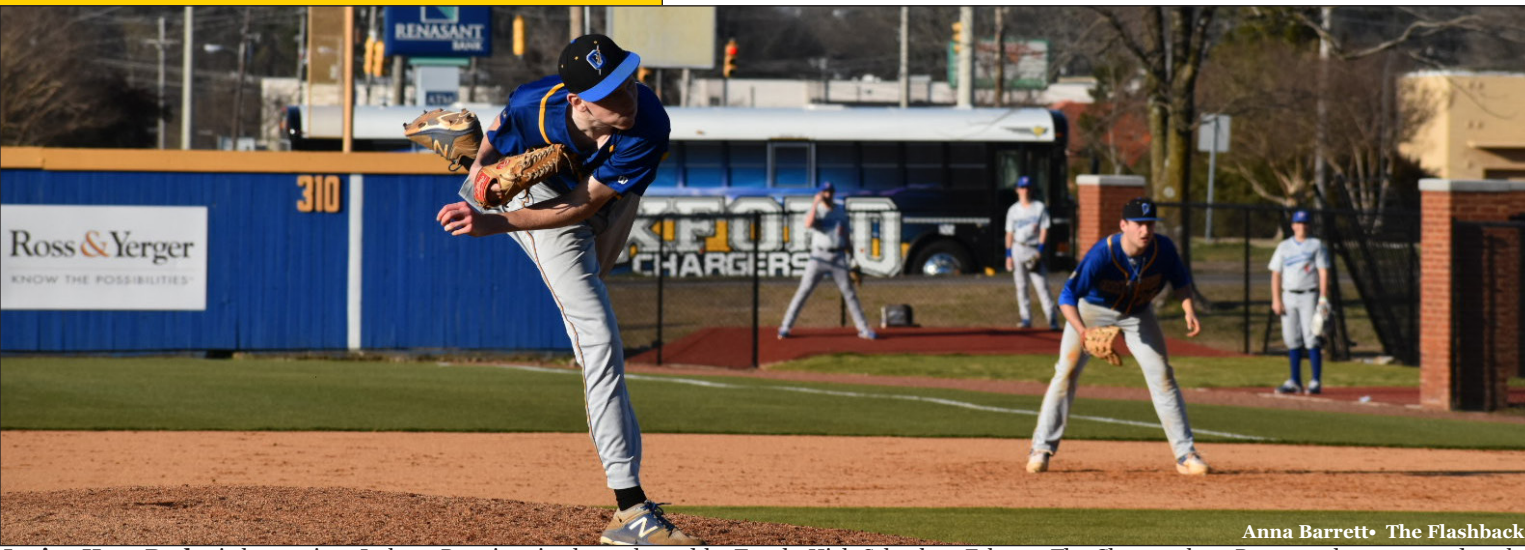
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Anna Barrett • The Flashback

Junior Hays Roth pitches against Jackson Prep in a jamboree hosted by Tupelo High School on Feb. 29. The Chargers beat Prep 4-3 that game and at the time of the suspension the Chargers had a record of 5-5. During this time, they were supposed to have played 12 games. The season is set to continue on April 17.



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