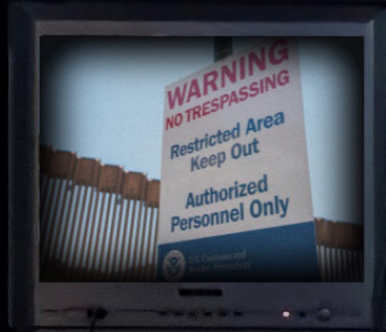


# PANTHER PRINTS

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OCT. 15, 2021

ISSUE 1



***America's Changing  
Immigration Policies,  
Foreign Relations  
pg. 10***

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## Mission Statement

At Panther Prints, our mission is to serve as a connection between the Plano East student body and surrounding communities. Through inspiration and high-quality content, Panther Prints offers diverse coverage, passionate writing, relatable stories and a unique point of view. Our credible sources allow an in-depth experience that appeals to both the public and the individual. Our publication offers an informative and distinctive outlook on current interests.

## Digital Media Policy

We at the Panther Prints commit to responsibly utilize all of our media platforms to unite and inform the student body. We strive to create original content and attribute credit to all sources. We require our staff to uphold these values and to accurately report the news to the student body and community.

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Abby Nguyen with photos from Unsplash

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### To submit letters to the editors of the Panther Prints:

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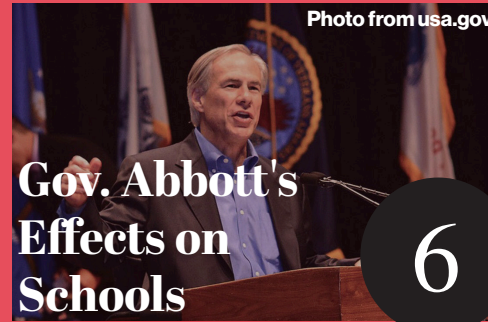


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### Editor-in-Chief

With a learning curve so severe it was nearly a circle, the first issue's creation was undoubtedly a challenge, especially without the print experience last year to fully prepare me for the intensity of my role and responsibilities. After seeing this end-product though, came an incredible sense of pride from myself, my fellow editors, and staff. I would like to thank creative director Abby Nguyen and copy editor Samantha Heath for their support, contributions and dependability. Thank you to our readers for your support as well, I hope you enjoy our newspaper.

Claire Tweedie

### Creative Director

As students come back to in-person school after a year of virtual learning due to the coronavirus, new stories and unique experiences are awaiting to be told. We hope to connect the student body with one another by telling no one else's stories but your own. Spending hours designing the newspaper has been a struggle, but seeing the product of the staff's hard work has made every second worth it. Despite every single one of us, which I assume includes you too, struggling with the start of a new school year, I hope you enjoy our gift to you.

Abby Nguyen

# Puzzled Panthers

By Samantha Heath

## What's the difference between a counselor and the sub school?

The counselors help students enroll, select classes, remain on track for graduation, and make plans for the future, while also being there for any students who have a problem or just need a listening ear.

Your sub-school keeps record of your attendance. If a student is leaving school, they need to check-out in the sub-school office. The assistant principal's office is also located in the sub-schools.

## Why do you get lunch detention if you're tardy?

You get lunch detention after your first offense of being tardy, which is ultimately up to the teacher's discretion.

"Without a defined campus policy to compel senior high students to arrive to class on time, instructional time can be compromised," principal George King said. "As I always preach to our teacher: be consistent, but flexible. I believe teachers are always willing to bestow grace on students with legitimate reasons for being tardy or for students who are rarely late to class."

## What is Paloween?

Paloween is an activity hosted by PALS Oct. 26. All organizations can participate if they sign up, and the event provides kids from elementary and middle school a fun celebration for Halloween. These activities will usually feature games and candy for the children, with the club members volunteering in the past to create decorations like paper pumpkins, bats, skeletons and other Halloween-themed ornaments.

# State Fair Makes Texas-Sized Comeback

By Claire Tweedie

The State Fair of Texas has reopened from Sept. 24 through Oct. 17 after closing for the 2020 season due to COVID-19. Opening weekend only emphasized Texans' readiness to revisit missed opportunities as thousands of visitors returned to Fair Park ready to celebrate with Texas pride.

"I'm looking forward to going on the ferris wheel this year," senior Risa Khawaja said. "I didn't get to go last time and I've never been on it." While students are excited to re-enter the fairgrounds, many are still concerned about the coronavirus's lingering effect on their experience, especially with the high concentration of people in one space.

"I do feel that we need to implement mandatory mask mandates or push down on COVID-19 regulations because I know the numbers are still high," senior Tristan Villazorda said. "We need to take accountability and be responsible for that."

Texas organizations are doing their part to keep everyone safe, such as the Dallas County Health and Human Services by providing free COVID-19 vaccines at Big Tex Circle and offering \$20 in food and ride coupons as an incentive for those who receive it there. The fair itself released statements encouraging guests to use face coverings, practice social distancing and to be vaccinated prior to entry.

"There is [still] a little underlying nervousness, but my friends and I are doubled-vaxxed and we are going to be wearing masks," Villazorda said. "I'm pretty sure we are well-versed for whatever comes our way."

While last year shifted to a drive-thru food parade, this year brings back the familiarity of traditional rides, food vendors and events.

"Obviously we couldn't do the

regular state fair in 2020, but I think [the drive-thru was] a great way to still have that livelihood that happens every year," Villazorda said.

Villazorda last went to the fair in 2017 with his parents. While he enjoys the classic fair feel of fried food and rides, his favorite part is the sentimental value behind the photo booths, and during his last visit, he recreated photos with his dad that they had taken when he was younger. As for Khawaja, she went for the first time in 2019 right before the pandemic hit. The playful competitiveness during games and shared fears on the rides helped her bond with the group she attended with while the fun she had and the energy felt in the crowd made her feel connected to her state.

"I've never felt like I was a true Texan since I moved here from Ohio and New York, so knowing that this is something we can only get here, with all of the Texas pride and southern charm, it really makes me feel like I belong," Khawaja said.

This is the last weekend to visit the state fair which closes Oct. 17. With discounted student tickets only valid on Friday, many rush for their last chance to visit the Texas tradition.

"It's a true bonding experience; it connects people," Khawaja said. "When I see everyone around me having fun, feeling the thrill from riding rides, and seeing all the crazy LED lights, it really makes you feel alive."





# Abortion Debates Heat Up

By Kayla Vu

The “Texas Heartbeat Bill,” signed by Gov. Greg Abbott, went into effect Sept. 1, criminalizing any procedure of abortion from being performed by a provider after six weeks once cardiac activity of the embryo can be detected with no exceptions for cases of rape or incest. With the enactment of the law, the U.S. Justice Department attempts to block it as medical professionals rise up to comment on the scientific realities of the bill. As of Oct. 6, U.S. District Judge Robert Pitman in Austin issued a temporary block against the bill in response to the Justice Department’s emergency request.

The bill executes punishment for violation of the law by granting private citizens the right to sue anyone who provides the opportunity of an abortion to a patient even without relation to the patient or provider. This includes medical professionals, abortion providers or any individual who aides a woman, such as a driver to the clinic, but not the patient themselves. With each successful lawsuit under the law, private individuals will be awarded at least \$10,000. Even with the law not specifically regarding patients, concern still rises to the extent it affects women.

“It will affect [patients] on wanting to go to an office or a clinic to get [an abortion] done safely versus taking a different route to have an abortion,” junior Arwa Quadri said. “This law will not necessarily decrease the number of abortions. It may instead have people take unprecedented routes to get it because they’re desperate.”

Although some understand the situation a woman may experience, it still doesn’t stop the empathy felt for the

to figure out what to do. The law in that sense, may cause some distress. When you can’t see a child, it doesn’t really matter to you, but when the child comes out into the world, it becomes a baby. It makes you realize that this was life.”

Attorney General Merrick B. Garland begins initiative against the bill, claiming that the law is invalid under *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, which prohibits any state to prevent a woman from having an abortion prior to fetal viability. The legal court case, adjudged by Garland and the U.S. Justice Department, resulted in a 5-4 decision in the Supreme Court, declining the request to block the law. The bill’s enforcement through private individuals via civil law instead of government officials allows it to bypass laws that prohibit the banning of abortion.

“In a country with common law, that can be pretty dangerous because anything is then justifiable to prohibit under civil law,” senior Jackson Keith said. “There’s a lot of things people have rights to and rely on for their liberty that could then be infringed on. There wouldn’t be criminal action against them because it’s all civil.”

While medical professionals argue on the scientific implications of the bill, registered nurse Cathy Nguyen explains that a heartbeat could still be present, but knowledge of pregnancy may not always be clear to a woman.

“[Embryo heartbeat] could be [detected] as early as five weeks, but usually, the average is about six to seven weeks,” Nguyen said. “You need to get an ultrasound to get the heartbeat, but most women don’t even know they’re pregnant unless they really planned it and counted the weeks and days. Some signs [of pregnancy] are usually [their] menstruation, they don’t have the cycle or skip the cycle, breast tenderness, appetite changes, [or] they might get nauseated.”



developing life within a womb as well.

“[Abortion] would affect any woman who [would] become a mother,” junior Essie De Velasco said. “If it’s unplanned, they may not feel qualified to be a mother. It would be a difficult time

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# Abbott's Effects on School Districts

Governor bans vaccine mandates, mask mandates, critical race theory

By Samantha Heath

## Vaccine Mandate

Gov. Greg Abbott announced an executive order banning government COVID-19 vaccine mandates Aug. 25, suspending Section 81.082(f)(1) of the Texas Health and Safety Code and stating that no governmental entity can compel any individual to receive a COVID-19 vaccine unless they choose to.

"I don't necessarily agree or disagree with [the banning] because [the vaccine] shouldn't be mandatory, but it should be pushed heavily," senior Robert Serna said. "I think with certain individuals in the government, they're pushing the choice of free-will too much, and it's almost disregarding the vaccine."

When it comes to the discussion on a federal level, vaccine mandates were discussed at the third special session of the Texas Legislature, which started Sept. 20. Ten bills were filed during the session concerning the mandate, with only one of them

specifically pertaining to school districts. House Bill 86, which was filed by Rep. Tony Tinderholt, states that public or private schools that require students to be vaccinated are subject to a civil penalty of up to \$5,000. Schools in violation will also lose their eligibility to receive grant money from the state government or enter into a contract payable with state funds.

"I believe people would want the vaccine not to be mandatory because they believe the vaccine mandate is unconstitutional to them," senior Christopher Delgado said. "They also [believe] that the vaccine isn't fully safe and still contains risks."

## Mask Mandate

Abbott prohibited governmental entities from requiring or mandating mask-wearing May 18, and if they attempted to impose a mask mandate that

was inconsistent or conflicting with his Executive Order, they would be subject to a fine of up to \$1,000. On June 4, students, teachers, parents, visitors and other staff members were not required to wear a mask while on campus.

"If COVID-19 is manageable enough where enough people have gotten the vaccine, or just use the safety protocols in general, then I don't really see a huge need for the mask mandate," senior Emily Means said. "But if there are still too many people who have

"People don't like being told what to do such as wear[ing] a mask," junior Mohamed Birafane said. "They have [the] freedom of decisions and the option to do what they want."

## Critical Race Theory

Abbott signed into law a bill Sept. 17 that would ban critical race theory from Texas classrooms. Critical race theory is the teaching of race and how racism has affected the United States throughout history, however, Abbott and the Legislation want to ban it from being taught altogether.

"You can't teach that one race is better than the other," Rep. Steve Toth said. "You can't teach that one gender is better than the other. You can't discriminate either... and say that one race or one gender is responsible for the ills of the past."

The bill compels educators to not discuss a particular current event or widely debated topic that could be controversial

in a public policy or social affair way unless they taught both sides. It aims to strengthen past laws such as House Bill 3979, which prevented students from receiving credit for civic activities that include political activism or lobbying elected officials on a particular issue. It also prohibits schools from requiring educators to take any training that presents any form of race or gender stereotyping or blame on the basis of race or gender. This new law is set to be put into effect Dec. 2.

"I think teaching about race is important just because, in a way, it brings people closer together," senior Corinee Resendiz said. "We learn about each other's hardships, and you learn about limits on each other's culture and race."



*1 in 5 students believe the legislation that bans the school district from mandating vaccines & masks has a neutral effect*

\*out of 331 students polled

not gotten the vaccine, it's best that we keep it just for the safety of everyone."

Due to the conflicting nature of the mask mandate, about 21 school districts and 29 total entities have defied Abbott's executive order, with some voting in August to join an existing multidistrict lawsuit. Disability Rights Texas (DRTx) contributed as well, filing a federal lawsuit over the ban Aug. 17, which alleged that the prohibition puts students with disabilities and underlying medical conditions at risk. Other school districts have followed the ban, letting their students walk around without a mask as per their free-will. The district applied for a mask mandate Aug. 26, originally only allowing exemptions for medical, religious or philosophical reasons, but it did not pass the district's board of trustees meeting, and it expired on Sept. 24.





Students finish painting the mural in the IB fishbowl.

Photo by Ron Nag

# Students Create Mural to Represent IB World

By Aziz Syed

Throughout the first nine weeks of this school year, students from all around the campus have helped paint a mural in the IB office. Junior Dhillan Nag began planning this project in March, but the outlining and painting began in August. Though the planning of the mural was complete, Nag was nervous to actually break ground and begin painting. However, once the outlining and the beginning stages of painting began, he was thrilled to see his vision come to life. Nag created the mural as an Eagle Scout project- a service project that demonstrates leadership and benefits the community- to finish his journey with The Boys

Scouts of America. He wanted to make something that he could be creative with and that could play to his strengths.

"I like doing art in my free time like drawing and painting," Nag said. "I thought 'What if I could mix the two together and do service for the community, but at the same time, do something I'm passionate about like art.'"

The IB world has been a large part of Nag's life for the past three

years, so he decided to speak to the IB world coordinator Karen Stanton. It was then that Stanton and Nag discussed ideas for the project.

"I had really been hoping for a mural for some time, and so I told him that would be something

*"What if I could mix the two together and do service for the community, but at the same time, do something I'm passionate about like art?"*

- junior Dhillan Nag

I would be interested in," Stanton said. "Early on I helped with the design and gave feedback on his ideas."

Originally the idea for the mural was flags from all around the world, but Stanton and Nag later changed this to birds because they felt that the flags wouldn't correctly represent the entire student body. She believed flags were only able to symbolize the different nationalities of the students, rather

than express the students' identities beyond that. The mural was changed to birds of different colors and species flying out of a book of knowledge and into the world, representing IB students taking the knowledge they have learned at school and applying it to society.

"We were certain that we would leave someone out," Stanton said. "Instead,

I wanted something more inspirational and also a little more abstract, more open to interpretation."

Stanton's main contribution to the mural was making sure that there were enough teachers willing to volunteer as supervisors for the students on weekends. Students from different clubs and organizations came to help paint the mural and were able to obtain National Honor Society and IB CAS service credit for their volunteering.

"It's been a school-wide effort," Nag said. "All of the volunteers who came to contribute on their Saturdays did an outstanding job, and I am so glad to be here at Plano East with such talented peers."

# School Celebrates 40 Years

By Jackie Theiur

Founded in 1981, this year marks the 40 year anniversary of the school. Over time, the school has developed in layout with the addition of buildings and wings, changing the campus structure. The general significance of the 40th year anniversary is to celebrate the school's community and campus as a whole. Things were brought back this school year to give students an idea of what the school was like in the past. Although the campus has changed in structure, the east side pride and spirit within the walls truly hasn't.

The school was originally built with only three buildings along with a gym and fine arts building. Building four was built in 1983. The addition of building five and the wing on the west side of the building also came later. French teacher Pauline Sinnamon has taught at the school since it opened, starting with only 600 students total. Bonds were inevitably created between the small staff.

"It was very different," Sinnamon said. "We had a small staff and we often had our lunch together in the cafeteria because we really enjoyed being together and being close, so we kind of built close relationships. It was a lot of fun."

The original composition of the campus was not built to hold the different programs and academies that are in place today. Principal George King believes that all of the programs that have been brought to the school explain the cause for expansion.

"There were also renovations within building four, for instance, we had to renovate the downstairs to accommodate the Health Sciences Academy. We had to add classroom space onto the back end of building four, hence that peculiar hallway. That used to be an outdoor porch, it got enclosed and turned into an additional hallway," King

said. "We had to convert the upstairs building one area into an IB Academy area. Those are the additions that have occurred, all to accommodate growth."

An increase in student population over time resulted in the diversity present within the school. Foreign exchange students and programs such as IB World School brought in even more students from different backgrounds. However, certain parts

*"All these sorts of things just kind of make it our community."*

*- AP government and U.S. history teacher  
Dean Malabanan*

of high school culture, such as basic school traditions, never change. Former student and current AP government and AP U.S. history teacher Dean Malabanan believes that some things have remained the same over time.

"You go to the football game and it's really cool to see some of the stuff that we used to have when I was here, as a student, to see it come back," Malabanan said. "In many ways that high school culture hasn't changed, it obviously changed because of the pandemic which kind of stunk, but I would argue that it's still the same in many ways."

The school did alter its culture in the academic aspect. King finds it crucial to prioritize education to guide students' aimed career-path in hopes of providing them with opportunities.

"I think the biggest culture shift has been that the staff is focused on getting kids ready for life after high school," King said. "It's all about trying to prepare them for college or

some other career path. Our staff is focused on: Can we get you an industry based certification? Can we get you in the military? Can we get you to college? Can we get you into a trade program? And so that's the evolution."

A tradition brought back this year was the homecoming parade Sept. 29 that stretched from Bob Woodruff Park to campus, finishing off with an evening pep rally around the pond. The

revival of old school events brings back memories for Malabanan, who got to witness the homecoming parade as a student and got the opportunity to experience it again this year.

"It's really cool to see some of the stuff that we used to have when I was here as a student and to see it come back, so my favorite would be the parade," Malabanan said. "It was really cool to see all the groups and

schools represented. It certainly brought back a lot of memories of the last time I participated in the homecoming parade, but this time I was a spectator so it was really nice to see everyone come out and enjoy it. All these sorts of things just kind of make it our community, and the other schools don't have that."

This year's anniversary is a celebration for not just the school, but for the entire community. It's a moment of bonding, reflection and honoring the school's legacy and existence.

"We realized we have an important role to play in this community, so we want to honor that and celebrate bringing families together," King said. "I think that when you get a chance to reflect back on the school's history, it causes you to think about what the school was like in the past. Let's try to get inside that history and understand what it was like to have been part of the east side system in the past so it helps us reflect on the past."



## Panther Profile

# Sophomore Exemplifies Expression

By Kayla Vu

The laptop light flickers, illuminating against pages of pencil scratches and scribbles. As the faint sounds of writing fade, sophomore Natalie Tan brushes her fingers against the edges of her agenda, peeking at the organized lists and schedules within. With one quick look, she lifts up the pencil once more.

While Tan perseveres through the school year, the sophomore develops strong bonds with her fellow classmates and puts in the effort to mature her own individual identity. With each passing day, she finds opportunities to find a means of that self-expression. For the most part, that chance is the ability to communicate with her peers. “I’m a very artistic and social person,” Tan said. “I enjoy working and talking to a lot of my friends during school. Especially during the pandemic, I was in a kind of bad place mentally because I didn’t have a lot of people I could talk to on a regular basis, so I would say just being able to talk to other people and just be in an environment where I can hang out with one of my friends is something that defines me.”

Tan’s social nature broadens as she spends her time participating in multiple local organizations. With certain groups that catch her eye, she partakes in different activities that interest her such as Girl Scouts and National Honor Society. Tan’s motivation to be a part of these groups stems from her determination to actively engage with her community and be a form of support for others.

“I think it’s really important to increase awareness about things,” Tan said. “Just doing volunteer work at different organizations nearby is something beneficial to the community and can also affect other places around the world.”

Even though she enjoys actively interacting with others, Tan appreciates her alone time as well. Throughout the pandemic, she had the leisure time to

work on practicing instruments like the cello and guitar, but the one passion she has rekindled is her enjoyment of art. With a fascination growing since the third grade, Tan enrolled herself into an art class this year to expand her set of skills from a simple pencil to different mediums. Although unsure of how she wants to develop her relationship with her interests, she recognizes how these pastimes have affected her.

“They’ve connected me to other people that have the same interests and I think that it’s really important to build long-lasting relationships with those people,” Tan said. “I think it’s also just a great way for me to develop my skills and interests further. It also shows



groups like Talks on Innovation, Leadership and Entrepreneurship and We Think Feminist Club in order to connect and support her peers. Her dedication to lead and represent her community displays a form of adversity and positivity to those around her like friend and fellow sophomore Arin Meeks.

“She’s really hard working and she really values social connections,” Meeks said. “She always pushes herself to be involved in things inside and outside of school. She’s very organized which is really surprising because she has a lot of commitments, but she still manages to be super organized.”

Despite the accomplishments Tan has achieved, she admits that it wasn’t always an easy road to get to this point. Prior to her current days, the sophomore struggled with public speaking and found it difficult to talk in front of large audiences, but after practicing in speech classes, Tan mustered up the courage to perform in front of a crowd of a hundred people. This achievement opened up new opportunities for her to build her confidence and fueled her current passions in life.

“I want people to be accepting of others and learn to love each other rather than judging,” Tan said. “Part of the reason why I was so scared of speaking in the future was because I thought people were going to judge me. If people learned to just be nicer to people and accept others for who they are, that would be something good to learn. Being a role model for having love for others and self-love for yourself is important.”



Photo by Kayla Vu

**Sophomore Natalie Tan works on a drawing for a class project.**

me what I like doing and what interests me in the world and can help me in the future with certain career paths.”

Aside from developing her own way of self-expression, Tan hopes to be a voice and character of positivity within her community for others as well. Within the current and upcoming years of her high school career, she aspires to hold representative positions in certain

# America's Changing Immigration Policies, Foreign Relations

By Abby Nguyen and Claire Tweedie

As the political crisis in Haiti intensifies amid power struggles following the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in July, Haitian immigrants residing in South America quickly immigrate to the United States in an effort to find better job opportunities and living conditions. While the conflict was once nearly 2000 miles away, as Haitian migrants cross the Rio Grande from South America into Texas, the issue only adds to the growing criticism the American government faces regarding immigration and foreign affairs.

## Lingering Consequences of Immigration Policies

America's issues with immigration have been a continual smudge on foreign relations and changes to previous policies following 9/11 were one of the first catalysts to this public disapproval. In 2002, Congress replaced the Immigration and Naturalization Service with the Department of Homeland Security while the executive branch issued policy and regulation changes. While the American government aimed to further regulate migrant admissions into the country to avoid another terrorist attack, many of the new policies received criticism for targeting Arab, Muslim and South Asian migrants.

"It's obviously very scary to be a brown person in America," Model UN co-president senior Neel Kanamangala said. "When uninformed masses

tend to group people of the same skin color together, whatever happens to people from the Middle East can impact the way people perceive me."

These consequences of immigration policies implemented nearly 20 years ago have continued to impact the American public's sentiment toward migrants and their perspective on recent events. The political parties, with the power to make these decisions, continue to receive backlash regarding the consequences of the immigration changes after 9/11.

"[The war in Afghanistan] began under a Republican president, George W. Bush, but now you have a Democratic president who oversaw the end of that engagement," AP government teacher and former Air Force member Harrison South said. "I think, although it was originally a war waged under a Republican government, it will overall be remembered as a Democratic failure."

## Haitian Migrants at Texas Border

Thousands of Haitian immigrants arrived at the border hoping to enter the United States in September, but were denied entry under Title 42, a public health measure aimed to expel migrants during certain public health emergencies. In May 2021, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported 112,302 expulsions under Title 42, 62% of all migrant expulsions during that month. International Rescue Committee immigration director Olga

Byrne pointed out that they chose to expel Haitian immigrants without testing them for COVID-19 even though coronavirus testing is widely available.

"There has been pretty widespread criticism for recent news from the border as well as Biden's policies," South said. "Both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, have been concerned with what they're seeing at the border."

Biden pledged to implement effective border screening, modernize the immigration system, and reassert America's commitment to asylum-seekers and refugees. Yet, according to immigration authorities, the reported surges in migrant encounters at the United States-Mexico border are at a 21-year high and are estimated to continue rising.

"It's a pretty big step in the wrong direction," junior Nathan Gong said. "Originally, a big part of his platform was critiquing Donald Trump, saying his policies were bad for immigrants, but he's making the situation a lot worse and the recent images of Haitian immigrants are not a good look for his policies."

As the Biden administration continues to reinforce border restrictions, Republicans have criticized the administration's failure to secure the border while Democrats have criticized the use of Title 42 and border patrol tactics. As Haitian immigrants face challenges that inhibit their ability to come to the U.S., other countries face issues regarding America's immigration policies as well.

"[The handling of Haitian immigration] definitely draws a lot





of parallels to anti-immigrant and anti-black sentiment in the United States,” Kanamangala said. “It is a very clear wakeup call to the fact that our views on immigration are outdated.”

### America's Handling of War in Afghanistan

Afghanistan has seen a shift in their political agenda since the Taliban first seized power in 1996 and vowed to restore peace and prosperity under Islamic law. While they originally garnered popularity by eliminating corruption and improving commerce, they also upheld a strict interpretation of the Islamic law which personified itself into public executions and various human rights restrictions. Since their regain of power in May, American troops have evacuated tens of thousands of Afghans to the United States, one of the largest evacuations in U.S. history.

“[President Biden] has a responsibility to aid refugees coming from Afghanistan and provide asylum for them,” UNICEF officer senior Rawaan Alhaddad said. “At the end of the day, America is a big reason why Afghanistan is the way it is [due to] their previous involvement in the country.”

According to the Pew Research Center, 42% of Americans believe the Biden administration did a poor job handling the war. Biden defended his decision to withdraw American troops, but many politicians believe the issue lies in how the evacuation was handled and not necessarily the decision to leave. “I think there are a lot of faults [with Biden] pulling out in such a dramatic and immediate fashion without alerting regional groups,” Kana-

mangala said. “We have a duty to remain loyal to our allies in the region.”

Thousands of Afghan citizens rushed to the Kabul airport following the widespread panic after the Taliban's takeover, as it was the only area in the country still under U.S. control, all hoping to find passage out of the country. While some were successful, others were restricted from Taliban checkpoints that prohibited them from reaching the airport and from explosions near the Kabul airport in August.

“It seems that we don't really have a strong focus on what we want to do in the Middle East or anywhere else,” Gong said. “We seemed to have a very aggressive foreign policy stance [last presidency], and now Biden is kind of reversing [that] entirely. He's becoming a lot more passive rather than interventionist.”

### Biden's Campaign Promises

President Biden has gradually taken action to shift the country's political agenda away from the Trump administration's previous implementations, but his recent actions regarding foreign relations and immigration policies caused his approval ratings to drop to 43%, the lowest during his presidency.

“I don't think he's helping at all [with immigration issues],” Alhaddad said. “Previous presidents have only created more immigration problems; immigration officers will abuse their power from a local level because nothing is being done at the national level.”

President Biden's increase of the refugee admissions cap, which was at a historic low under the Trump administration at 15,000 for the previous fiscal year, to 62,500 and his nominations of

political allies for leadership roles within the Department of Homeland Security, are steps toward his campaign promises. However, with the backlash the Biden administration received regarding promises contrasted with actions, some students believe focusing on these issues is only making problems worse, both overseas and on the homefront.

“I think the perfect position is one in which we have enough international authority to serve as a deterrent for any sort of crises or escalation, but I think we get to that by making sure we as a country are sound,” Kanamangala said. “There are a lot of specific economic

*6.4% of students believe America's foreign policy is beneficial*

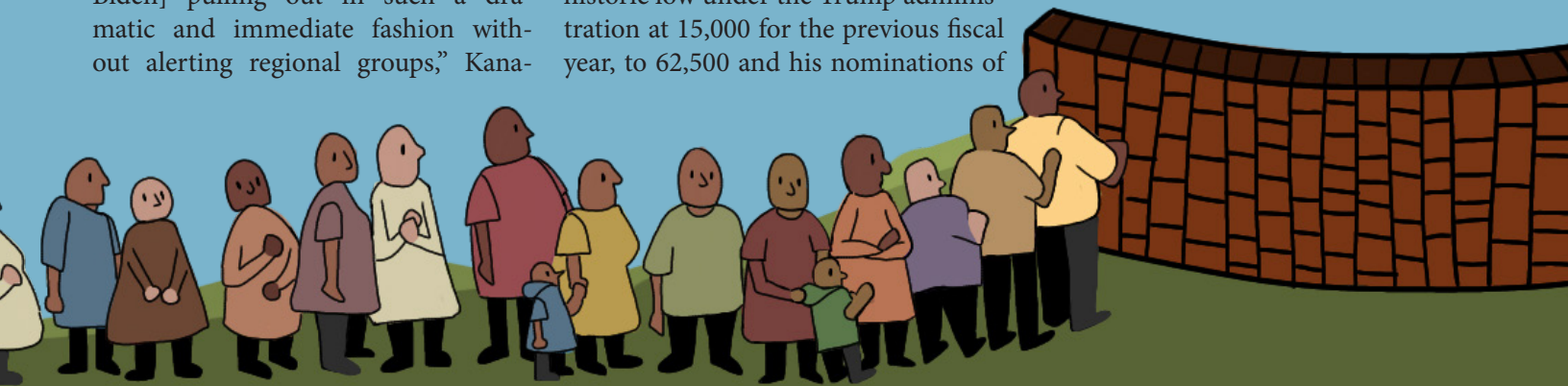
*27.7% of students believe America's foreign policy is harmful*

*15.5% of students believe America's foreign policy is neutral*

*37.5% of students do not know enough about America's foreign policy*

*12.8% of students have no comment*

\*out of 331 students polled





**Color Guard practices as a full team Sept. 11.**

**Photo by Thomas Almholt**

# Inclusivity in Color Guard

By Sydnie Grayson

As the sun shined down on the band pad, the members of the color guard set up their flags and rifles for practice while uniformed in athletic shorts and sunglasses, ready to fend off the rays of the sun. Through these practices, they show many different perspectives through their inclusivity.

The purpose of color guard, according to color guard director Wesley Tyree, is to give students a place to broaden their experiences in a team environment and build friendships.

"I think the family values are more extreme, they're really tight knit this year compared to previous years," Tyree said.

For every four females on this year's team, there is one male; all together, there are four males and 16 females, meaning that the group is usually seen as more female-oriented.

"[This] number has been going up since I started," Tyree said. "It's really refreshing to see more males

interested in doing color guard."

The color guard attracts all points of view from both sides for different reasons depending on where the team members' interests lie.

"For me, I really like the dancing part," senior Neharika Vajinapalli said. "I also like the performance part of it. It's very impressive when you can finally get a toss [and it] clicks together."

For senior Kiran Kicinski, his factors of interests differed in a more philosophical way rather than physical.

"It's unlike most sports," Kicinski said. "It's not a competitive sport in the aspect that there aren't really winners or losers. You still get to compete against other schools and other teams, but genuinely, every team is understanding and supportive."

The main way of hearing about color guard was through clinics held at feeder middle schools, where any and everyone had the option to par-

ticipate. Both junior Matthew Tran and junior Hannah Mendoza became interested in color guard through their friends and other meetings.

"It started in middle school," Mendoza said. "They held little clinics during lunch and posted flyers around [encouraging] people to join. There were summer clinics [that] you could sign up for and band camp during the few weeks before school started."

Across the board, the conclusion is that color guard is very inclusive to each and every person who has a desire to join.

"I feel like color guard is actually a little more accepting of difference[s] than any other sections in the entire school," senior Rylie Jones said. "We have people of all types here. There is really no odd one out in guard; you fit in no matter what."



# With Tension Comes Motivation

By Abigail Cardenas

School spirit at sporting events is fueled by competitive rivalries between schools. The games with the most attention are generally football games against Plano West, and whenever the hockey team plays Plano Senior, the tension often heightens. These conflicts have grown for the past 40 years and not only do they impact team dynamics and motivation but the entire environment during school as well.

Brandon Nemit, a senior attackman on the lacrosse team, has been on the team for four years and has seen the effect of continual sports rivalries.

"I would say our biggest rivals are definitely Lovejoy, Plano Senior and Plano West," Nemit said. "There are so many kids that go from Lovejoy to East, so there is always some animosity between the two."

These rivalries are created by distance and a constant pull to be the most successful team in the area, but they are fueled by more than just the players.

"The coaches don't give their time to watch a team lose and the same goes for the students," Nemit said. "Students come to see their teams win."



There is pressure between everybody involved when it comes to any sporting event and challenging teams with long-lasting opposition only strengthens this energy. With last year's football team loss to West, aggression and ambition for upcoming years is stronger than ever. Traditionally, all Eastside schools prepare anxiously for the annual match off against West, generally causing the highest attendance and participation.

"I remember going to the games in sixth grade and even as a middle schooler I was most excited whenever we played West," senior Brooke Letourneau said.

Evidently, long-lasting rivalries create a more exciting atmosphere within the school, which strengthens intra-school connections and builds up school pride.

"If I could suggest one game for students to go to, it would definitely be the West game," Letourneau said. "The energy is unmatched, and it really introduces you to the spirit of Eastside pride."

# One to Watch: Buzz Flabiano

By Rishi Mallela

In the athletic department, a player who has continued to make an impact is Wilton "Buzz" Flabiano. He is well known within the football team, however, his impact on the team's successes is lesser known among the student body. Kicking for the football team for the past two years, he has garnered himself as a natural starter in every game. Game in and game out, he assists the offensive and defensive line, punting and kicking field goals, and respectively fueling the energy at both ends of the drives.

"Say for example, against Wylie, to get us the ball, his ability to kick 50 to -55-yard field goals has been incredible," head football coach Joey McCullough said. "The most important thing has been his ability to open offenses deep to flip the field, and really be an important member of our defense with his ability to punt."

His technical skill paired with his work ethic makes him a great addition to the team, and his progression over his two years on the team shows that. Watching him this season will allow people to see the true character of a player who pushes his teammates to trust his ability in his position by action rather than words. He truly walks the walk and his performances exemplify that.

"Buzz is probably one of the best kickers I've ever been around," McCullough said.

Just look for #36 next time there's a varsity football game, and you'll witness it firsthand.

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# Players Setting Conflicts Aside to Succeed

By Aziz Syed

Compromises and sacrifices are often a large component of school sports. As a new season of sports begins, players and coaches must overcome a new set of challenges and difficulties for the sake of the team. Every player on a sports team may not always be satisfied with the coaching decisions, which can lead to conflicts. Oftentimes players have to come to a compromise to accommodate changes for the success of the team.

Linebacker and junior Daniel Cabrera initially wanted to play middle linebacker, but was moved to book linebacker by the coaches early in the season. Although Cabrera looked forward to playing middle linebacker, he understood that the coaches were going to do what was best for the team and believed they changed his position because he wasn't performing to his highest potential. He understood that someone else could play the position he wanted better than he could at the time, so he decided to discuss a new position with the coaches. After their discussion, he was moved to his new position. He believes the football team knows that sacrifices have to be made for the betterment of the team this season.

"I think the coaches chose linebacker for me because it's a bit of a simpler position, and I think he knows that I'm pretty aggressive, so I think this position suits me," Cabrera said. "Honestly, I think there are no arguments and no pointing fingers during practice."

Assistant head coach of football Tom Rapp believes that the players

are able to work out conflicts with each other, and that they don't let them get in the way of their performances. However, if the coaches need to get involved to resolve a conflict between players, they will. The football program has a contract that the players and their parents sign. By using this contract, the coaches can take care of any problems as both players have agreed to resolve problems according to the contract.



**Linebacker and junior Daniel Cabrera prepares for a new day of football practice.**

"We have to do what's best for the team, that's the number one thing, and they know that from the get-go," Rapp said. "If there's a conflict between an athlete who thinks they should be playing more, there's a step-by-step process that we go through where the athlete meets with a particular coach and they get the conflict resolved."

Junior varsity tennis coach Robert Gifford feels that players should always express any problems they have and come to a resolution. He's

a firm believer that it's always important for players to convey their grievances and resolve them. The coaches will only get involved in conflicts between players if the players can't communicate and work it out themselves. If they do get involved, they'll typically talk to both players together to solve the problem and work together. He believes conflict resolution is an important aspect of being part of a team because it allows students to deal with any disagreements or discords while also learning about how to solve problems with their peers.

"If someone is not happy with our decisions, then the big question for them is 'Are you a part of the team?'" Gifford said. "The reality is we don't always get along, we always have our differences, and a team helps them by giving them a common goal and common purpose."

Tennis player Parthiv Varanasi feels that conflict only arises within tennis because of the competitive nature of the team. Challenge matches are held to decide which players play in what positions, but the coaches will make the final decisions. Varanasi believes that even though some players may be unsatisfied with the position the coaches put them in, they learn to accept it and enjoy their role while understanding that the coaches' decisions are what's best for the team.

"We believe that the racket does the talking," Varanasi said. "Statistics don't really matter, it's just about the performance, the character and attitude on the court."



# Sports Rebound from COVID-19

By Rishi Mallela

As sports teams start preparing for their competitive seasons, one thing that remains an overlying consideration and concern is COVID-19. Throughout last year, COVID-19 remained a big factor in sports culture across the district, but this year it is less regulated while teams continue to maintain adherence to guidelines to avoid losing players during the season. The varsity volleyball team faces these challenges head-on, and the original compliance of the coronavirus policy has diminished. Being indoors at the peak of COVID-19 cases during the previous school year, masks were implemented in volleyball practices, social distancing was practiced during warm-ups, and equipment were sanitized.

"During practices [this year], our team tends to stay pretty close to each other when we practice, but at the same time it's inevitable with us playing together so much," varsity starter sophomore Mahima Jetty said.

As cases decrease, the regimen of COVID-19 protocol has definitely eased in respect to the intense preparation of team/practice equipment that was placed during the height of the pandemic.

"You know, after practice, it was twofold, not only having to do all the laundry, but also opening every locker and spraying helmets and shoulder pads, and all those things," head football coach Joey McCullough said.

In football, masks and social distancing had been followed in the locker room, even as other

COVID-19 guidelines of wearing masks and implementing restrictions haven't been, but students continue to try their best to keep each other safe from the pandemic.

"We haven't been too strict on wearing masks, but we want to keep each other safe to prevent any issues of transmission and infection," varsity senior Dominic Pavone said.

*"It's so good to be back to normalcy this year, with bands and drill teams and cheerleaders, and all the things that make Friday nights special."*

- head football coach  
Joey McCullough

Hockey loosely follows mask guidelines, but still makes attempts to follow COVID protocols when possible though masks are worn at the discretion of players upon their optimal playing style.

"With the mask mandate lifted, masks are not required to wear when entering [the rink], but we are still told to wear masks when entering the rink," varsity senior Andrew Parker said. "We don't wear masks while playing to be able to breathe, but we maintain pretty good respect to our team COVID-19 guidelines."

Even as coronavirus wanes down-given current data trends from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention- coaches and players for football and other sports have still

made strides to ensure the team performs at its best, even from its height last year. Last year, a game was forfeited as a player on the opposing team contracted COVID-19. Fortunately, this season, virus contractions have not been a prevalent issue, but last year's offseason COVID-19 fallout is a reminder of what general precautions must be made to keep safe from the virus. This has been the case for all sports teams. Players do indeed follow precautions, but a common consensus among the teams is that even if they are not rigorously followed, teams should try their best to make sure their health is not a hindrance to the teams' performances. So as this consensus has been reached, teams are feeling the relief of eased restrictions into this year, especially the coaches and players.

"It was a different style [with no bands, student section, and maintenance], so it's so good to be back to normalcy this year, with bands and drill teams and cheerleaders, and all the things that make Friday nights special," McCullough said.



Wide receiver coach Joshua Harris talks with the varsity football team during a scrimmage against Lake Highlands.

# New Abortion Restriction in Texas

## Ban threatens reproductive rights

Staff Editorial

As one of the most restrictive abortion bans in the country, Texas' new law banning abortions after about six weeks of pregnancy raises concerns regarding people's bodily autonomies. Despite the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision nearly four decades ago that established a constitutional right to get an abortion, the Texas law prohibits abortions once cardiac activity is detected in the embryo. However, the abortion restriction is completely unconstitutional and threatens the safety and rights of those who already experience societal injustices.

The ban allows people to wait until six weeks to get an abortion and Gov. Greg Abbott believes that is enough time to get the procedure. However, according to a survey done by reproductive health journal *Contraception*, 28% of women found out they were pregnant later than six weeks, meaning that a good amount of people do not even know they are pregnant by the time the new ban places a restriction on abortion at six weeks. Due to the fact that many people are unaware of their pregnancy before six weeks, an unexpected pregnancy can cause a major financial burden on new parents. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it costs approximately \$284,570 for a middle-income and married couple to raise a child to the age of 17. The money, time, energy and dedication it takes to raise a child are things that some people do not want or are unprepared to do, and the abortion ban takes away people's ability to decide whether or not they want to have a child.

Even in extreme cases of rape, sexual assault or incest, the ban does not make any exceptions. According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), one in every six American women have been the victim of an attempted or completed rape. Out of those

women, 31% of all rape victims develop PTSD and 30% of victims experience a major depressive episode, according to the National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center. Therefore, the abortion ban fails to address the mental health issues of those who have experienced sexual assault. Trauma can cause a person to develop emotional



numbness, which leads to a complete shut down of one's feelings, thus causing a delay in their ability to get an abortion before six weeks. Forcing victims of rape or incest to give birth to a child only serves as a reminder of the traumatic experience they faced.

The 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision gave people the right to access abortion legally, which expanded the reproductive rights of people across the nation. However, the abortion ban infringes on people's free will and bodily autonomy by dictating the time frame for people to get an abortion and by allowing citizens to sue those who

help in the abortion process after six weeks. By denying people their right to make medical decisions that affect their own bodies, the ban endangers their safety because without safe legal abortion access, people may either perform the abortion themselves or illegally get the procedure done somewhere unsafe. In 1972, a year before abortion was legalized, around 130,000 people died from performing illegal abortions, according to the Centers for Disease Control. By restricting access to reproductive healthcare and safe medical procedures, people will still find a way to accomplish the same task but without the proper medical professionals, a sterilized environment or the necessary skills.

While the abortion law allows citizens to sue anyone who performs or helps with the abortion procedure, patients themselves cannot be sued. Some believe that the patient should not worry since they are not the ones being sued. However, the abortion law still negatively affects society as a whole. If medical professionals are sued for aiding the abortion, then hospitals can be stalled due to the lack of medical staff, causing those who have other serious health conditions to not be treated as quickly. Therefore, without professional help or hospital space, people may die from something completely treatable.

The decision to give birth or not should lie in the hands of the people affected, not government officials who only serve their own interests. After decades of fighting for reproductive rights, the restrictive abortion law will not only take away people's rights to decide what to do with their own bodies, but it will also take away their right to the future they want.

\* The Panther Prints staff voted unanimously against the Texas abortion law



# Student Body Back in Classrooms

By Sydnie Grayson

School has reopened to a fully in-person learning experience, and although COVID-19 cases and fatality rates are currently decreasing after the delta variant peak, they still fluctuate. Because of this, students, teachers and parents are worried about the mental health and grades of students, while different states' governments and the federal government still debate whether or not students should be back on campus due to safety concerns. While being back at campus is worrisome, schools can stay open and protect students and staff without issues if done in an effective way.

Students show better results in an in-person environment, otherwise known as kinesthetic learning. KVUE News states that 22% of students in Central Texas were failing at least one class halfway through the school year of 2019. When it came to being in an online learning environment, students tended to get lower grades, with 29% of students last year failing at least one class. This is close to 10% more of a failing rate than in-person learners. Kinesthetic learning, according to The Learning Styles and the Preferred Teaching, is the preferred learning style among students because it is more interactive and dependable. Being on campus also provides a safe space for all students, with more people learning social and emotional skills in an active environment with other students, which can lead to having a positive effect on their grades and mental health.

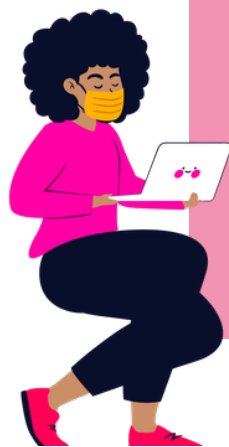
Safety protocols during in-person learning should be followed, such as wearing masks correctly. The district imposed a mask mandate from Aug. 23 to Sept. 24, offering an exemption with

7% of students taking the opportunity to exempt themselves. With 1,814 students and staff having had COVID-19 at one point in time, according to the PISD database, people should still be wearing their masks on campus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), vaccines are effective to a certain extent, and some people opt out of getting it for religious or philosophical reasons, so they recommend wearing a mask indoors

labels, hand sanitizer and hand soap. During the pandemic, this is not a wise choice considering the suggestions that have been made to wash hands before and after almost every activity, including eating. Because of these recent vandalisms, schools have been recently shutting down restrooms. It seems risky to temporarily shut down the restrooms if the washing of hands is crucial to the prevention of COVID-19 and new variants.

The CDC states that social distancing is an effective way of slowing down transmission. While it may be effective, it is hard to ensure that social distancing is being practiced in a school of more than 3,000 students. Average class sizes range approximately from 15-30 students in an average sized classroom with at least as many desks as there are students. In this case, most desks are in groups so that students can collaborate, and even with groupings, it is hard to stay at least a six-foot distance from each other. Leading into lunch, students have the option to eat anywhere they would like including places such as the cafeteria, the IB commons and outdoors. Eating outdoors is an effective way of keeping students safe, but there are not as many places outside as there are inside.

In order to ensure good health to all students and staff, schools should stay open because of the mental and physical benefits, with the enforcement of precautionary safety measures. School is an environment for students to see old friends and make new ones. And if these precautionary measures are not enforced, school would no longer be a safe environment that students rely on. Moreover, if the fatality rates increase even more, the government might be forced to shut down schools once again, bringing back the lack of awareness of mental health concerns and the lack of engagement in classes.



*69.3% of students support mask mandates and believe they are effective*

*11.3% of students support mask mandates but do not believe they are effective*

*7.1% of students do not support mask mandates*

*12.3% of students had no comment*

\*out of 331 students polled

and in public in areas of high transmission due to the risk of being infected with the new delta variant.

COVID-19 is transmittable through many other things such as desks and other shared objects, although this is not the main way the virus spreads. While this virus's transmission rate has gone up since the appearance of the delta variant, if cleaning habits are maintained, this transmission can be slowed. Apart from the mask mandate, the CDC also suggests that handwashing be promoted to prevent the spread of the virus. Because of the new TikTok trend "devious licks," students have started to steal bathroom

# Top Brew Near You

By Abigail Cardenas



## 1418 Coffeehouse

1418 Coffeehouse is the perfect spot for studying, reading, or just enjoying a quality cup of brewed coffee. While serving the best espresso in town, 1418 additionally sells an array of delicious baked goods, breakfast tacos, lunch sandwiches and fresh pies imported daily from Emporium Pies. Located in a cozy corner of downtown Plano, this shop makes for a convenient after-school studying venue or even a delicious quick lunch stop.

**Recommendation** - Rosemary Brown Sugar Cappuccino, *seasonal*

**Distance from school** - 10 minute drive



## Armor Coffee

With an array of seating options and a convenient drive-through, Armor Coffee is the ideal shop for a quick pick-me-up or a casual meet-up. Their menu features an array of unique, quality drinks, in addition to a delicious selection of all-day breakfast foods. Located in Allen near the Allen Premium Outlets, this shop can provide the perfect fix for a weekend day-out.

**Recommendation** - Cookie Butter Latte

**Distance from school** - 20 minute drive



## Rosalind Coffee

Rosalind Coffee is a small coffee shop located in the heart of downtown Garland. While this shop is located a little further from school, the smooth espresso and creamy froth are well worth the distance. Many of the signature drinks are on the more expensive side, however, the prices are well reflective of the quality of the products. The environment is dim and extremely cozy and the quiet music makes for the perfect studying atmosphere.

**Recommendation** - Shaken Espresso

**Distance from school** - 25 minute drive



## Mudleaf Coffee

Mudleaf Coffee is a spacious coffee shop located in Independence Square, off of West Parker Rd. The environment is bright and easy-going and the baristas are extremely friendly and attentive. Pricing is affordable and each espresso drink is handcrafted to the perfect rich taste. They possess an array of seating options, including a private rentable room that can be booked for club meetings and study groups, making it the perfect location for small academic gatherings.

**Recommendation** - Lavendar Honey Latte

**Distance from school** - 16 minute drive





# Oscar Picks, Popcorn Flicks

By Claire Tweedie



Icon from Canva

## "Dune"

### Possible Oscar prediction: Best Visual Effects

Based on the 1964 science fiction novel by Frank Herbert, "Dune" is finally being released Oct. 22 both in theatres and on HBO after being delayed multiple times due to the pandemic. Aided by a star-studded cast and highly anticipated reception, the out-of-this-world settings and large scale fight scenes could ultimately land the film an award for best special effects. With its sci-fi origins, trailers have shown both battles and beasts alike that could create an awe-inspiring experience on the big screen.

## "Lamb"

### Possible Oscar Prediction: International Feature Film

With the North American theatrical release Oct. 8 and official premiere at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival, this supernatural folklore explores the discovery of a lamb-human hybrid on a couple's rural property as they raise it as their own and consequently defy nature. Solely in Icelandic, the film was produced with help across Iceland, Sweden and Poland. With a captivating plot and oddity characteristic of A24 films, the chances of garnering a well-deserved international feature film Oscar might urge viewers to explore other foreign films.

## "Army of Thieves"

### Popcorn Flick

The prequel to Zack Snyder's zombie heist movie "Army of the Dead," which was released May 2021 on Netflix, this upcoming thriller expands on the universe Sydnor created with a romantic-comedy twist. Directed by and starring Matthias Schweighöfer, reprising his role as Ludwig Dieter, the movie will release for streaming Oct. 29 right in time for Halloween. With generally positive reviews for the original source material, the prequels and eventual spin-off series are sure to be fun entertainment regardless of critic's reception.

## "Venom: Let There Be Carnage"

### Popcorn Flick

After mixed opinions on the 2018 version of "Venom," which ultimately found success in Eddy Brock and Venom's unlikely friendship, the sequel seems to have leaned in a similar direction. The superhero movie's main faults lie in its chaotic plot and occasionally lackluster script that give it little substance behind the violent action sequences. While there's little chance it will receive high praise, critics have coined it as entertaining and humorous as the two main characters' unconventional companionship falters alongside their struggle for balance and control.



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