

Jeff Haney:

Welcome to Connect Canyons, a podcast about making connections all across our District, how we reach out and learn from each other in our classrooms and even in our neighborhoods. This is a show about what we teach in Canyons District, how we teach, and why. We'll get up close and personal with some of the people who make our schools great. That's our teachers; our principals; our parents; and in this case, our students.

Jeff Haney:

Being a Student Body President in high school is a rewarding, yet challenging, experience. Those filling the role this year, they have no precedent to follow. Last spring, Student Body elections were held virtually when Canyons schools closed and moved to online learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Will [Rahaniotis 00:00:58] remembers the rollercoaster election at Brighton High School, the move to a completely virtual process in March.

Will Rahaniotis:

It was just a crazy experience because I, since freshman year, I imagined myself running and doing my skit in front of a school, and I had my idea. And then all of a sudden, it was just gone.

Jeff Haney:

So does Parker Pogue, a senior at Corner Canyon High School, where he's currently student body president, leading students in a totally different way than what he imagined.

Parker Pogue:

Look, I don't want to come across as rude, but I have to go around and kind of police like mask wearing and social distancing, so it's definitely been a challenge. I'll say there's that really could've prepared me for this, because not only are you looking out for your student body, but you're also looking out for people that your student body comes in contact with.

Jeff Haney:

Still, he's humbled for the opportunity.

Parker Pogue:

It's been a unique challenge, but a good one, and I'm like really grateful that I've been able to be president during a time like this.

Jeff Haney:

Canyons School District has provided multiple learning options for students, including in-person, parent-led, District-supported, and online instruction.

Jeff Haney:

Max Lepore, Student Body President at Hillcrest High School says he's working hard to make sure students who chose to stay home and learn still feel connected and included at the school.

Max Lepore:

This transcript was exported on Jan 11, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

For our assemblies, we still have performing groups perform, important announcements, all that stuff. We've had an assembly; but what we did is we live-streamed it to kids' homeroom classes, so we didn't have too many people in an area. And we made that livestream available just on YouTube to anyone who wanted to watch it. So we were giving an opportunity to those kids at home to still get a bit of the experience to be able to watch that assembly. And we're still finding ways to include those online students.

Jeff Haney:

The in-person learning option presents unique challenges never before faced by student body presidents. Student government leaders are aligned with the District, encouraging mask wearing and physical distancing.

Max Lepore:

I think the biggest thing is to just kind of lead by example because student government leaders, if we're not wearing our masks or we're not wearing them correctly, covering our nose and our mouth and everything it needs to or we're wearing masks that aren't, you know, deemed effective by the District and the health department, then it's just really setting a bad example to the school if student leaders themselves cannot do the correct things.

Will Rahaniotis:

We are following all of the state guidelines. We are restricting events. We are restricting the number of students at events and no assemblies. We've been pretty active on social media as well. I know our school created a video with lots of students from different clubs and teams putting on their masks and talking about why they're willing to wear their masks. And so, everyone knows what they have to do to stay safe, and everyone's been pretty willing to do it.

Jeff Haney:

For these student leaders, the goal is to keep schools open so they can have some semblance of a normal senior year, and so students don't lose the opportunity to connect in person if they choose.

Will Rahaniotis:

Eventually, hopefully by the spring ... being so dedicated right now to safety will pay off, and we can maybe be a little more lenient and do some more fun things come the springtime.

Kirsten Stewart:

Join us again for the next episode of Connect Canyons, a podcast sponsored by Utah's Canyons School District. If you have any comments for us, questions, or ideas for topics you'd like us to explore, email us at communications@canyonsdistrict.org. You can also follow us on Twitter [@canyonsdistrict](#).

Kirsten Stewart:

Today's show was reported and edited by Jeff Haney, with assistance from Stephanie Christensen. If you liked this episode, please be sure to share it with a friend. I'm Kirsten Stewart, and this is Canyons School District.