

**Jaylen Clifton - 10th Grade**

*Springfield Township High School; Erdenheim, PA*

As I get up in the morning, it's exactly six-fifteen. I take a shower and get dressed, brush my teeth and eat breakfast if I have time on my way out. I leave the house. It's a little chilly as the wind zips by me. I stay there for about five minutes, and then the bright yellow bus with flashing lights comes. My bus has a big forty-one on it with about twenty kids on board, ready to go to school and learn. It takes the bus about fifteen minutes to get to school. As I get off the bus, everything feels so new. There are so many more people getting off the buses than last year.

As I looked around, everyone appeared tired. I walked into the school through the cafeteria and grabbed some breakfast. It was a Cinnabon. You could smell its aroma through the air sending a strong sweet smell through your nose. It sure smelled delicious, and it tasted even better. Next thing you know, the bell rang, and it was time for homeroom. The hallways immediately flooded with people. I wasn't very used to this. There were only about forty people at the high school last year. I got to homeroom in a hurry because I didn't want to be late on the first day. Homeroom was boring and silent, as expected. You could hear crickets as the teacher calls out roll calls. Like usual, everyone says their name and their hobbies—nothing really special. Soon then, the bell begins to ring, and then again, the hallways are flooded.

I struggled to get through the crowd to get to my English class, and I got a little lost at first, but I soon found it. This world felt so different. Last year wasn't a very great experience, and I probably wouldn't do it over again because it was very hard. The teachers gave me a lot of work. I was stressed out and exhausted; I barely got to see my friends. Transferring from virtual to school was a lot. I passed my classes except for one, and that one wasn't my strong suit; it was science, and let me tell you, I am terrible at science. If school had given us the opportunity this year with flex, I would've done way better in my classes and wouldn't have had to worry about failing anything.

Flex is a system where you have an hour of lunch where you can go to a teacher's classroom for forty-five minutes, and you can talk to your teacher about your work and get your work done. I think it's a very effective system they implemented in the school. It's given every student the benefit of the doubt when completing their work and bringing up their grades. It's very helpful, and I'd be sad if they took it out next school year. It has helped me bring up my grades and stay on top of my assignments. Overall the last school year wasn't that good for me, but teachers and students helped make it better by helping me with assignments, staying focused, and staying on task. I hope to support others someday, just as my friends and teachers were there for me.