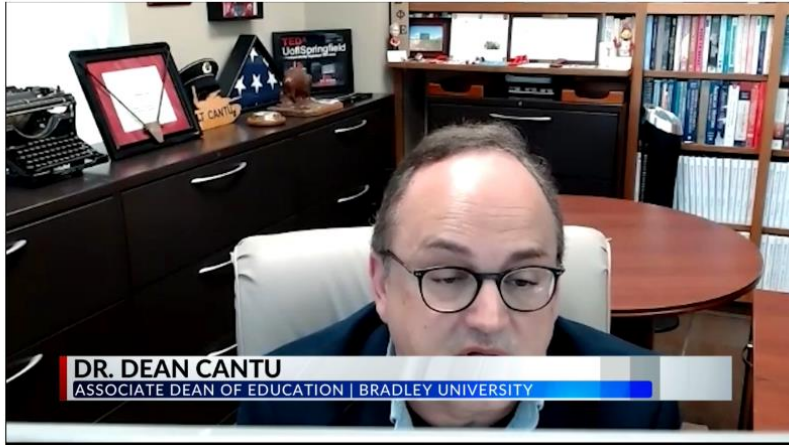


## LOCAL NEWS

## Academic leaders weigh in on COVID-19's impact on education



**DR. DEAN CANTU**  
ASSOCIATE DEAN OF EDUCATION | BRADLEY UNIVERSITY

by: Demetrios Sanders

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PEORIA, Ill. (WMBD) – As the school year nears its close, lessons learned during the pandemic could be applied in the future.

With the full first school year facing COVID-19 winds down, Dr. Sharon Kherat with Peoria Public Schools says she's proud of her staff, students, and community.

"We were able to show our values, our values as a district of resilience, and equity-minded, and hope," said Dr. Sharon Kherat, Superintendent of Peoria Public Schools.

Looking forward to next fall, Kherat says she would like to build on the district's virtual schooling.

"There are a number of families who like to continue that option, so I'd definitely like us to perfect that," she said.

Dr. Dean Cantu, Associate Dean of Education at Bradley University, says utilizing different teaching methods may just be the future.

"It's not a substitute for face-to-face. It's something that can compliment it and it's something that can enhance the teaching and learning environment," Cantu said.

Taking what they've learned the last year, he says he expects more teachers will integrate technology in the classroom in a hybrid manner.

"Whether it's Zoom breakout rooms or using digital response systems like Cahoot," Cantu said.

He also explains some of those pursuing a career as an educator are now better equipped.

"That whole situation where you had different modalities and platforms, our students here at Bradley were out there in those classrooms," Cantu said.

Peoria's Regional Superintendent of Education, Beth Crider, says she believes a lasting effect of the pandemic will be an emphasis on educating the whole child.

"We can't just go back on day one of school and say 'It's time for algebra'. We need to have a moment and then we can move forward with education in a new way," Crider said.

Cantu also says he believes things like snow days may become a thing of the past as teachers are able to use remote options.