

TOGETHER

AT LAST

HEADING TO CLASS.

Within the five-minute passing period, Austin Watkins walks out of AP U.S. History class Sept. 21. "Going to school was exciting, but there was also a slight uneasiness to it as well with all the precautions and the fact that COVID was going around. I was most excited about seeing my friends," Watkins said. In the new hybrid model, school ended at 1:40 to provide teachers time to develop materials for asynchronous learning. Students alternated between days on campus and learning at home in the A/B split.



(sorta)

"Instead of going to Disneyland with my best friend, COVID-19 shut it down!"
LACEY MILLER



BACK AT IT. In the library, Diana Sahakyan works on her AP stats homework Sept. 21. "The first day was odd. I couldn't see my teachers. I couldn't get as much help, and there was less time for instructions. Considering all of the coursework and everything we had to do, having less instruction made learning and soaking in material a lot more difficult. I know the teachers changed it to make it easier on students, but having hybrid made it much harder than it would have been if I could have seen my teachers every day," Sahakyan said.



CATCHING UP. During second lunch, Katie Quaranta and Grace Graham discuss their Group B classes and feelings on the new schedule. "I was excited to be able to see more people again, but at the same time it was weird since half of my friends were in Group A, and the rest of my friends were split up by the separate lunches. Overall I felt pretty strange, especially since we were all wearing masks, and it was hard to recognize people," Quaranta said.



ALL OVER AGAIN. To start first period Graphics II class, Ms. Whitney Lum lines up her students before allowing them to enter J-8. "Coming back to campus was both exciting and overwhelming. The class vibe was different because students couldn't sit next to each other, which was pretty weird. It was hard not being able to interact with my friends as much as previous years. Even with the precautions, I was still happy to be at school, because it made my senior year feel more normal," Nathan Morquardt said.

First day back brings changes as hybrid model begins Sept. 21

For the first time in 192 days, students stepped onto campus Sept. 21 to find maroon balloons and bows tied to trees and gates, starting a new hybrid schedule with the student body split in half alphabetically.

With Group B up first, 922 students donned face masks and sat six feet apart in rooms that had been transformed to remove extra desks and chairs. The A/B split wasn't the only divide; third period classes also were separated to create multiple lunch groups, allowing for smaller crowds while students removed their masks to eat.

"It felt really different. In every class we had to wipe down desks and stay apart. It was shocking," Devon Thompson said. Instead of the usual first-day noise as friends reunited and attended a welcome rally in the gym, students quietly made their way to class to meet teachers they had seen each day for six weeks on Zoom.

To add to the almost-eerie feel, a recorded message in an unfamiliar monotone played after each period, reminding students to follow precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"It felt like we were in some type of

dystopia, like we were in a movie and just following orders," Trey Marsh said.

Although it sounded odd, Mr. Jason Feuerbach said he created the recording for the safety of students and staff.

"I felt it was important to have a daily reminder about the top five rules to follow on campus. I listened to several examples and recorded the one at Low's Home Improvement. From there I altered the script to match the school atmosphere," Feuerbach said.

The new precautions made engaging in conversation harder for Gaby Pruett.

"Coming to school for the first time was nerve-racking because I just moved here from San Jose. It wasn't easy to talk to people and make new friends," Pruett said.

Despite the changes, students expressed relief being back.

Brandon Whitney said, "It felt great to be on campus and see everyone I hadn't hung out with over the summer. I didn't like having to wear masks all day because it got very hot, but it was worth it to be back in the classroom. I feel as if I learned nothing at home, so it was good to be back and actually learn in person."

actually

← **140** rode the bus
187 got lunch from the cafeteria

SOURCE: SLUJ
Transcription Services
Ms. Maggie Smith