

PANTHER PRINTS

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ISSUE 2



***Rising Debates, Rising Concerns:
School Shootings' Influence
on Campus Safety
pg. 12***

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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.

Cover photo taken by Abby Nguyen
 Cover model: Wanya Ashraf, 12

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Editor-in-Chief

Following another nine weeks of experience now under our belts, the second print issue showed continual progress and ambition within both myself and the staff. We learned from the trials and tribulations of our first issue and came back stronger than ever, with new plans and motivations that have carried us through. I had the privilege of writing centerspread this issue on a topic I believe has become increasingly more pressing in recent years. While there were moments it was difficult to handle such a sensitive issue, I'm so proud of my co-writer Kayla Vu's contributions and dedication to this article's process. With a longer print issue, and more content for our readers, I once again hope you enjoy reading. Good luck to everyone on their exams next week and I hope everyone has an enjoyable winter break, we've earned it.

Claire Tweedie

Creative Director

After a rough start to the school year, many of us have adjusted to a new environment of in-person school, proving that we can take on anything that comes our way. With that idea in mind, the newspaper staff has faced numerous obstacles that challenged the success of the newspaper for this issue, but I am proud of the staff for continuing to push through and take on more responsibility. This issue focuses on a variety of controversial topics, which I believe are important for the student body to read about since those issues are becoming more prevalent than ever. With exams coming up, which is the first time many of us are taking a semester exam since before the pandemic, the newspaper staff hopes this print issue adds a little joy in your day.

Abby Nguyen

Letters to the Editors

Dear Editor,

After reading the first issue of Panther Prints, I've got to say, I liked most of the issue. The illustrations were charming, the articles were well written and well edited. I felt more informed about current issues occurring in recent times. I liked reading about the new abortion restriction in Texas since it was written well and further talked on about the injustice of the restriction, which I too am against. It laid out the reasons and the possibilities of what would happen if pregnant women who decide to not want the baby might go to unsafe ways to get rid of the baby. One photo caught my eye was the color guard practice one, it was a good photo to use. I personally liked the front cover as it contrasted with the rest of the pages which were all colorful, it was a nice touch. Overall, pretty good, like 9.5/10. One thing to do would be to take more active looking photos if that makes sense. For example the one of the coach talking to his students and of the sophomore seemed kind of bland to look at, although I understand as it is school and it is hard to take interesting photos as we have the same problem. Using different angles or an outside of the box approach would be better in my personal opinion. I liked the line "with a learning curve so severe it was nearly a circle," following that, the print was well rounded. Good work.

- Paul Pham, 12

Dear Editor,

Love how there are many stories in one page on the cover, really brings out what's going on. The stories and especially the photos are real eye catchers to the readers, it makes you want to read more. And the history that is going around us which some of us could be unaware about is very interesting. The facts are very interesting to read and seeing percentages about people's opinions really gets you thinking. Every picture fits the story perfectly, if there were to be no photo I would visualize probably something similar to what I'm reading. I'm not much of a reader but this was very cool to read and get to know what's going on here at school and around the world.

- Marina Henricks, 11

Puzzled Panthers

By Abigail Cardenas

“If we are graduating, is there a way to keep all of our documents from our PISD email?”

Whenever a student graduates, their PISD email files are automatically deleted. Before graduation, students can download files necessary to them and relocate them to a personal email drive, otherwise, these documents cannot be archived.

“Are we still allowed to join sports, and if so, which ones? Which clubs can we still join?”

Spring sports such as baseball and softball are still available to try out for, and tryouts are expected to take place after winter break. Although many athletic programs have finished their seasons, tryouts for next year's teams often begin in the spring for any underclassmen who may be interested. Additionally, clubs are open to new members throughout the year, including Key Club, Foreign Film Club and the We Think Feminist Club, to name a few.

“How do I get to class on time?”

Although it may seem difficult to be on time with all of the hallway clutter and distantly spaced buildings, there is always a path that can be taken to make it to class in the allotted seven-minute passing period. One way to avoid the traffic in the hallways is to take an outdoor pathway to easily pass from building to building, or if both classes are upstairs, it may be beneficial to utilize the breezeways. In addition to finding the quickest physical route, it is important to avoid stopping in the hallways to congregate with people headed in opposite directions.

Supply Chain Disruption Affects District

By Aziz Syed

A global supply chain disruption has left a noticeable effect on schools throughout the district. Due to the lasting effects of COVID-19, as well as high unemployment rates across the United States, the demand for products is not being met, making it difficult for corporations and businesses to function at the rate they typically do. The district has experienced shortages in materials and goods that they haven't experienced in years prior, the most noticeable effect being on school lunches.

Every week, the lunch staff receives a shipment of products that they use to create meals for the school lunches, but due to the shortages of products, the lunch staff isn't aware of what they'll receive each week. This makes it exceedingly difficult for lunch manager Mariam Youssef to plan out the meals ahead of time. Every week Youssef observes what products they have in stock as well as what items have been delivered and arranges lunch items based on that.

“The most challenging thing for us right now is the lack of paper products like trays, boats, silverware and cups,” Youssef said. “I'm not sure what we're going to receive and I have to work with what we get. It's a challenge every week.”

Many students are unaware of the disruption and its effects on the lunches. This is in large part due to the efforts made by the lunch staff. The material in which items are served change frequently, however, the types of food remain consistent throughout the school year. Junior Kirtan Mistry believes that the few students that are aware of the changes are unaware of what's causing them.

“At the end of the day, I'd say the

change in material was just a minor inconvenience,” Mistry said. “It didn't affect the quality of the food itself.”

The Food and Nutritional Services (FANS) department has dealt with this issue since the beginning of the school year, trying to find substitutions for products that aren't available to schools. The main focus of the FANS department has been finding similar products to the ones they've had in the past, products that they feel would be acceptable to provide to the students without compromising quality. The department continues to partner with the vendors that they've worked with in the past. Marketing Specialist Meredith Bolin believes that the most important thing the department can do is continue to have a good rapport with the vendors to be informed of any problems with paper or food supplies. Bolin is of the opinion that this problem will continue to be an evolving situation and all the department can do is plan with the best of their ability and ensure the quality of the products is not being sacrificed.

“The vendors are doing a great job keeping us as updated as possible,” Bolin said. “Maintaining consistent communication with the campus administrators, our staff, our vendors and our community regarding the supply chain disruptions so that we're all on the same page is of the utmost importance.”



Students Contributing to Unemployment, Job Availability

By Sydnie Grayson

As the unemployment rate decreases, job availability increases with a demand for more employees. The unemployment rate averages at 5.4%, despite Texas adding 56,600 jobs since October 2021. While the demand for workers is much higher, these jobs don't seem to be filled.

According to the Texas Workforce Commission, the state added over 700,000 jobs since September 2020. Employers are increasing their wages to better appeal to prospective employees, which leads to inflation in the economy, according to Consumer News and Business Channel (CNBC).

"I've never seen the amount of pay going up so fast and it's because of a lack of employees and [the employers] are paying more and more just to find employees to fill the slots," career preparation teacher Tommy Guynes said. "I've seen how companies will offer referral bonuses or a \$500 signing bonus after 90 days."

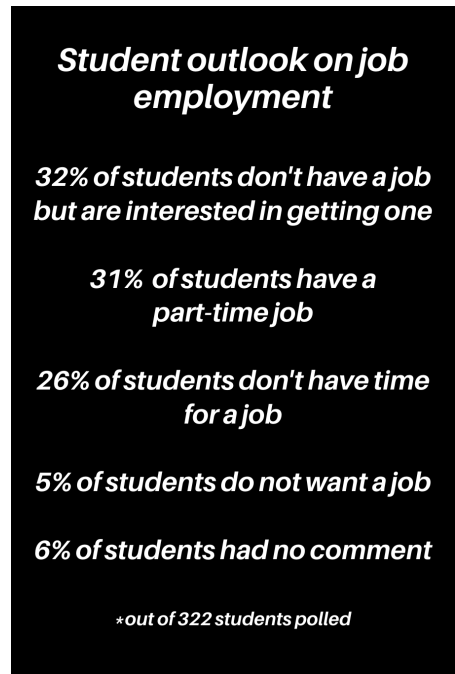
The district increased select wages, such as the pay for bus drivers from \$16 to \$21 an hour to drive students to and from their respective schools. According to Star Local Media, the district board decided to authorize a two percent pay increase for all employees.

"There [have been] so many jobs available during this last year and a half [affecting] the economy," Guynes said. "It's hard to find people that will stay nine months to a year because all of a sudden, you hear that at the next job over, they're upping their pay to find more workers as well."

Texas was one of the first states to reopen after the pandemic, lifting certain restrictions such as the mask mandate and encouraging the economy's return to full capacity. During the pandemic, restaurants such as

Jeng Chi, a Taiwanese and Chinese restaurant in Richardson, contributed to an increase in prices and wages, which led to their employees staying.

"For us, we're pretty fortunate [that] we've maintained a steady workforce," co-owner of Jeng Chi Janelle Teng said. "Priorities have changed. Employees are more interested in free time and more time with family; they are interested in working less hours which leads to having more employees."



When the pandemic started and companies began to let people go from their jobs due to the fact that both the supply and demand decreased, those workers could apply for an unemployment check, distributed by the government, to help them financially after the change in income. To encourage unemployed members of the labor force to apply for jobs and have work, these benefits have been repealed, accounting for the fact that job availability is increasing.

"I had students that were making

\$2,000 a month because they applied for unemployment which was double what they were making at their job and they lost an incentive to want to work," Guynes said. "All of that began to fade away as the government checks began to drop off so it upset the work habits of people in general."

During the pandemic, students and adults decided to start their own businesses, sell their own products, and make their own profits. In this time, they became accustomed to their own schedule and doing something they're specifically interested in.

"I'm trying to start my own business by selling spray paint art that I make," senior Heather Arnett said. "I like art and spray paint art is really fun for me, especially not having to work under someone else."

According to CNBC, this age of increased job availability is driven by desires for better pay and greater flexibility. Jobs need more employers that work, on average, six hours a day, but for sophomore Estella Pittman, these hours aren't flexible enough.

"It's mainly time," Pittman said. "I'm in the IB program here and I don't have a lot of time to work, especially because I have a lot of homework to do. I don't get home until around six and I don't go to bed until around midnight on a good night during the weekdays."

Even though the job availability is more than the amount of people unemployed, people are having trouble getting hired for these certain jobs that are most impacted by the labor shortage.

"I'm not sure how [the government] could ease this shortage," Guynes said. "Eventually, things will begin to stabilize. Something like this will begin to run its course naturally. It's just survival of the fittest."

Texas Bill Restricts Transgender Student Athletes

By Abby Nguyen

After numerous attempts at passing a bill to ban transgender student athletes from participating on sports teams that correlate with their gender identity, the Texas House of Representatives passed House Bill 25 in October, which will go into effect Jan. 18. The bill will require K-12 students who participate in sports competitions to play on teams that correspond with the sex listed on their birth certificate. As the first statewide anti-transgender bill, it sparked debates over the topic of transgender student participation in sports.

Transgender junior Niciki Phuenphiphop believes the bill will create discomfort not only with transgender student athletes themselves but within the entire sports team as well.

“The bill is basically trying to give trans people a reminder of who they were born as and not who they are now,” Phuenphiphop said.

The author of the bill, Rep. Valoree Swanson, said that the bill is beneficial for the sports environment by ensuring fair competition.

“Men are biologically structured differently and have certain strength advantages in sports,” alumni Caleb Cardenas said. “This would be a problem if a biological man were to try to play on a woman’s sports team.”

Head swim coach Adam Bull believes that transgender students already have a difficult time in society, so the bill only fosters an unsupportive atmosphere for them.

“I think everyone, whether they are transgender or cisgender, should have the opportunity to play sports,” Bull said.

According to the Pew Research Center, 92% of American LGBTQ

adults believe society has increasingly become more accepting of those who are part of the LGBTQ community. Although society has become more tolerant, Phuenphiphop believes that the bill is similar to the idea of taking one step forward but two steps back.

“With trans individuals, we’ve progressed so far in society because there’s a lot that has been done and we have a lot more rights,” Phuenphiphop said. “But [the bill] is telling trans individuals that we’re not accepted and that we don’t belong.”

Student outlook on Texas bill that requires trans students to play on the team that aligns with their biological sex

51% of students do not support it

15% of students do support it

13% of students somewhat support it

21% of students had no comment

***out of 322 students polled**

Swanson argues that the bill protects not only the physical safety of cisgender sports athletes but also their mental health as well since it will create a fair playing field.

“I do think the bill is in place to prevent trans people from having a competitive advantage over cisgender individuals, [which would affect cisgender athletes’] opportunities to succeed in their desired sport,” Cardenas said.

Others believe that while the bill is aimed at keeping one group’s best interests in mind, it ignores the best interests of transgender individuals.

“[The bill] is definitely going to

discourage transgender students from pursuing sports,” Bull said. “There will be an atmosphere of exclusion [by] telling people they don’t belong in certain sports.”

According to Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, allowing transgender students to compete in sports will rob cisgender people of the benefits of athletics, such as a college scholarship.

“I think colleges and universities have become very expensive, so there are a lot of parents who want their child to get a scholarship in a sport,” Bull said. “I think if college wasn’t as expensive, maybe people wouldn’t view [transgender student participation in sports] as unfair.”

Some believe that the bill widens the gap between transgender and cisgender people and makes transgender athletes feel like they need to fit into a certain mold society has created.

“[The bill] could cause transphobia and sexism [because it pushes] the idea that people in a certain sex have to have this amount of weight or this amount of strength,” Gender and Sexuality Alliance vice president senior Isa Hamilton Cruz said.

According to Hamilton Cruz, the lawmakers behind the bill should be more accepting and less prejudiced toward LGBTQ individuals, and Phuenphiphop shares the same belief.

“One of the most important things behind these types of decisions should be emotion and not just facts because this [bill] affects people’s emotions,” Phuenphiphop said. “Nobody is going to be comfortable living in a world where people are trying to make others uncomfortable, and that’s not the kind of world I want to live in.”



Photo from Unsplash

Teacher Eligibility for Booster Shot

By Jackie Thieur

Despite votes against it by a federal vaccine advisory committee, the COVID-19 booster shot is now available to all education staff due to the overruling of the committee's vote by the director of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Dr. Rochelle Walensky. All education workers, including teachers from K-12, are eligible to receive the booster shot due to their increased risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission by means of their occupational setting.

The CDC suggests that education workers should make their decision about the booster shot based off of an assessment of their medical health and individual risks and benefits. It is believed that, although being a high-risk environment, schools have always been a risky job in terms of transmission of illness. English III and special education teacher Teresa Farmer-Clemens is vaccinated, but believes that she is in good health and is fully aware of the environment she works in everyday. She does not see the booster shot as a necessary precaution to prevent COVID-19 contraction.

"I have natural immunity," Farmer-Clemens said. "I feel that as long as I use preventative measures, if I contract COVID-19, it's very like-

ly that I would not be hospitalized. I believe that everybody knows their own medical history and I have no intention of having any additional vaccines. Yes, I'm a bit more at risk, but I have been and so have teachers for many, many years."

44% of students believe COVID-19 booster shots should not be mandated for teachers

*out of 322 students polled

There is a growing concern for the circumstances students are put in if teachers are not present in the classroom. Lack of safety precautions, such as the booster shot, could result in long-term absences of teachers who end up contracting COVID-19, ultimately affecting the students who don't have the proper advisor to support their academic needs.

"It hurts the kids," IB humanities and History of the Americas teacher Richard Sklar said. "Because of the shortage of substitutes right now, it is important for teachers to get the shot because if teachers are out for 10 days, it's hard to find a substitute."

For some teachers, the concern of contracting COVID-19 isn't fully about being hospitalized or the fatality, but the effect it could have on an individual's entire life. Anatomy and physiology and IB/SL biology teacher Amanda Dunn worries about the aftermath of COVID-19, not just the short-term effects.

"Students are more likely to have an asymptomatic infection and that means that I am more likely to be exposed and not know I've been exposed," Dunn said. "I think that it's a fallacy when people talk about how this virus is not very lethal. The problem is that while the fatality rate is not very high, the morbidity rate is, so yes, people survive, but what is their quality of life after they've survived it?"



Photo from Unsplash

O'Rourke's Governor Agenda

By Samantha Heath

In a video announcement uploaded Nov. 15, former El Paso congressman and Democrat Beto O'Rourke stated that he was challenging Gov. Greg Abbott for his spot as state governor in the next Texas gubernatorial election taking place Nov. 8 of next year.

"I believe Beto is passionate about what he believes in and that his attitude will get him far in certain areas and positions in life, however, I don't think being the governor is one of those positions," Republican junior Katie Drex said. "This is mainly because of how many Republicans make up Texas and the length of time the state has been red."

O'Rourke has been open about his beliefs regarding Abbott's response to different situations affecting the state, criticizing him on his past handlings of the power grid failure that occurred in February, and the coronavirus as a whole. O'Rourke is particularly focused on the concept of firearms, stating that if he is elected governor, he guarantees that he'll take away AR-15s and AK-47s, unlike Abbott who believes firearms should be allowed to be carried even without a license.

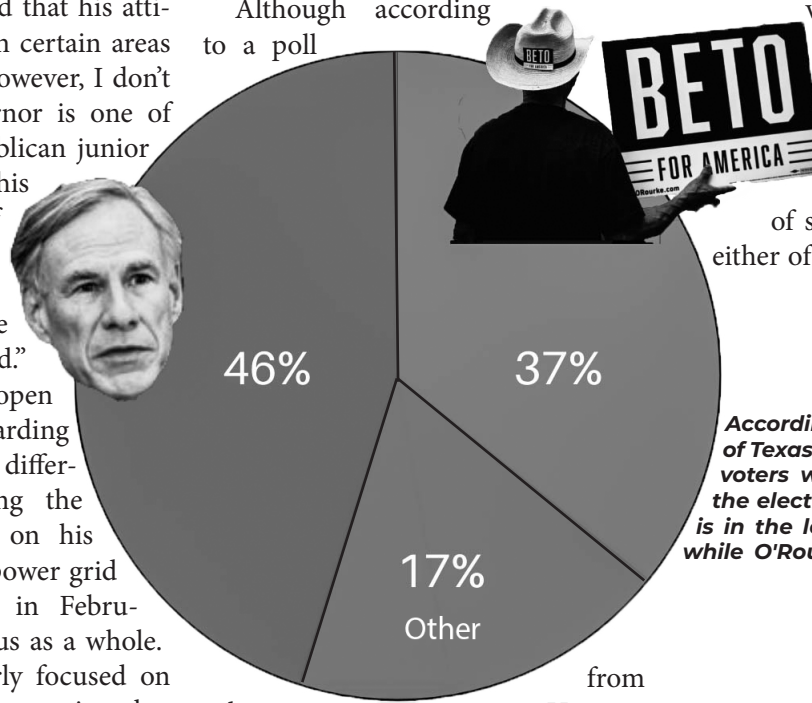
"The Democratic Party's messaging about guns in general has been very misguided," Democrat senior Anderson Shih said. "I mean, [with] school shootings [for instance], a

lot of them are suffering from massive mental health issues and stress from their economic situation. Trying to address this by buying guns will do absolutely nothing to actually solve the situation and [anger] those who just want guns for recreational purposes or other things like that."

Although according to a poll

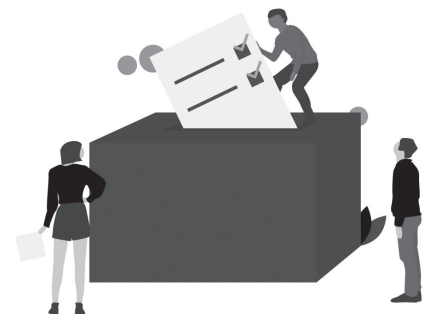
the state compared to 43% of voters who approve. Meanwhile, O'Rourke is seen to have more of a negative image, with only 35% of respondents saying they have a favorable opinion of him, with 50% registering to have an unfavorable opinion of him.

"I think if it really came down to it, voting Beto would be better," Shih said. "In an election where we had more candidates, we had more options that had actual viable chances of succeeding, I wouldn't say either of them are good for Texas."



According to a poll by the University of Texas at Austin asking registered voters who they would vote for if the election was held today, Abbott is in the lead with 46% of the votes while O'Rourke has 37% of the votes.

from the University of Texas at Austin and The Texas Tribune, Abbott leads with a nine-percent-point advantage over O'Rourke with 46% to 37%, both men have disadvantages that weigh them down from having a clear idea on who's more favorable. Abbott's approval rating has slightly improved since the last poll in August, however 48% of voters still disapprove of the way he led



Students to Prepare for Course Selections

By Abigail Cardenas

As the second semester approaches, winter break is the ideal time to begin considering classes for next school year. All underclassmen will make course selections soon after returning from winter break. Students are encouraged to begin considering AP courses, electives and application classes to prepare for scheduling.

One main component to take into consideration are courses that require applications and interviews. PALs sponsor Regina Carrell encourages students that are considering applying to these classes to think carefully about where their mind is before committing to any of these courses.

“Consider your motivation behind applying and really ensure that you’re committed to doing the work of the class,” Carrell said.

Most applications will be available in January and due later in the spring. Carrell encourages students to consider the time requirements and additional requirements for the specific class they are applying to. Planning

ahead will allow students ample time to gather application requirements.

“They [might] have to provide recommendation letters, apply, and go through an interview process,” yearbook sponsor Josue Blanco said. “Prepare early rather than rushing everything when the application is due.”

To avoid scheduling issues at the beginning of the school year, it is important to prepare carefully. Senior Ashlyn Palla is one of many seniors who endured conflict earlier this year, not being put in zero hour as she had originally signed up for, and then having too many classes once corrected.

“Figure out what you want to do before your meeting and apply to any classes that require it beforehand,” Palla said.

Classes such as yearbook, audio/video production, culinary arts, and athletics require applications or try-outs, and it is never too soon to begin figuring out what courses to take.

“Talk to friends who have taken the classes you are considering and see



what that course has to offer,” counselor Crystal Levingston said. “Focus less on their opinion of the teacher and more on the content of the class. That is what will remain consistent.”

With the school offering such an array of classes to prepare students for the future, scheduling is where students can pursue their talents and passions. The course catalog is a valuable resource students can use to learn more about each course.

“Don’t feel pressure to know what you want to be when you grow up, some adults still struggle with that concept,” Levingston said. “Use your time in high school to explore your interests.”

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Senior Annabel McCoy pipes cotton candy-flavored buttercream onto sugar cookies.

Photo by Annabel McCoy

Homemade Hobbies

Student's Vegan Bakery Popularity Rises

By Abby Nguyen

As the sweet scent of butter and bread wafts from the oven, senior Annabel McCoy presses her face against the glass, watching the dough rise and her creation come to life. She slowly slides the tray out of the oven, revealing the flaky layers of the croissants while hearing the sizzling of the butter seep into the pastries. After taking a bite and hearing the crunch of the layers as she sinks her teeth into the croissant, Annabel smiles at the hard work, commitment and love she put into her vegan bakery: Annabel's Bake Shop.

"My main goal with my bakery is just to inspire people to start trying more plant-based things," Annabel said. "I would love to have a bakery one day, but if all I can do is inspire people to try non-dairy milks or recipes without eggs, then that is something I would be really proud of too."

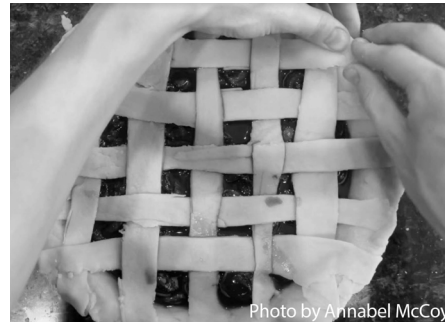
After brainstorming the idea of her business in January 2020, Annabel spent months creating logo stickers, ordering packaging, making labeling that listed allergens, and obtaining a food handler's license. With the help of her mom, she officially launched her business in March 2020.

"We didn't know what the rules were, what the law was, or how much it would cost to even start, so [Annabel] did all that work herself to find out," mother Paige McCoy said.

One of the characteristics that allow Annabel's Bake Shop to stand out is the vegan aspect of it. While vegan-

ism has numerous benefits involving better health and improving animal welfare, Annabel became a vegan to help the environment. Through her efforts to preserve the planet, she also spreads the message to her customers like senior Iman Nasir.

"I think it's super great that Annabel is trying to bring more awareness toward veganism because not only is it



Senior Annabel McCoy crisscrosses strips of dough to make a lattice pie crust.

a healthy lifestyle, [but] it also impacts the environment in a positive way by reducing carbon footprint," Nasir said. "Vegan food doesn't require a great use of fossil fuels, [so] it can also help decrease greenhouse gas emissions."

Whether it's coconut oil, flaxseed eggs, almond milk or vegan chocolate chips, Annabel constantly tries to incorporate healthier, plant-based products into her baking.

"Trying things from a vegan bakery and finding out that plant-based foods can taste just as good and be just as decadent as non-

plant-based foods is really a revelation for people," Paige McCoy said.

Aside from the food aspect of Annabel's Bake Shop, Annabel is a friendly seller who focuses on the needs of her customers whether it's cost, productivity or client satisfaction.

"She is really efficient on her orders so you could place an order and have it the next day or even that same day you ordered," Nasir said. "It's surprisingly pretty cheap for [the bakery] being vegan."

From her YouTube channel with videos sharing her vegan journey to her website listing plant-based recipes, Annabel stays committed to ensuring that her supporters are aware of the countless ways they can follow a vegan diet.

"You should buy from my bakery to experiment with more plant-based options and see if going plant-based is something that's in the future for you," Annabel said. "I really love baking and by buying from my bakery, you're allowing me to keep doing what I love."



Scan to access Google Form to order from Annabel's Bake Shop.

Panther Profile

Senior Pursues Medical Aspirations

By Sydnie Grayson

Filled with her desire to pursue a career in the medical field, senior Angela Aguilar walks into the classroom to begin a variety of projects that will help her learn more about human anatomy to prepare for her future career. She takes particular notice of the nursing aspect of the field, taking an increased interest in the demands of the job. The only thing left for Aguilar to do is fully indulge in this opportunity to learn more about the thing she loves the most.

Aguilar's interest in the medical field has been prevalent for four years, starting in eighth grade when she began to research possible careers. Because of this, she tends to keep an open mind in her anatomy class by actively participating and interacting with others.

"I think Angela is a super bright student," anatomy teacher Erica Johnson said. "She talks a lot in class whether it be with her friends about any projects we're doing or just about what's going on in school. She always likes to be involved."

Her main interest for this profession comes from the desire to learn how the body works and how each part of it affects each other.

"It's very interesting to me because if you do something wrong, it can affect the whole system of your body," Aguilar said. "It's a very delicate thing. I also get to help people like a teacher [does] and you need special training for it." She regrets not enrolling in a medical program, but her current classes seem to provide the same educational benefits as a regular medical program would.

"Right now, I'm taking pharmacology, and it's a bit challenging sometimes to learn all the [medical] drugs," Aguilar said. "At the same time, it's nice because I get to learn it now instead of later."

Through her studies, she learns more about the numerous opportunities to help others, which eventually sparked a desire to become a nurse in the future.

"I've thought about being a nurse since sophomore year," Aguilar said. "Mainly because nurses are always needed and especially now since the pandemic happened."

Being a nurse is a time-consuming job that requires a lot of effort and attention. For Aguilar, that is an

satisfy the medical needs of others.

"We help clean up [around the shelter] and clean the kennels," Aguilar said. "We also walk the dogs and help with the laundry."

Nursing has a major impact on her school life and extracurricular activities. In the future, she hopes to accomplish big things, focusing on the benefits of each specialty on each other.

"Learning about medicine is very interesting and exciting because there



Photo by Sydnie Grayson

Senior Angela Aguilar Juarez observes a kidney in her anatomy class.

easy task to fulfill due to her excellent work ethic and attention to detail, according to her friend Patty Olivares.

"Her work ethic in our classes really shows how passionate she is about it," Olivares said. "I think that the workload and all of the classes she has [are both] good startups for the career she wants."

Aguilar volunteers at an animal shelter where she tends to the animals' needs and aids them when they are not in good spirits, further proving her innate desire to help others. This occurs through Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) where she volunteers in health-related activities to

are always new ways to help people," Aguilar said. "Everyday something new is being discovered that will potentially help people in the future and being able to be a part of it would be a great experience."





Photo from Unsplash

Rising Debates, Rising Concerns: School Shootings' Influence on Campus Safety

By Claire Tweedie and Kayla Vu

With the buzzing of a lively classroom providing the soundtrack for yet another uneventful day, junior Alex Aponte scrolls through his social media feed, stumbling upon the news posting of yet another school shooting. The headline is one he's seen countless times before, similar to other news about gun violence stories he's seen in recent years. As he skims through the brief post, a sense of apathy and sadness arises at the realization that he's become accustomed to these continual reports. While Aponte feels this is a morbid response, he can't help but wonder if he will find himself in a similar situation.

"It's obviously tragic and something that you wouldn't think happens as often as it does," Aponte said. "Unfortunately it has come to the point where I do have an 'Oh, this again' reaction because of how often it occurs. It's disheartening when you see it so much."

Resulting Legislation, Statistics

While shootings such as Col-

umbine and Sandy Hook nearly a decade ago have become known world-wide, the events of gun violence in educational settings have yet to see a notable decrease. From the time period of January 2018 through October 2021, accounting for the

"Especially during school lockdowns, I always have this fear of 'What if today is the day?'"

-senior Aamina Choudhry

trend disruption due to COVID-19, there have been 82 school shootings in the United States resulting in at least one person injured or killed.

"Guns have no place on a school campus," principal George King said. "Our efforts to prevent a school shooting comes from us being constantly tuned to whatever information is out there and hav-

ing a solid plan for responding to a school shooting, should it occur."

The United States has repeatedly been recorded as the country with the highest rate of school shootings. In Texas specifically, the state ranks second highest in the number of school shootings within the country since 1970, with 133 cases according to data up to 2019 from the K-12 School Shooting Database created by the Center for Homeland Defense and Security's Naval Postgraduate School. The most recent of these incidents in the DFW area occurred Oct. 6 at Mansfield Timberview High School in Arlington which

ultimately resulted in four injuries.

"After seeing [reports of school shootings] so many times, I can see how I'd be desensitized, but it makes me feel horrible and disgusted for the families that have lost their children," senior Aamina Choudhry said. "Especially during school lockdowns, I always have this fear of 'What if today is the day?'"

Gov. Greg Abbott passed multiple gun control laws that loosened restrictions Sept. 1, including House Bill 1927 which allowed the carry of handguns in public without a license or the resulting background check, and House Bill 2622 which prohibit-

shootings, he doesn't think gun control will have that great of an impact.

"I think it's very important that we keep the Second Amendment as open as possible because I think if the Second Amendment falls, the rest of the amendments fall," Loncar said. "Of

course I'm more upset about the kids being hurt but it's also upsetting seeing it being weaponized to try and take people's Second Amendment rights away."

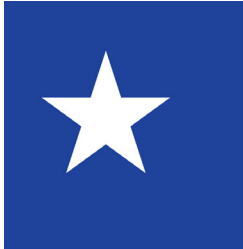
Senior Aamina Choudhry is anti-gun, believing there is a correlation between gun control and mass shootings. She believes stricter gun

law regulation, including more detailed background checks, would prevent people from obtaining the weapons necessary for these acts of violence. Regarding gun control, Aponte is neutral toward it's regulation and effect on gun violence. He believes that while there is a balance between gun control and gun use, school shootings can be prevented without harsh action from either side.

"I feel like gun control shouldn't be enforced but it also shouldn't be implied that you need one, there are many responsibilities that come with owning a gun," Aponte said. "The right to own a gun shouldn't be taken away since it's important that you have the option to defend yourself."

Self Defense, Current Safety

In terms of self defense, these opinions on gun control can factor into the safety of an educational setting. Choudhry believes any holding of a firearm on campus grounds is more likely to have the intention of



The United States is ranked as the country with the highest rate of school shootings.

Texas is ranked as the second highest state in the number of school shootings.

According to the K-12 School Shooting Database

ed both state agencies and local governments from enforcing new federal gun laws. However, the federal Gun-Free School Zones Act and Section 46.03 of the state penal code still prevents weapon carry within 1,000 feet from and on public school grounds, or where educational institutions are being conducted. This includes locations such as off-campus events or school transportation vehicles.

"Most humans want to be in a place that is orderly, safe, secure and is free of any kind of drama or instability," King said. "We all want that. Given that fact, we have a common goal which is safety and security."

While the close proximity of these events could spark fear in students, any hesitancy toward campus safety runs alongside rising debates regarding gun control and its potential effects on these statistics. Senior Peter Loncar is pro-gun and asserts himself as an absolutist of the Second Amendment. While he anticipates that more guns would create a higher chance of incidents such as school or public

What East Thinks



"I feel like incidents regarding school shootings on campus could be prevented if we had better restrictions on what people bring to school," junior Alena Ononye said. "I think [the safety measures] are effective to an extent, but there are downsides to the methods they take to protect students. There's not a lot of security and it's not always the safest."



"Guns should be allowed to be bought, but there should be stricter laws on who can buy them and a mandatory yearly test to show they are capable of owning a firearm," junior Jeff Sanchez said. "There should also be a class you can take that teaches students about gun control, gun safety, the dangers and the pros and cons about guns."



"I think everything is being done that can possibly be done," English, journalism, literary genre and creative writing teacher Diane Porter said. "I'm pretty sure that every year, administration meets and goes over the protocols. They're looking at it from all angles so I trust them to make sure we're safe."

violence, citing that stricter gun control overall and the implementation of psychological tests would prevent this from being an issue in the

self-proclaimed self defense item as an offense manageable to varying degrees, from campus discipline to expulsion.

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- principal George King

“You’re not really supposed to have [certain self-defense weapons] at school,” campus officer Troy Bourgeois said. “One, it could be illegal, or two, it could be against school policy. I don’t recommend students to bring any type of self defense weapon to school [and] I wouldn’t want someone to get a hold of that and use it for the wrong purpose.”

“The primary and most comprehensive way to ensure safety on campus is by networking with the students, networking with the teachers, and teachers networking with the students and being able to respond to information being provided to us.”

With these in mind, Aponte believes the current safety measures are effective and does not think any further precautions are needed to maintain overall campus safety.

“The school’s safety measures make it so that suspicious activity of any kind is preventable,” Aponte said. “Anything that could put students in danger is moni-

first place. Loncar states that regardless of one’s age, they have the right to defend themselves, potentially with the use of a firearm, but allowing teenagers to hold guns on campus could do more harm than good.

“Not everyone has been raised in a pro-gun family and been taught the right safety rules for guns,” Loncar said. “I feel it can be a recipe for disaster for people who don’t buy it to defend themselves, but might buy it for malicious reasons or to try and look cool which could lead to incidents.”

While students may argue that the inability to carry a gun deprives them of a self-defense item, minors in the state aren’t allowed to buy more traditionally “mundane” tools for protection such as pepper spray or tasers. Even district policy, according to the 2021-2022 Student Code of Conduct, cites the possession of a weapon or

Due to the inability to hold these items on school grounds, students begin to look toward the overall safety precautions on campus for protection and support. Both King and Bourgeois encourage the use of the online tipline to report any suspicious or worrying activity to administration, along with promoting Alertus, an instant warning system app designed to notify students of an emergency situation. Currently, students can list regulations such as the requirement of ID badges, the practice of lockdown drills, and various security cameras around the campus as notable safety elements.

“What we’re left with is building relations with kids and asking them to help us with information so we can help them,” King said.

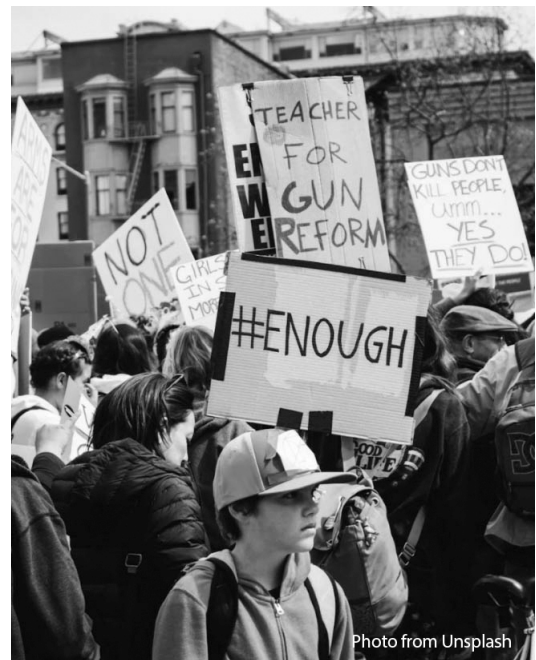
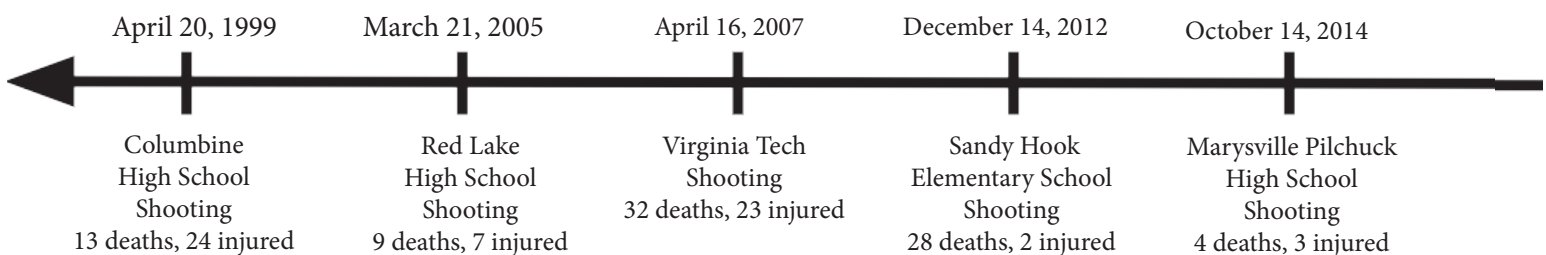


Photo from Unsplash

tored, we have officers for a reason.”

Meanwhile, both Choudhry and Loncar do not believe these safe-

Mass School Shootings in America



ty measures are effective, both stating the lack of ID enforcement and non-connected building layout as reasons for this lack of confidence. Both feel that if the district truly wanted to eliminate the risk of gun violence on it's campuses, they would do more, but are unsure of what "more" means.

"I just know that their current barriers and protective measures aren't really enforced," Loncar said. "I think if you fear for your own safety, then it's your choice to have something to defend yourself with and if you don't fear for your safety, it's still your choice."

Next Steps Toward Unified Goals

Loncar believes a better understanding of guns and the weight they carry through the implementation of gun safety training classes in school for gun-owners could help teenagers understand the risks associated with firearms. Aponte states that better relationships between counselors and students could prevent incidents involving gun violence by giving students an outlet to express themselves and their emotions. Choudhry has a similar outlook, advocating that mental health could be an indicating factor of an individual's likelihood to commit an act similar to those discussed and should be a focus.

"I think the counselors are too occupied with seniors and colleges that they can't focus as much of their time on students' mental health," Choudhry said. "[The district] could use counseling to observe those who

may be going down that path of violence. I feel that there are signs to see if someone is mentally unstable and if they may direct that to violence, specifically gun violence."

Current school safety measures include a series of protocol responses such as lockdown, lock-out and evacuation drills. Police officers, administrators

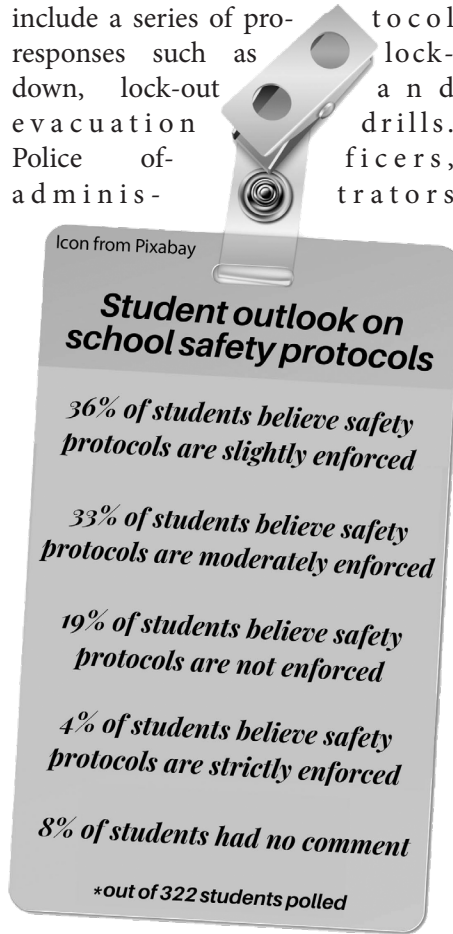
possible for administration to run over 3,000 students through the machines multiple times while still being able to continue class hours on schedule and maintain an open-campus system.

"I feel like we're doing the best job we can," Bourgeois said. "It's kind of scary to think about but you can't make this [campus] 100% safe unless we turn this place into a prison. Nobody wants to go to prison for school. Sometimes more freedom comes with more risks."

Bourgeois hopes to see a change in the distribution and design of ID badges similar to the parking pass system to differentiate old badges with current ones for an added layer of security. Aponte and Loncar believe staff involvement could create a safer environment, with Aponte stating increased mandatory staff training on efficient and safe ways to react in the situation of gun violence could be helpful and Loncar opting for more resource officers on campus. Choudhry believes maps to allow people to familiarize themselves with the campus layout will help students quickly find a more secure area in the case of a dangerous situation.

"We should all see safety and security as our number-one concern," King said. "As administrators, it is by design and by law, as humans, [that] we should all work collectively together to ensure and to report any information they have that says 'I've heard something that sounds unsafe.' That's my ambition and my hope is that we all play an integral role."

and teachers are trained to respond to any emergencies while surveillance cameras around campus keep watch of any suspicious activity that could occur nearby. Although it has been proposed to implement a system of metal detectors, King and Bourgeois explain that it would be im-



Mass School Shootings in America



Captain of the Golden Girls senior Genevieve Springsteen performs in the drill team show prior to the marching band performance at the football game against Plano West Oct. 8.

Photo by Yovani Martinez

Golden Girls Group Up Drill Team's Involvement in Marching Band Show

By Claire Tweedie

Captain of the Golden Girls senior Genevieve Springsteen readies her stance amid rising anticipation from the stands, crowded with fans eager for the halftime show. While the green turf is familiar under her feet, the gold flag she carries is practically a foreign object. Although the band and color guard members are seasoned pros, the drill team is new at this, more familiar with their cowboy hats and high kicks rather than the long skirts and low ponytails. The band begins playing with the confidence only practice and pride can bring, and as the show begins, so does the drill team.

"I feel like it's been a really nice change of perspective because while you see what [color guard does], you don't really understand how much work is put into it," Springsteen said. "It's difficult but at the same time it makes you appreciate color guard a lot more."

This marching season marks the Golden Girls' first year in the band show, acting as color guard members rather than their usual drill team roles to add to the size and visuals of the performance. With the addition of nearly 45 people into the finale, color guard member senior

Pauline Dang believes they make the show more extravagant while marching band trumpeter junior D'kota Adamson thinks it's a great addition overall to an already great show.

"My favorite part is the way you see what everyone's special talents are," Dang said. "Not everyone can do high kicks like the Golden Girls, not everyone can do flags and rifles like the guard, and not everyone can march like the band, so when we all do it together, we create this new respect for each other and our skills."

Their first performance as a whole was at the Oct. 1 homecoming football game, which Springsteen recalls having minimal preparation for. With the introduction of such a large group into the performance, training the drill team on flags and dot measurements instead of yard lines to track member placements proved to be a struggle, but not one they couldn't overcome.

"Honestly, for never having done anything like this before, it's gone pretty well," Springsteen said. "We're learning how to work with each other and getting over all of the humps and obstacles. So while our season at the beginning was slow, I think we've done a really good job transitioning back."

Even with this preliminary obstacle, the show won numerous distinctions and high ratings at competitions in recent months. At the UIL Regionals Marching Band Contest held Oct. 16, they celebrated their 40th consecutive Division 1 rating, and at the UIL Area Full Band Finals Retreat held Oct. 30, they won 9th place after making finals in the previous round.

"I'm proud of us either way," Dang said. "To see everyone run together, it's so grand and big. It sends the message that we're all together, especially with the wow-factor the drill team helps contribute."

With universal hopes that the Golden Girls will continue to participate in the show for years to come, band members are looking forward to similar, if not bigger and better, successes alongside them.

"The drill team could play a huge part in how our band shows work in the future," Adamson said. "We have more open spots to make our band more inclusive and to show the world who the Plano East marching band really is. I just hope I'm able to include myself in the works and influences of next year."

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New Coach Brings New Successes

By Abigail Cardenas

Sounds of shoes creaking on the court and basketballs rebounding consume the gym as 13 players rush up and down the court, preparing for another successful season. Meanwhile, new Coach Derrick Richardson proudly motivates the team members with encouraging words and insightful strategies accumulated from his 23 years of coaching experience. With a new head coach and key players returning from last year, the girls' basketball team is driven to have another successful season, ideally exceeding their success from last year.

"There are not that many differences player-wise; the goals we have for the year have stayed consistent," power forward junior Idara Uda said. "But it has been very different coach-wise because Coach Richardson is very calm most of the time."

Last year, Jessica Linson coached the girls' basketball team, making it to the fifth round of playoffs and this year presents new opportunities. The adjustment of new leadership has only brought about increasing motivation.

"I think we'll be successful this year because last year we barely fell short, so we're excited to

come back stronger," shooting guard senior Kaitlyn Hong said.

Barely losing regional finals last year to get into state semifinals, the returning team members know exactly what to expect and are freshly motivated to exceed their previous season.

"You can expect us to come focused, ready and driven to make it even further than we did last year," Uda said.

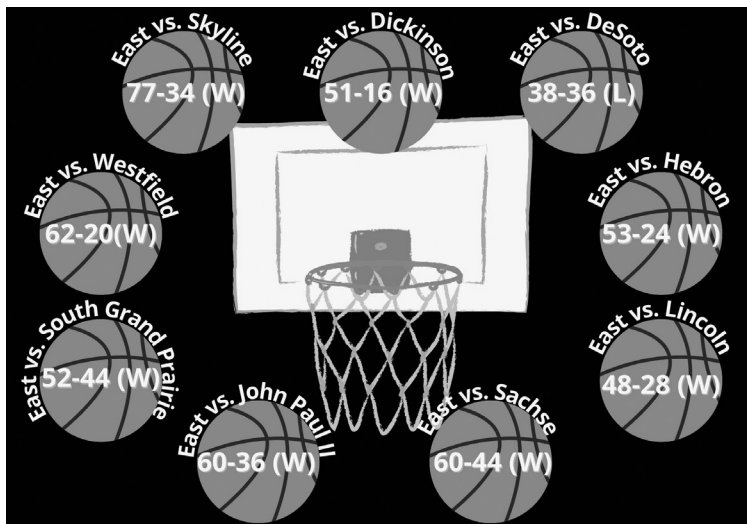
Seniors are especially motivated to win playoffs, as they know the criteria and value of hard work.

"I think this year's team will be as successful as last years," Uda said.

"We all have the same mindset going into this year and all know what we need to do to reach our goals."

The girls' basketball team is notorious for their dedication and drive to succeed, becoming sixth in the state last year. This success is not only accumulated from their athletic capabilities, but their strong connections with one another.

"The bonds we've developed over the years is what makes our team so successful," Hong said. "We're not only teammates on the court, but best friends off the court. It's a level of chemistry I believe every team needs."



Dallas Cowboys' Comeback Season

By Rishi Mallela

The Cowboys began the season consistently exceeding expectations with triumphs against imposing defenses like the Carolina Panthers and backup quarterback Cooper Rush's unforeseen win against the Minnesota Vikings. While as of Nov. 30, the team is 8-4, a revamped defense following the 2021 NFL Draft ultimately built a formidable defensive line that has taken the NFL by storm. Fans can attribute this success to the team's exceptional defensive performances and dynamic offensive play calling.

Trevon Diggs has an interception total of seven on the season, on pace to break a franchise record of 11 interceptions set by Everson Walls in 1981. He has been crucial to maintaining the defensive scoreline. Ceedee Lamb and Amari Cooper have made remarkable plays down the field for long yardage, averting man coverage, shaking off safeties and opponents' secondaries.

The fitting piece to this team's success is coach Mike McCarthy's comeback from an overall successful run with the Green Bay Packers. While he missed recent games due to contracting COVID-19, McCarthy's quick and frequent pass game has thus far allowed the team to utilize the most out of the receiver, giving less work to protect the quarterback. The new play style that McCarthy has implemented, along with talent from the Cowboy's secondary and wide receiver squad, will take the Cowboys to new heights. Their next game is Dec. 12 against Washington, giving the Cowboys another chance to prove themselves on the field.

*Claire Tweedie and Samantha Heath contributed to this article.

Change of Pace

Individuality of Different School Sports

By Rishi Mallela and Claire Tweedie

The widespread acknowledgment of sports like basketball, football and volleyball are generally more common in schools compared to other equally thrilling sports such as cross country, golf and wrestling. Each has their own attributes: In golf where the club meets grass, hard-work is artfully mixed with the player's luck. In cross country where self-pace meets distance, both mental and physical endurance must be pushed to the limit for success. In wrestling, a game of resilience and technique, the player must move past their own obstacles to move past their opponent.

The individual competitive nature of golf is ultimately what makes it special.

The anticipation of whether or not the player will succumb to the pressure of the spectators gives the sport a special dynamic of viewership. The players from this team prove just how well they can work amidst this by showcasing their skills on the golf course. The golf team received honors under Coach Jon Engelking's direction, with his experience and coaching cultivating a team that won a state championship in 2018 under his direction. Additionally, many have gone on to continue playing golf in college.

"Practices are going well, kids are doing exceptional, and we're in the green," Engelking said. "The kids in the program are definitely progressing."

Conversely, the individual development of each runner in cross country, along with the welcoming environment created by the students,

gives it a unique dynamic. It is not a requirement to be conditioned in either running or jogging, creating a more inclusive group as members are developed and trained accordingly as a whole. With this, it allows the runners the opportunity to participate in every meet. This individual mindset to be the best at every chance given, practices or events alike, allows spectators to watch players strive for new records and awards after their performances. The boy's varsity team finished second at the District 9-6A Championship,

ending their three-year streak of finishing third at the event, while the girl's varsity team finished fifth.

"It's a very intrinsically motivated sport," cross country coach Robert

Reed said. "It's you against somebody else, it's you against the clock, and it's the students' motivation to work hard to see themselves do better."

Prepared by their skill set of balance, strategy and unique technique, the individuality and level of mental and physical toughness within a wrestler are integral parts of the dexterity required to perform at their highest level. The attention at every given moment makes or breaks every step made by the aggressor and the opposition, meaning for spectators of the sport, the excitement of a match isn't clouded solely by physical statistics and predictable team movement. While their season only recently started, wrestling coach Bryan Kenney established the wrestling team as a collective of formidable wrestlers, trained to take down any opponent. As of Nov. 30,

the boys team is 10-1 in their matches and the girls team has achieved their first dual win in five years.

"We're one of the biggest schools in the country and we should be one of the best [wrestling] programs in the country," Kenney said.

Photo by Kayleen Le



Senior Alan Lin perfects his swing during practice Nov. 11.

The cross country, golf and wrestling teams have garnered many students in their programs, and in a similar fashion, the student population should garner support for these sports as well. What makes these sports special is the individuality involved in each player's success, which has promoted great success in the programs as well.

"Every event is so different, and regardless of the performances, there are always so many levels involved," cross country senior Danielle Tillery said. "It's always interesting to see how athletes perform based on the courses and not really knowing what's going to happen next."

Player to Professional Coach Tactics in Hockey

By Jackie Theiur

It's a coach's opportunity to shine as a strategist in the performance of their team. The clashing on the ice, with the ultimate goal to strike the puck into the net, has all the players working together to reach success. Varsity hockey coaches Thomas Joyce and Zachary Piekarsky utilize their past hockey experience and apply it to their coaching methods to help the team succeed.

Joyce understands the individual skills each player has. His knowledge of the team's capabilities help him plan practices in which all players benefit and perform well. Varsity hockey player junior Cade Willis admires his coach's observations of each player and how he has the team play together, acknowledging how his coach's past plays a factor in his longing for the team's success.

"He is good at pairing certain people together, like the people that have specific strengths and weaknesses on the team," Willis said. "He's good at putting the right people out at the right times and matching it to the team."

Piekarski feels that the strug-

gle with teamwork throughout the last couple years can be reversed back to the "winning way." He believes that the most prominent thing to lead the team to success is structured routine and selflessness.

"It starts with practice," Piekarski said. "Just making sure there's

nor setback throughout the recent years for the hockey team, but is determined to bring it back. Joyce's plan to help his team succeed is by creating a positive culture and building up his players into benevolent individuals.

"The team lost its swagger," Joyce said. "I came in last year, and



Photo by Nira Ranganathan

Varsity hockey coach Thomas Joyce guides his team through drills during practice Nov. 30.

no selfishness out there, because it's hard to win a game when somebody tries to do everything by themselves."

Joyce also believes there was a mi-

we did a culture reset and started building a good strong culture beyond just winning; building good athletes and good people."

Although the coaches put their all into leading their teams, they believe that the players earn their achievements, and that their coaching is just a guide.

"In the end, the players have to play the game," Joyce said. "We give them the tools, mindsets and systems, but in the end, the team is going to execute."

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Texas Lagging Behind on LGBTQ Rights

Staff Editorial

According to the Human Rights Campaign, Texas has the most anti-LGBTQ legislation of any other U.S. state and ranks the lowest in terms of support for the community. With the legislation currently initiating several bills that restrict LGBTQ rights, and considering the constant dismissal of enforcing laws and programs that protect the community, change is ultimately not being made fast enough to accommodate LGBTQ individuals properly.

A bill signed into law by Gov. Greg Abbott Oct. 27 that will be enacted Jan. 18 bans transgender individuals from participating in school sports teams that don't correlate with their assigned-at-birth gender, with nothing being done to stop it from contributing to the 25 anti-LGBTQ bills that have already been enacted in the legislation this year. Even in past instances where there has been a positive enactment, such as when same-sex marriage became legal in 2015, it was discovered that the First Amendment extends private citizens the right to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages, with no state or local laws protecting from discrimination. This refusal to combat any of these anti-LGBTQ laws is the most up-front example of the state lacking in making any progress to protect the community.

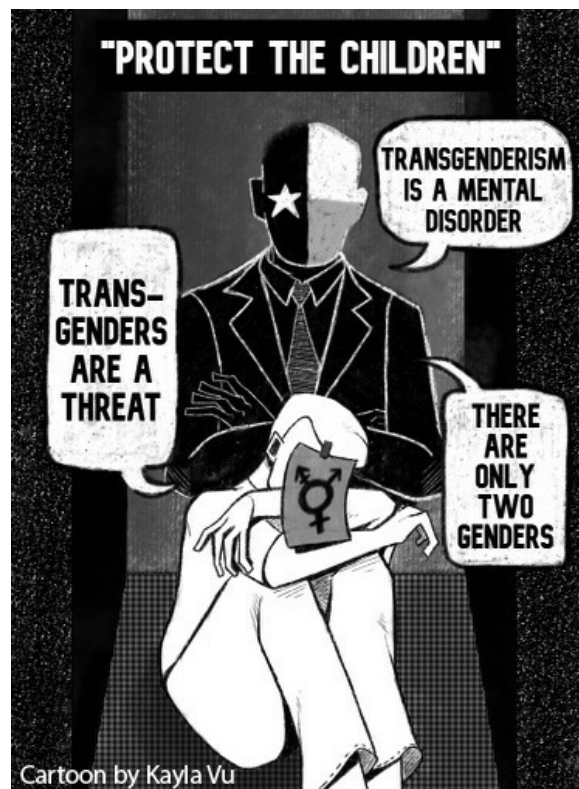
House Bill 133 was filed Aug. 9 and, if passed, will not allow a physician to provide gender-affirming healthcare under a penalty of possible license loss. This includes providing transitioning surgery, as well as administering or prescribing puberty-blocking medication. Along with medical restrictions, mental health as a whole is something that is rarely addressed.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, 43% of queer students compared to 15% of heterosexual students thought about suicide in the past year, with the incidence of an actual attempt being 29% for queer students compared to 6% for heterosexual students. LGBTQ individuals in general are more likely to experience negative health outcomes

and 33% physical harassment based on their sexual orientation, and 64% receive verbal harassment and 28% physical harassment based on their gender expression, which causes them to feel uncomfortable or threatened in their learning environment.

There are, however, some corporations in the state that try to combat these situations. The Real Education for Healthy Youth Act was introduced May 18 and plans to fund teacher training on sex education in addition to prohibiting federal funding of programs that are insensitive and unresponsive to the needs of LGBTQ youth. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) dedicates themselves to defending constitutional and civil rights for LGBTQ Texans by fighting for equality in schools, courts, city council chambers and at the state legislature. This does show the progression and initiative when it comes to protecting the rights of LGBTQ individuals, however, these organizations have not made any significant impact on changing the discriminatory laws they have vowed to help, even if having that goal in the first place is a big step for the community.

It doesn't seem as though the community will be receiving a solution anytime soon to their personal and restrictive problems considering how slow the state is when it comes to the LGBTQ community's progression of rights. Hopefully, if it is actively fought for by multiple parties, this can be changed for the better in the future.



that have been linked to the experience of stigma and discrimination.

This transfers over to education as well, as queer individuals have lower grade point averages, and are nearly twice as likely to report they did not plan to pursue any post-secondary education after high school according to the 2019 National School Climate Survey. In the state, according to a 2017 version of the same study, this occurs because 72% of queer students receive verbal harassment

*The Panther Prints staff voted 8 - 1, with majority opinion believing Texas is not making changes, fast enough to accommodate the LGBTQ community

Public Schools Ineffectively Teaching Sex Education

By Kayla Vu

Four decades since its first reported case, a cure has yet to be found for the millions of people around the world living with HIV/AIDS. Every December during HIV/AIDS awareness month, health care workers and activists continue to educate topics about this epidemic and commemorate those who have lost their battle. Although medical advancements have been made to reduce the outcomes of HIV and HIV-related illnesses, school-based sex education proves to be one of the most crucial methods to inform and prevent these diseases amongst the youth. However, the execution of the curriculum within the U.S. public education system isn't as effective as it should be.

Although sex education within school settings may have the ability to reach a large audience of young students, there's an inefficiency in how it's achieved. According to a 2017 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) analysis of state health education laws, Texas required sexual health education, but had no mandate on instruction of HIV and STD prevention. In November 2020, the State Board of Education officiated new standards for sex education more than two decades since its last revisions in 1997. Despite the new, revised policies, these changes aren't necessarily improvements. Sex education continues to not be required in the health curriculum, and even if a student does take the program, future legislation still doesn't enforce information to be medically accurate or require topics such as consent to be mentioned. Because of this, it's difficult for students to be properly educated and constantly aware of these issues.

While these subjects aren't mandatory to teach, districts are still able to incorporate them into their educational programs. The district's policies on Human Sexuality Instruction includes a multitude of topics: anatomy and physiology development of both males and females, diseases and disorders

sex education also comes an increase in benefits from this curriculum. The CDC on Adolescent and School Health notes that effective sex education can reduce the transmission of STDs, unplanned pregnancy, relationship violence and any other related risk behaviors. To further yield even more positive outcomes, researchers embrace the idea of Comprehensive Sex Education in which the values of relationships are more prioritized. According to the Journal of Adolescent Health on the Case for Comprehensive Sex Education in 2020, this system provides positive impacts on both student health and interaction with peers. The studies discovered an improvement on school environment quality with the reduction of certain social issues like homophobic bullying, gender stereotypes, discrimination against sexual identities, and victim blaming. Despite one's viewpoint on the validity of certain identities, it's undeniable how the physical and mental health of an individual should be valued first and by this system, it does so efficiently.

Without proper sex education within public schools, setbacks on worldwide issues such as the HIV epidemic will continue. Accurate instruction of HIV/AIDS not only allows for a method of spreading awareness and educating the youth, but it also serves as a way to reduce the stigma and discrimination directed at people affected or living with the virus. With the lack of effort to improve this system, the presence of social stigmas and factual ignorance will continue to persist into adulthood, thus helplessly leaving society with no pathway for development.

Student outlook on sex education in schools

- 71% of students believe it should be a mandatory topic taught**
- 12% of students believe it is important but some topics aren't necessary to teach**
- 1% of students believe it is not important and shouldn't be taught**
- 16% of students had no opinion or comment**

*out of 322 students polled

derived from sexual activity such as HIV and other STDs, benefits of abstinence, methods of maintaining healthy relationships, and the use of refusal skills in unsafe situations akin to consent. Regulations also require instruction to be taught by certified teachers with district-provided training. Even though parents and guardians are still able to remove their child from this program, district regulation allows for a more accurate and thorough understanding of sex education with the inclusion of topics not required to be taught by the state.

With the improvement in quality of

Must-Watch Korean Dramas

By Samantha Heath

With the stir of attention circling around Korean dramas amidst the popularity of “Squid Game,” with the subtitle barrier becoming less and less prominent every day, here are a few recommendations for other Korean dramas on Netflix that may prove interesting.

“Move to Heaven” is a heartwarming drama about a young man with Asperger syndrome named Geuru, played by Tang Joon-sang, who suddenly has to adapt to taking over his father’s trauma cleaning business with his uncle Sang-gu, played by Lee Je-hoon, who has become his new guardian. The show follows multiple stories of those who have passed and how their death affected those close to them, while periodically cutting back to the main characters’ struggles as they learn to heal from the past and cope with their present.

The story is extremely well-balanced, with every episode guaranteed to have the audience reaching for their tissues. The representation across multiple types of relationships regardless of age or sexuality was refreshing to witness due to its rarity in a lot of Korean media. All of the characters have their own

charm that have audience’s wishing for more due to the ending cliffhanger and unanswered questions regarding Sang-gu’s storyline. “Move to Heaven” is definitely a show that audiences should be begging Netflix for a second season, however, it stands perfectly by itself as a great show regardless of what direction they may take next.

“My Holo Love” is a science-fiction romance about a woman named Soyeon, played by Ko Sung-hee, who, due to an unexpected circumstance, becomes a beta tester for a hologram named Holo, played by Yoon Hyun-min. Meanwhile, Holo’s creator Nando, also played by Hyun-min, shares no traits with Holo other than their identical physical appearance and an infatuation for the same woman.

While a love triangle between a hologram and his creator was not a romance plotline that most expected to be entertaining, it’s done in an engaging way that keeps the audience hooked on what the next episode might entail. The effortless attachment to the main characters ultimately came down to Holo’s characterization, executed flawlessly due to writing of the staff and the acting of Hyun-min, who humanizes Holo and easily

distinguishes him from his human counterpart. Sung-hee, while giving a questionable performance whenever given a scene wherein she has to cry in, interacts with both of Hyun-min’s in a way that showcases how dynamic she is, being able to display her character’s comfortability to the two characters even though, for her, it’s the same person. Overall, “My Holo Love” is a unique take on a romance-driven plot line that is worth watching to the end.

“Strangers from Hell,” also known as “Hell Is Other People,” is a psychological thriller about a man named Jong-woo, played by Im Si-wan, who stumbles upon a cheap residence named Eden Studio and decides to stay there due to his inability to pay for better housing. As he spends more time there, he starts to realize that the other residents are extremely abnormal, including his next-door neighbor Moon-Jo, played by Lee Dong-wook, but he decides to tolerate it until he saves enough money to move out.

The ambiance of the show is definitely its biggest strength with the way each scene is devoid of music, letting the audience bask in the tension Jong-woo has to endure. Any scene that does take place outside of the residence, however, does become stagnant, making it harder to continue watching what is almost an hour’s worth of content. The performances of the residents are pretty solid, with Moon-jo in particular being a stellar character that proves to be a worthy antagonist and mentor for Jong-woo. Jong-woo himself is a very intriguing character, with his eventual madness allowing room for interpretation as either an unfortunate byproduct of his surroundings, or something that was in him all along. Either way, “Strangers from Hell” acts as a serviceable horror.



Courtesy of Netflix

Music Tours Coming to You

By Aziz Syed

Tyler the Creator

Tyler the Creator is kicking off his “Call Me If You Get Lost” tour February 2022 and plans on finishing it in April. Tyler performed dozens of pop-up concerts across the country in 2021. For his surprise appearance in Dallas, fans were quick to collect their tickets in Deep Ellum creating a line that wrapped around Elm Street. The excitement for Tyler in Dallas is electric and fans are eager to see what he has in store for his newest tour. He will perform at the American Airlines Center Feb. 16 at 7:30 p.m.



Photo from Columbia Records

Brockhampton

The hip hop group Brockhampton is scheduled to perform in Irving March 4, 2022 at The Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory. After multiple setbacks due to COVID-19, Brockhampton returns to Irving to perform their distinctive R&B and hip hop melodies live after nearly three years. Because the band originated in Texas, the enthusiasm and excitement from fans here is unmatched by other states. Brockhampton is set to perform their critically acclaimed new album “Roadrunner: New Light, New Machine.”



Photo from RCA Records

Mitski

Indie musician and artist Mitski is set to perform at The Factory in Deep Ellum in Dallas Feb. 25, 2022 at 9 p.m. Mitski’s last album “Be the Cowboy” was critically acclaimed and was named the number two album of the year by The New York Times in 2018. After a three year hiatus, she has returned with a new single, “Working for the Knife.” Mitski’s unique ability to create music in different genres keeps her audience guessing and in anticipation of what she’ll release next. Fans are eagerly anticipating her sixth studio album “Laurel Hell” which will be released Feb. 4 and will be performed on her tour.



Photo from Dead Ocean Records

Elton John

Academy Award, Grammy and Golden Globe winner Elton John is performing Jan. 25 and 26 at the American Airlines Center at 8 p.m. for his tour “Farewell Yellow Brick Road.” Fans are looking forward to seeing John perform a variety of tracks from his impressive 50-year career. John planned on coming to the area in June of 2021, however due to setbacks caused by the pandemic, as well as an unforeseen hip injury, he postponed his tour.



Photo from EMI Records

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