

Corey Tafoya:

Hello everyone. Welcome back to Education Buzz, the Harvard Community Unit District 50's Podcast series where we talk to people in and around the Harvard education scene. And today we have a special guest. Even though we're not together, we're Zoom podcasting. We're really taking it to the next level here. Thanks to Guy Clark, our communications expert is helping us. So I'm with Mr. Carl Hobbs. Carl, thanks for joining us today.

Carl Hobbs:

Yeah, it's good to be here. How are you virtually doing?

Corey Tafoya:

I virtually feel fine. Yeah, though that's kind of our world, isn't it? It's kind of been an amazing five weeks for all this and what we thought would be a good idea because we're spending as much time as we can communicating about everything going on and we sure know that there are probably other ways to get to people, and because we've introduced this podcast series this year, we thought it'd be great to get you on because many of the questions I'm getting are related to end of the year high school things. And in some ways, that's the topic on everyone's mind. What's going on with prom and senior awards, assembly and graduation, and all these things that are these really markers in the lives of our class of 2020 that we're worried about.

Corey Tafoya:

So we thought we'd get you on and... but before we get to that, how are you doing with all this? This is just bizarre territory for all of us, isn't it?

Carl Hobbs:

Yeah, actually it is. If you would have said in the beginning of the year that we were using words like pandemic and social distancing, I would have said you're crazy. But it's actually really interesting to see how people are adjusting and we're managing our lives. So it's been eye opening, it's been heartwarming, it's been amazing how much we've taken for granted. So I mean, there's definitely some things that I'm appreciating because I'm missing so much. So definitely missing seeing the faces of our kids and our staff, that's for sure. So it's been an adjustment, but I've been really pleased with how people have been reaching out and working together to try to get through this. So it's been good.

Corey Tafoya:

How are you and your family doing?

Carl Hobbs:

We're doing wonderful. I mean, I think my 14 year old is okay with not having to sit in a room with me all the time now. He's like, "Dad, don't you have something to do? Don't you have a meeting or something? Come on." No, it's been good. We've also discovered something, it's really kind of cool. It's called the outdoors. You actually can go outside and there's fresh air out there and you can go for walks. So we've been doing those kinds of things.

Corey Tafoya:

Do you have a, I can't believe I was so bored that I did this, moment of our shelter in place yet?

Carl Hobbs:

The house, we're finding there's a lot of projects that were just waiting for us. So we're [crosstalk 00:02:46] a lot of projects that we thought we would never do, like moving every single book from one bookshelf to a whole new bookshelf. Mixing chime and painting and fixing the walls and things like that. This is a hundred year old homes so there's always on the list that needs to get done. So our house is very happy that this is going on right now.

Corey Tafoya:

A lot of TLC. I saw something of the day that there's a lot of pets that are worn out from so many walks and I saw someone that somehow had attached hot air balloons to their dog and they had to figure out how many hot air balloons they could strap to this little thing before he lifted off the air. He was like, I can't wait for these people to go back to work and school.

Carl Hobbs:

That's hilarious.

Corey Tafoya:

It's probably true, there's all kinds of little things that are going on, so. Well, talk about caring for your seniors. I think one of the things that is heartbreaking for you as principal, I'm sure, is just how to not have answers for these seniors, and we can talk about that a little bit because we don't really know everything yet in terms of the state's timeline for either canceling the year or going back. But just talk about how you're reaching out to seniors and how you're communicating and caring for them because that's a big part of this.

Carl Hobbs:

I think one of the things that we need to keep in mind is even though there's a lot of unknown uncertainty, one thing that we know is certain is that at some point, we're going to have graduation. I mean, I think it's important that our students get the privilege of walking across the stage and having a diploma put in their hands because they've earned it. One of the things I do is I put out videos and send those through our Google Classroom and things like that, to try to remind students of the things that are important. Reminders to take care of each other because I mean, obviously, academics is important, but our health is even more important.

Carl Hobbs:

So with our seniors, I think the most important message that hopefully they understand from us is that they're on the forefront of our mind. We know they didn't sign up for this. I've been in contact with a lot of seniors. I appreciate the fact a lot of them are emailing me directly and chatting about this year and some of the triumphs and tribulations that they're going through. But everything that we talk about is this, we may not have graduation on the day that it was set, but our goal is to have graduation, period. And that means sometime down in the summer or in the fall, we don't know.

Carl Hobbs:

Those are the things that are frustrating, I guess for me, it's like hurry up and wait. We know we want to do this, you have to wait till we get some guidance from the state. So graduation is something I don't want to do virtually. I think families deserve to see people walk across the stage and the kids deserve to

feel that and experience that. So that's one of the things that we're trying to plan for a best as we can. Same thing with a prom. We're not going to be able to prom on May 1st, but our prom committee has been working with the venues. The current venue and some other venues that are local to find alternate dates that are available to do that as well.

Carl Hobbs:

Again, that's one of those things where I know some districts have canceled prom altogether. We would like to still hold out some hope that we can go ahead and actually hold that later on. Again, it's another experience that is very important for our students. So those are the kinds of things with all the uncertainty, we still like to plan for, we just don't have that specific date yet. But in our mind, we still want to have them.

Corey Tafoya:

Right. And I think it's fair to remind everyone that that's really the frustration that we share with people wanting to know the answers is that, until the state comes out and says schools will not reopen for the remainder of the year, it's hard for us to make any plans. So we're kind of stuck in this limbo land where we don't know whether we should plan things or not. And what things, if we were to come back, would we be able to do? Can we have soccer games? Can we have baseball games? There's just a lot of things we don't know and we realize that a lot of that anxiety that people are feeling is something we wish we could resolve either one way or the other, but we just don't have that knowledge yet of what the state might do.

Corey Tafoya:

We've seen a lot of states, just recently in Pennsylvania just canceled for the rest of the year. Missouri. So states are doing that. Certainly, I think I saw today 19 states have already canceled, but we're not there yet and until we get to that point, we can't say definitively so. That's really the challenge and we're trying to walk a fine line between some version of preparedness for it if we do come back, but the reality is I think many of us think we won't be back this year. Is that kind of how you feel right now too?

Carl Hobbs:

Yeah, that's kind of what I'm getting. And I've been talking to a lot of other principals and other districts on the listserv and we're all sharing the same exact conversation. It's all about what if. A lot of us are on the same boat as wanting to have graduation, wanting to do the prom, those kinds of things. There are some things that we're looking at that I think we can still do. Like for example, our scholarship honors program. We can't physically have the event at the school, but there's no reason why we still can't award the scholarships and notify students that they received those. So that's something that we're working on right now for the beginning of May.

Carl Hobbs:

So students who applied for scholarships that are eligible for them, once those scholarships are all figured out and awarded, we'll actually be making personal phone calls and follow up with email for those recipients. So obviously, it's more fun to have the actual event with everybody in the same room, but this is one of those things where I think we still can go ahead and do the program as far as announcing the scholarships so students know what kind of awards they'll be getting.

Corey Tafoya:

So just to clarify that, there will be no senior awards' assembly for sure, but those scholarships will all be given out and awarded. So all seniors have those financial opportunities given to them just as more, right?

Carl Hobbs:

Exactly. Yeah. That's exactly what we want to do and we want to get it done in the beginning part of May so students know what they're getting and they can make plans accordingly.

Corey Tafoya:

That's helpful. It just won't be as public of a celebration. Then we'll figure out how to share that information obviously, because a part of the enjoyment of that too was sharing that good news, so we'll figure out a way to do that. Here's the thing that I find fascinating about all of this. Obviously, there's so many horrible things that are going on with the illness and the death and the financial implications to all this and they're just devastating. I don't even think we understand, but there is so much creativity being sparked through all these things. The ideas of how do you do these things virtually, or how do you connect with things.

Corey Tafoya:

How are your seniors managing to kind of make the best out of this? Or are they just kind of saying, "I'm going to wait to see if we're going to be back?" How are they reacting to this?

Carl Hobbs:

I think it's kind of all over the board. I mean, I think you have some students that, based on the design of e-learning, it's actually a structure that works better for them. So in some cases, some of our seniors who they're self-driven, they're very independent, this works better in their world because they can plan their time accordingly and they're not kind of constrained by the structure of the day. Some of the seniors I've talked to are working more hours because they can. In some places, they're in demand for workers, so they're getting paid even more money. I think some of our seniors, a probably could portion, are just kind of down.

Carl Hobbs:

I mean, to be quite honest, I think they could do these school side of it okay, but I think they're realizing that they're missing each other. And Zoom is fine but isn't the same as obviously being in the same room with people and kind of catching up on a regular basis. Kind of that informal connection that we get every day. And I think there's a handful of our seniors that are really struggling with this. I mean, I think school was tough to begin with and I think this is even tougher when you don't have the teacher right there working with you and all the supports that we take for granted that were there and now they're not necessarily there at hand, and that structure isn't there.

Carl Hobbs:

That's another piece I find is very challenging is sometimes having that set structure, knowing that this is the time I'm going to be in this class and this is the time that I have to do this work, it's very helpful. I was talking to one of our students who does very well in school and she's like, "I cannot believe how much I depended on the routine of the day. It just made my life so much more easy." So I think it's all over the place. And I also think some of our seniors are really missing their spring sports. I mean, this is

their last time at the spring sport and so they're doing the best they can to stay in shape and practice their skills being hopeful that something might come from the spring sports. But that's also tough.

Carl Hobbs:

So I mean, it's all over the place as you can imagine because I think it's all over the place for a lot of people. There's some parts of this that I think are good. Bringing some things together and realizing that there's some things that maybe we took for granted that were really powerful and impactful in our lives. And also we're finding, this is a difficult process that we have to figure out how to work through it the best we can. But all in all, I mean, I think it's one of those things that's just a lot of uncertainty and that's tough for everybody, so...

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah. So let's just kind of maybe run down some of those things that are the end of the year functions and we can just maybe talk about those. As you said, we're looking for future dates to see if prom can be rescheduled. Is that right?

Carl Hobbs:

Correct. Yep.

Corey Tafoya:

And same with graduation. We don't know. It'd be hard to imagine a congregation of 1,500, 2,000 people in our gym in the end of May, but we'll hopefully look for a new date for that, right?

Carl Hobbs:

Correct.

Corey Tafoya:

Senior awards assembly is postponed, but they will be getting their scholarships.

Carl Hobbs:

Correct.

Corey Tafoya:

We don't yet know about our spring sports because that kind of men remains dependent on the governor's decision about April 30th.

Carl Hobbs:

Correct.

Corey Tafoya:

What are some other things that you're getting a lot of questions about, Carl?

Carl Hobbs:

Some of the questions I've gotten also from juniors is the SAT and the [inaudible 00:12:36] that has been canceled for the spring and there hasn't been a definitive answer yet if they're going to do that in the fall for our juniors, which will be seniors next year. So that's a conversation they're having right now. And again, that's the kind of thing as soon as we know, we'll get that information out. But we do know that the SAT is not going to happen in the spring. I think some people, there's a sigh of relief. What? No state testing? Come on.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah. Mr. Hollingsworth maybe, right?

Carl Hobbs:

Yeah. Mr. Hollingsworth, exactly. Interesting though the AP test is still on, it's going to be unique under this e-learning situation and all the people who will be taking AP tests will be getting more specific information, but it's going to be interesting because it's going to be like college. It's only going to be a 45 minute test, not a three hour test. It's going to be open book, open notes. It's going to be very unique as far as traditional AP tests. If you're going to take an AP test, this is the year to do it.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah. I really appreciate that because that's something that has, like other things in this, a lot of financial implications, getting that AP three, four or five can mean saving thousands of dollars actually. So I'm really glad that college board has found a way to do that. It's the best year. Some of those people that were on the board line taking AP class, they may be kicking themselves right now.

Carl Hobbs:

Exactly. Yeah. And they're being very realistic. They're only testing up to what was prior to the pandemic. So there's nothing new after the pandemic that they're going to have on the test. And that information is being specifically shared with all the students taking the AP test.

Corey Tafoya:

But it looks like seniors next year will have the opportunity for a free fall SAT test, isn't that correct?

Carl Hobbs:

Yeah, that's correct. Absolutely.

Corey Tafoya:

So I know that a lot of families count on that because there's some financial costs to take an SAT. So we can offer that to our family. So that will be good. The state's going to do that but won't look like it is. I know that you guys had an SAT prep class that was ongoing partly too. It's been canceled too.

Carl Hobbs:

Correct. Yeah. And they got most of the way through, but we already communicated out with folks that when we know the date to the new SAT, we're going to start a few weeks before that to go ahead and start doing some reminders and refresher courses and finish the practice test that we started. So that will continue once we know the date, yes.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah. Well another issue, and I was on a call similar to you, I have kind of these network of people that I talk to and I was on a conference call with a group of people and it was funny because we had a really lively debate about this same topic and we had a superintendent in Mississippi and a superintendent in Alaska who were in this, having a really interesting conversation about grading. And they really were talking about the same issue. And I know you and I have talked about this, but one of the things we found out really early in this situation was how do we deal with grading and how do we do with the evaluation of student work and feedback on the quality of that work?

Corey Tafoya:

Because a lot of times we think about grading as just the cause or the reason for gradients to get something in the grade book. Well, an educator might see it quite differently. The reason for that is feedback. So how they're mastering the skills that are most important for our students. And I actually took a few calls from people or emails from people right away when we said, it looks like there won't be an emphasis on grading of new material because we don't really understand what kids opportunity to access the learning really looks like. And so talk about how you've waded through those waters because I think in this situation, high school principals especially trying to figure out valedictorian and all these things, how you've dealt with grading, because I think that's probably the most complex issue that gets people stirred up in this.

Carl Hobbs:

Yeah, that's been a pretty passionate issue. I mean, I think you hit it right on the head. The most important thing for me anyway, and it should be for us is learning and feedback, and I think feedback can be more than just a grade. I mean, feedback, I can give you feedback on your progress in the areas I think you're doing well and areas I think you need to improve without having to put a score in there necessarily. I think there's a couple of pieces of this. The first one is I think there's pre-pandemic and post-pandemic kind of things. I mean, so pre-pandemic, one of the things I think students need to understand is as the state mandated as far as they're asking us to do no harm, meaning that your grade should not be lowered as a result of this situation and rightfully so.

Carl Hobbs:

I mean, we have to be empathetic and compassionate in this time because there's a lot bigger things going on. One of the things though that that does for us, and we've talked about this and we're going to continue to talk about this, especially with our seniors, is that if I was a student who had, let's say, a failing grade prior to the pandemic, I could still work to get that grade up and I could work with my teacher to find out whatever skills I was missing, quizzes I need to retake, whatever I can do to get the feedback needed to go ahead and try to improve that score. And once I improve that score, that score should not go down.

Carl Hobbs:

So that's something I think that's really motivating for our students to realize, once-

Corey Tafoya:

Good opportunity.

Carl Hobbs:

Yeah. Once you get that grade to passing, it shouldn't go down after that. And that's something that I think students really need to embrace and work towards during this time. There's a silver lining, if you can even say that, that's one of the silver linings as far as grading goes. I think the most important thing is, as you said, we don't want to necessarily do new learning because we're not there to support those students necessarily where we normally would be to provide new learning, and we don't know everyone's individual situations, so we have to be cognizant of that.

Carl Hobbs:

So what we're trying to do is really work through the skills and the and the standards that we wanted students to know and go a little bit deeper. In some ways, it's kind of nice because with the regular year we're so busy in trying to cover so many different things, it's actually nice maybe to slow down and go a little bit deeper into some of these skills so that students can understand them and own them a little bit better. So our goal with the staff is to provide feedback to students. And if the feedback in the work can improve their grade, by all means we want to improve their grade. If a student is not, let's say I give them an assignment, they're not understanding it, they're not grasping it, I'm going to give them opportunities to continue to grasp it and give them feedback on the areas where I need them to improve.

Carl Hobbs:

So really now it becomes more of a communication of this is the learning I want you to know and this is how I want you to get the skills and learn the information I'm trying to give you. And so it's more of a feedback in that sense of the learning. In some cases, I know teachers are doing things like a check minus means a check means you did the assignment, which we're really asking all students to please stay engaged. It's very important for a lot of reasons. I think for our sanity, it's also important. I think we need to make sure that we're staying engaged to the learning and getting our brains working, but also connecting with our teachers and our classmates. That's huge.

Carl Hobbs:

But one of the things that we want to make sure students are doing is actually at least engaging in the process. So for an example, some teachers are doing as simple as a check means that you've completed the assignment and it's all good. Thank you, you did what you needed to do. A check minus means you completed the assignment, but there's some things I still need you to work on. These are some things that are essential that you really, really should know and I want you to know. And so I'll give you feedback saying, "You got this right. These are some things I want you to go ahead and improve on." And then maybe a check plus may be that person that went above and beyond.

Carl Hobbs:

Here's what I wanted you to get. The check is proficient, but you know what? You went above and beyond and you applied this to new learning, whatever, however it works. And so I teacher can still give feedback in that sense as well. And some teachers are giving feedback through numbers as well. Again, we're just asking you that the numbers don't negatively affect the student's grade.

Corey Tafoya:

Right. And that is challenging in some ways because one thing that the high school, and you deserve credit for, is you've had a lot of conversations and been to a lot of professional development on grading and assessment. How to make sure that what we're talking about is issuing a grade that you can't evaluate. What's important is not whether you got an 85 or a 90, it's to what degree you understand what we've decided are the essential learnings of this class. So I think luckily, if you think back on this, there's a lot of things that really are fascinating to me about this is some of the things like your work to really have good and deep conversations about grading, how critical they are. And it was the right conversation to have, that this is really highlighted how important that is.

Corey Tafoya:

And sometimes I think as a district, we've just been pretty fortunate to plan things or prioritize things that really let us to be important. Like for example, the hotspots and the one-to-one computing. If we hadn't have designed our rural and low income grant to use that, we would have a lot of kids that are high and dry. And so just funny how things fortuitously have kind of worked out for the district to be that. So it's a good thing that maybe this conversation on gradings have happened. Otherwise, this might've been a harder lift for you and your administrative team.

Carl Hobbs:

Exactly. And I think those are some things we were talking about at our last staff meeting is can you imagine doing this if we weren't a one-to-one school district? So kudos to everybody that brought that here to the district. Yeah. The feeling I'm getting from my staff is they're realizing that this is not ideal for them. It's not ideal for our students. Our staff has a lot of compassion. So our goal is to continue learning and not worry so much about what grade goes in the grade book, but are you getting what I think is important for you to know?

Carl Hobbs:

And one of the examples I gave is a colleague of mine was talking about, if you had all your students sitting in your living room together and your kids were able to say to you, "Mr. Hobbs, between now and the end of the year, what is it do you really think I need to know? What this [inaudible 00:22:36]. Let's work on that." And that's kind of the conversation. So looking at what we have between now and the end of the year, what really matters the most and how can we help these students best learn the material that we think is really important, given all the situations, given the pandemic, given the fact that we're doing everything virtually and also having a little grace and empathy in that whole process.

Corey Tafoya:

And one of the things that we're starting to talk about is for the district, how do we create a three week experience, either a summer school or something that we have to reteach even in the fall to figure out what are those gaps that have been created. And I think it's a little easier to conceptualize for our younger grades. If you're a second grader, there's going to be things in both math and literacy probably that are going to be real gaps that we got to find a way to offer them some free summer school opportunities so the parents can encourage them to get active and things that they would get when we get back to school in August.

Corey Tafoya:

But it's a little harder in high school when you say, okay, wait a minute, I've got chemistry, my friend's got physics and I'm in algebra two. They don't have math, and so you can't just say all 11th graders need

to do this three week thing, it's kind of got to be by class. And so we're kind of fortunate too that we have a good partner in Edmentum who may be helping us design some of these things. So if we can do what you said just a bit ago and we had everyone lined up and said, these are the essential things I want you to learn, hopefully we've got enough online resources so we can provide that to students either this spring or this summer or next fall, so they can not have those gaps because we know that that could be a problem because we're trying to design our curriculum so that it builds upon itself and there will be some gaps if we don't take time to shore those things up, I think.

Carl Hobbs:

Exactly. And I think also we kind of have to prioritize those classes. There are definitely some classes that are much more sequential and so we know if they're going into the next level, that we're asking our teachers now to kind of start thinking about, okay, these are the things that we know we didn't get to cover. Let's make sure we front load that before the next sequential course. In some cases, it's not as important because it's not a sequential learning situation, but those courses that we know are sequential, those are the ones who are going to take priority and figure out how we could actually maybe fill in some of those gaps that we know that they miss, no fault of their own, obviously, but to help prepare them so that they're starting off in the fall a little bit on a better footing.

Corey Tafoya:

Let me ask you a different type of question, Carl, because one of the things that I think a lot of people other than just me, admire about you and your leadership style is you are so genuinely concerned about your staff and your students, making them successful and anyone that's around you knows the mantra; your success is not an accident, that they hear from you. How are you dealing with this? Because you live in an environment where you just want to make sure that all students are finding every way to be successful. And in this, not that you're trying to control the environment of a school, that sounds kind of bad or something, but when you get to see him, there's more control of what's going on and I think... How are you dealing with this idea of remote success and all those stories of kids you know they're working hard with a full class to graduate on time and all that.

Corey Tafoya:

How are you holding up in this? Because your empathy and your passion for your staff and students, I think is one of your greatest strengths.

Carl Hobbs:

Well, thank you. Yeah, actually in all honesty, it's been very difficult because I'm somebody that actually kind of thrives from the relationship of people. I mean, I like the energy of people, the buzz of a building. I like the comradery of staff. I like the humor. I love the fact that the students are comfortable in talking to me as a human being, not just as a principal. And I miss that. I know and I think there's a lot of students that feel the same way, and staff as well. I mean, I think we're just missing the energy and I think everyone's doing the best that they can. But I know some of the videos I do, and I'll continue to do videos. I have one coming out today as well, I know students who have emailed and appreciated that.

Carl Hobbs:

And that's one of those things that's kind of funny because when I do my five reminders every week about success is not an accident, and so forth, a lot of times I just feel that maybe a lot of kids just don't hear them. But it was funny because now I'm hearing kids say, "Well, where's the message. We're

missing the five [crosstalk 00:27:05]." Wait a minute. You guys would always give me a hard time about saying the same things every week and now you want them. So it's just kind of funny. Those little things that you may take for granted, you realize that for some of our kids that are actually connecting. But I do, I'm just missing the environment. I got into this business because of the impact that we can have on students.

Carl Hobbs:

I know the educators in my life had a huge impact on my trajectory. So I just feel like when you're not there and you can't see them every day, I feel like I'm not providing everything that I can. So it's a struggle to be honest, but again, I know everyone's going through a struggle as well. So that's why we always say, be kind. You don't know what people are going through every day.

Corey Tafoya:

Right. And I think you described that very well and a lot of staff would say, "That's what I'm going through is that I wanted to see out the experience of these kids and I had it all designed so that they would be a certain point upon the final day of school." And it's just such a sense of either loss or being dissatisfied with not being able to see that really satisfying end of the year experience, where you know, I was a former Spanish one teacher and one of my favorite thing was at the end of the year, having a rudimentary conversation with my students knowing full well that because of how hard they worked and the opportunities in my class, that we could have that conversation, because they didn't know anything prior to coming in other than [foreign language 00:28:35] and a little bit of [foreign language 00:00:28:36]. That was it.

Corey Tafoya:

And so to have that conversation was so rewarding. And I hope people appreciate that teachers are going through a lot emotionally too because part of our profession sits inside us as our identity a little bit. And I think that's why things like grading gets hard. Like okay, if I'm not grading, what's my role, that's my value? How do I really do that? And I think we're all trying to sort that out a little bit. And have you been hearing from staff and how they're doing too? Or how are you staying in touch with your staff? Maybe that's a better question.

Carl Hobbs:

A variety of Zoom meetings. A lot of Zoom meetings. And some basic information and emails and some videos and things like that as well. A lot of the feedback that I'm getting is interesting because in one sense, a lot of folks are happy because they're home with their kids, their family, and then one of the things that's challenging is that they're home with their kids and their family. Because I think it's important too for students to realize that, when teachers are at home teaching, they're also at home being a parent of their student who's also going through e-learning in a school or another school district.

Carl Hobbs:

The word balancing, I actually just had an email conversation this morning about what's the new definition for the word balance because balancing your life and work, being at home is very challenging. So it depends on the family situation, but I think our staff is really appreciating it, seeing e-learning from their side when they have their own children in the house going through e-learning as well as them as teachers teaching e-learning. So they're seeing both spectrum sides of it. So I think it's eyeopening and I

also think it's given them a little sense of perspective and empathy for students because they know their teachers and they're working with their own kids to help them with e-learning.

Carl Hobbs:

And it's a challenge. And then imagine obviously not being a teacher and working with your students through e-learning. So I think it's given them a good perspective of, go gently into this e-learning because there's a lot of challenges to it. Again, honestly, and I'm not just saying this, I'm blessed with a phenomenal staff at the high school. I mean, we've been pushing all the years I've been here to try to follow best practice and raise the bar and do what's right by kids. And I get very little resistance because when you come from a point of truly caring about what's best for our students, it's hard to argue the why behind it. So our teachers, they really, really care about our kids.

Carl Hobbs:

And as a principal, I mean I can't ask for anything more. Everything else will fall in place if we have the right intention. And our intention is to make sure our students are safe, healthy and can learn. And honestly, that's what we do and that's why we get up everyday and do it.

Corey Tafoya:

That's good. So as we move forward in this, for anyone still with the endurance to still be listening to us, how in the world will we announce when we have made decisions about these big events and graduation? Any thoughts on the best way for someone to stay in tune with decisions that are being made?

Carl Hobbs:

I think I would like to do on some of the bigger events, like the graduation and prom, and those kinds of things. I mean, obviously you use Teachery and emails, but I also think some of those bigger things I wouldn't mind doing some all calls because sometimes I think if we could back it up not only through emails but also to get that voice and text, some people like that medium better than others. But I think if it's some of the big ticket items, I think we need to use all the media that we have available to us. Social media is obviously very good, but not everybody is on social media. So if we can do a multiple approach to it, I think that's important, but [crosstalk 00:32:20]-

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah. I think that's a concern some people have like, did I miss it? What's going on? Because I think some people have this assumption that we're done for the rest of the year and we're really not nor have we made any announcements to that effect. But when you're watching states near us cancel, it's like, "Oh, did I miss the news? What's going on?" And there really isn't news, and some of us just are wishing the governor would make that decision so we could plan. But there may be some limitations to the amount of time he can make these proclamations, is some people's opinion, but it's really just that.

Corey Tafoya:

And so I really appreciate people's patience and just hopefully this podcast helps people understand that it's just really a tough situation for us to not have that definitive understanding of how we are to plan in that. It's not because we don't care, we're not thinking about it. It's just we don't want to mislead

anyone with information that we have to then correct later that's incorrect because we've got better information or they told us. So we're just trying to be patient, so...

Carl Hobbs:

Absolutely. Yes. Yeah.

Corey Tafoya:

Any final message for all your Hornets out there listening?

Carl Hobbs:

I think the most important thing is, we just got to stay connected. I mean, even though we're connected, there's a lot of isolation going on and some of the students that I've been talking to are struggling with that piece of not being able to see their friends. And so I would challenge everybody to connect with somebody. So your classmates, texts, Zoom meeting, even if it's just for fun, if you're working on projects, work together. Do a meeting together so you can see each other's faces. I just think during this time right now, we need to lean on each other more than we ever have. And also the other thing too is realize that our counselors and social workers, they're on standby every day.

Carl Hobbs:

So I mean, if there's something that you need to talk about, make sure you reach out. This is not a time to kind of stay behind the doors and be quiet. This is the time to actually reach out because we're here actually waiting for those kinds of things. So we just realize that it's important that we stay connected as much as possible. Make sure you're talking to your teachers, make sure you're talking to your counselors. Seniors, especially, make sure you're connecting with your counselor. Make sure you're connecting with the teachers that you need to connect with. It's important that you finish this year strong.

Carl Hobbs:

I mean, in 10 years we're going to look back and say, you know what? A pandemic didn't stop me from graduating. I worked through it. I mean, I think we need to realize we got a lot of good things going on. We have a lot of support, we're more powerful together. And so I think that's the most important thing I could let the Hornets know is, hey, it's we. It's not me, it's we. So let's work together.

Corey Tafoya:

Yeah. Fantastic. Well, Carl, thanks for taking some time to join us for this Zoom podcast. We've done a few remote podcasts now and now, this our first Zoom one. So we're really hopefully using this medium to connect with people ourselves and not to be isolated because I think that's the hardest thing, is we understand social distancing from the scientific reason, but the isolation is what we're all trying to avoid as well. That no one's kind of without information or without connection. And I think that's part of what we're all appreciating about teachers and the effect that they have on school. And so thanks for your leadership and thanks for joining us on Education Buzz.

Carl Hobbs:

No, I appreciate. Thanks a lot. Have a good one.

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Corey Tafoya:

Yep. We'll talk later. Thanks everyone for listening.

Carl Hobbs:

Thanks everyone. Take care. Bye bye.