

TEACHERS

VS students

ISSUE



O.W. HOLMES HIGH SCHOOL



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SCHOOL SHOULD BE LIKE

What teachers say:

"Ideally it would be better if we didn't have to deal with all the kids that roam around-- the ones that don't go to class. It's such a waste of time for people that have to chase after them and they're wasting their own time, because then in the end, they just are scrambling to catch up. I wish everybody would go to class when they're supposed to."

-Student Success Advisor Donna Townsend

"Ideally we can build on the sense of pride that we have already had here at Holmes, making it even better. I'm a graduate of Holmes from back in 1990, and knowing that every month there was something going on for our campus where we could show pride in the school was important."

-Student Success Advisor Alejandro Anderson

"One thing I would change is the lack of communication. Communication is huge, especially for my athletes. They make sure to communicate with me, as well as students in the classroom. If students are having issues, they should communicate with their teachers."

-Tennis Coach Michael Garcia

"The ideal student is someone who comes to class every day ready to learn, and doesn't have to be reminded about the importance of education. In class, there would be a lot of questions being asked, practicing doing work, paying attention and movement--to a certain extent."

-Science Teacher Adrian Farrugia

We asked students and teachers what their ideal vision is for school. They told us about what the ideal teacher is like, the ideal student is like, and what a classroom should be like. Here's what they said:

What students say:

"The ideal teacher would be patient with their students even if they're easily distracted, and teach in a mannerly fashion."

-Ann Gutierrez, 11th

"The ideal teacher would care about their students and not be worried about irrelevant things."

-Adrian Carreon, 11th

"The ideal students would be respectful and pay attention to our teachers when they're giving lessons. They're here to help us with our education."

-Jayson Ponce, 11th

"In the ideal classroom, everybody would be talking and interacting with each other."

-Xavier Aquino, 11th

"The ideal teacher would stop addressing the small issues like students bringing their skateboards to school, because some kids don't have a way of transportation. There are some teachers that will go out of the way to just stop that one kid that has a skateboard. I feel like they should make better rules and focus on the major deals like kids that are smoking in bathrooms or kids that are tagging on walls."

-Roberto Zuniga, 9th

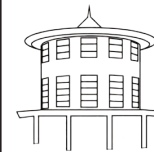
"In the ideal situation, there would be an interaction between the students and teachers. I feel like that's the only way that students would be able to learn. Students would ask questions."

-Jerry Sancez, 12th



TEACHERS VS students ISSUE

Things such as mental health and economic struggles are just some of the many problems students on campus go through. Students have busier lives than teachers think, and teachers have their own pressures and beliefs. In this issue, we get a better understanding of the struggles students go through, and the important role teachers play in a student's life, while hearing from both teachers and students along the way. This is the *Teachers vs Students Issue*.



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LIFE V.S. LESSONS



Life-challenges a pressure point between teachers, students

by Paige Borenheim, Co-Editor and Victoria Garcia, Staff Writer

Tired, overworked, and underpaid, the teacher wants their students to be more responsible. Between cups of coffee and stacks of grading, they wonder why their students can't seem to handle the simple work they give them. The students stare back at the teacher. The students are also tired, overworked, and underpaid at jobs they work because they have to, and from adult responsibilities they have at home to help out. The students wish their teacher would understand what all they were dealing with and be more reasonable, or maybe even help them out. The teacher blames the students, and the students blame the teacher.

A common criticism reported by students is that their teachers don't understand the immense pressure, difficulty and stress that students are under both inside of school and outside of it. Meanwhile, many teachers believe that students don't care enough, or that students' priorities are out of line. These differences can create a standoff in the classroom where students aren't learning and teachers are frustrated.

Junior Harley Hancock feels this way often. From working two jobs at one point and moving back and forth between family members, it can get difficult for him to focus on what teachers deem as important.

"The school work and homework that [teachers] give us isn't the only thing that we have to do in life," Hancock said. "It's our lives. Even though we do need an education to have a life, sometimes our personal lives just get in the way."

English teacher Katie Hodgdon believes that students do go through struggles, but there is only so much teachers can legally do to help, and that education comes first.

"We're trying to prepare [students] to be adults and we try to leave our problems at the door and come in and take care of you guys," Hodgdon said. "We are looking for you all to start learning to com-

partmentalize things like, 'okay, this is what I have to handle now.'"

While Hodgdon and others push students to learn how to work through and in spite of difficulties they face, some teachers may not even be aware of what all their students are dealing with for many reasons. One reason could be that students don't always share their problems with teachers, or that teachers don't always understand just how difficult a problem is to deal with.

"I don't really tell most of my teachers my personal problems at home because I feel like they won't understand, because you know, they're teachers," Hancock said.

Other students don't share their problems with teachers, because when they have, it didn't make a difference, and teachers dismissed or ignored their issues.

"There was a time I had told a teacher of my troubles and they didn't know how to help," senior Elaine Leyva said. "I just kept getting behind and not doing work. I lost all motivation and I lost myself."

For Leyva, when she reached out for help to her teachers, it made things feel even more desperate.

"I needed help but nobody could understand how I was feeling," Leyva said. "They just expect us to forget about our issues in the classroom."

The responsibilities and pressures students face outside of school are varied, but some of the more common issues are having to take care of siblings, cousins, or other young family members or neighbors due to working parents who sometimes have late shifts or multiple jobs, prioritizing their own jobs and making money, often to help out with not just personal expenses but family needs and bills as they come up, and dealing with what feels like an overwhelming workload from all of their classes, with due dates and major projects often overlapping.

Many students, like Hancock, have taken the role

of the parent at home and know that many teachers didn't have to grow up with the struggles this generation of students go through.

"Each person is different, so [teachers] may have different ways of how they grew up," Hancock said. "But I'm not going through what they went through. It's different scenarios, different parents, different ways of living. And sometimes it's the children having to be the parents."

With a disabled mother at home and a father who isn't always around, Hancock often finds himself being responsible for groceries, and he sympathizes with those who contribute more.

"I have to buy groceries and that's really where all my money's been going," Hancock said. "I know some people have to provide for more at home. I just don't know how they [work] that much. I had to quit my second job from stress alone."

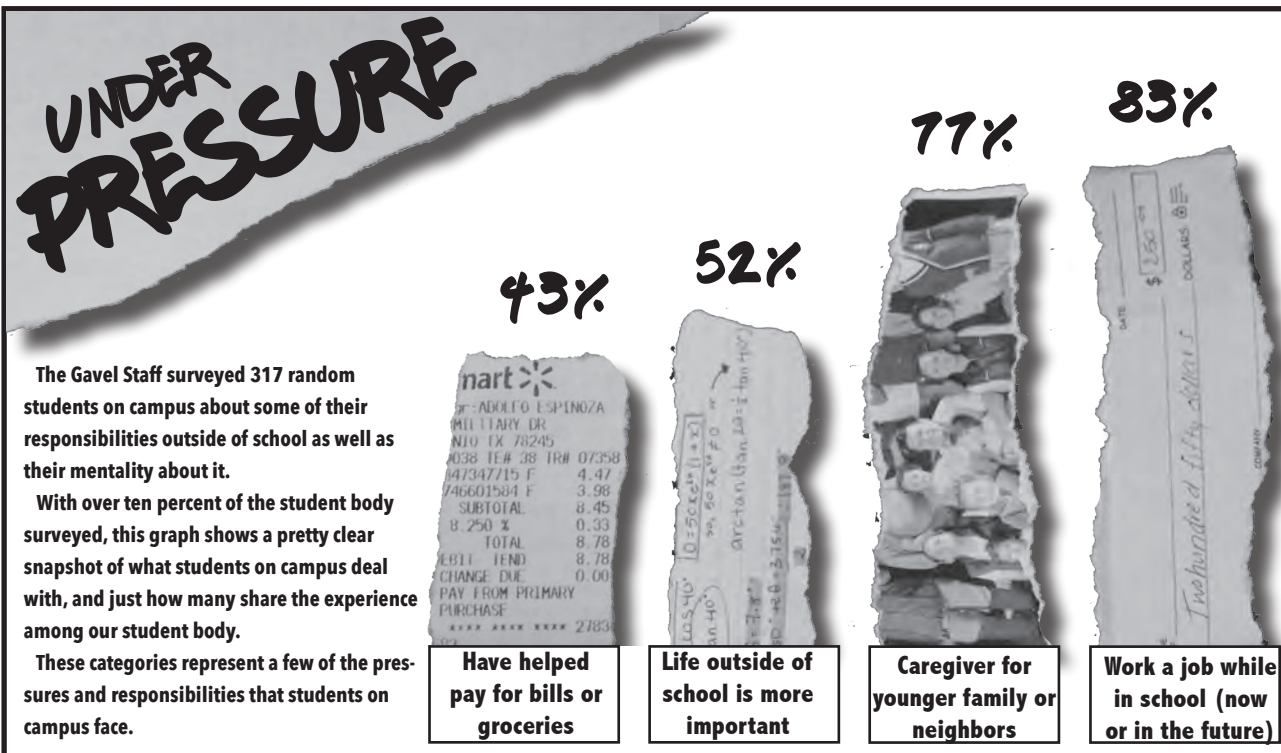
While many teachers may understand the urgency students feel to take care of these things at home, most also believe that school is the only place that can help students lift themselves and their parents out of the difficult circumstances that create the conflicts.

"The primary responsibility for students is getting their education so that they can, to quote a movie, 'change their stars,'" Hodgdon said. "Especially since so many of our students will be first-time high school graduates and college students in their family."

Psychology teacher Leola McKenna sees that tension as well.

"My understanding is that a lot of my [students] that do watch their younger siblings don't have a choice," McKenna said. "And it's not just their younger siblings. It can be their nieces or nephews or cousins. I think that students understand their education is important, but family comes first, and they do make sure their family is taken care of."

Students can confirm McKenna's understanding.



When her mother is at work, senior Maria Piedra is accountable for her two younger siblings, occasionally deprioritizing her own education.

"I babysit about four to five hours, sometimes the whole night, if my mom works a late shift," Piedra said. "I also have to do most of the chores, including laundry, cooking, cleaning and overall, making sure everyone is okay."

Not only do many students report having to care for younger siblings after school, but sometimes they are the only ones who can help out with childcare in an emergency and it causes them to miss school completely.

"Once, my brother had gotten the flu badly and my mom couldn't afford to miss anymore days," Piedra said. "I had to miss out on taking an exam to stay home to look after him. Of course when I got back to school the next day, the teacher didn't believe me. This not only caused me a bad grade, but distrust in my own teacher."

Still, McKenna emphasizes that students have to find a way to prioritize school in order to make their lives better.

"Students have to understand their best way towards 'a better life' is through education," McKenna said. "I think a lot of kids are forced to grow up well before they should. They don't get a chance to be a kid and they're taking on very adult responsibilities. As fifteen, sixteen and seventeen year olds, they get lost in 'I've got to make money now,' and they're not looking towards the future."

The reality for most students on campus is that they have to choose between school and the urgent responsibilities with family and finances. Finding the

literal time, not to mention the energy, to put the necessary work for both school and life outside of school can feel impossible for students.

"I usually spend around three or four hours on homework. I am in AP environmental science and AP calculus, so sometimes homework can stack up, along with my regular classes," Leyva said. "And when I'm not doing homework, I am babysitting my brother."

When faced with those kinds of hours and responsibility, many students simply can't keep up, and when the troubles stack up on them, it can have a domino effect.

"It can be very stressful," Leyva said. "Students, like me, with no motivation, tend to fall behind and have bad grades. We need someone to help motivate us to get back on track, not just telling us to do our work."

Leyva looks for her teachers to help keep her afloat, encourage, and motivate her, and researchers agree that those roles are critical for teachers to play and prioritize when it comes to working with students like Leyva.

"Emotion and learning are completely connected. If you're in a positive emotional space, if you feel good about yourself, your teacher-- that actually opens up the opportunity for more learning," Dr. Linda Darline-Hammon, President and CEO of the Learning Policy Institute said in "The Power of Relationships in Schools" published by Edutopia.

What students and experts can miss, is that teachers are dealing with external pressures too, like how they are scored on their state teacher evaluations, and how their job can be affected by how their

students perform on state tests. This pressure on teachers is real too.

"Obviously we have test scores hanging over our head," Hodgdon said. "I can't say, 'okay, he has to take care of six little brothers and sisters and work a job, and because of that their test scores don't matter,' because they do. But I think that if there is room for flexibility that it should stay between the teacher and the student."

In some situations, teachers are also in the position to make judgement calls on when they need to be flexible with certain students. Teachers like McKenna believe it's dangerous to pick and choose who she is flexible with, and tries to be consistent in her policies to everyone.

"If a teacher is going to be flexible, they're flexible with all of their students," McKenna said. "They can't pick and choose. I can't choose a student and bend over backwards to help them and then throw my other students under the bus."

Hodgdon also believes that if teachers try to be too flexible with students, there are students who might take advantage.

"There are [students] who are here and actually care to learn, and there are many others that are here because they have to be," Hodgdon said. "Those are largely the kids that have the mindset of, 'all I've got to get is a 70.'"

According to a survey of 317 students on campus (over ten percent of the student population on campus), 83% either currently work a job or are planning to work a job while students. Out of those same students surveyed, 77% also are either regularly or occasionally responsible for providing childcare for family members or neighbors, and 43% of them have helped pay a bill or buy groceries for their family.

The overwhelming majority of students on this campus deal with these responsibilities and it often affects their school life. Over half of the students surveyed said that their life and responsibilities outside of school were more important or urgent than their life or responsibilities in school.

Both teachers and students are in a difficult spot when it comes to figuring out the best way to deal with these issues, and while there are things students can do to help themselves, teachers have the ultimate authority and power as the adults. Teachers may not have all of the answers, but some like math, AVID, and speech & debate teacher Eric Falcon, a graduate of Holmes, believe it's important to try.

"There are so many different aspects to what students are dealing with, and I really hate when people simplify this topic," Falcon said. "Teachers can't over simplify it. When we do that we're isolating people. That's not cool."

who knows HOLMES? teachers vs students

by **Harmoni Guerrero, Opinion Director**
For the four years students are on campus, you would think we'd know our school history. The truth is, not many students know the background of our "husky pride." We were curious what both teachers and students knew, and who knew more about what it means to be a Husky. Here's what we found out:



Q: When was Holmes built?
"It was 50 years ago, so let's do the math... 1866?!"
-**Math teacher Claudia Greensage**
"If I am not mistaken, it's 1963."
-**Science teacher Ralph Martinez**

Q: Why are some of the buildings round?
"The rumor is that it is because it is shaped as a paw."
-**Science teacher Ralph Martinez**

ANSWER: Holmes was built in 1964.

Q: Can you list the buildings on campus from oldest to newest?
"I building, D building, B building, J building, E building, H building, F building, A building... I don't know. Is that all of them?"
-**Roslynn Clark, 11th**

ANSWER: B, C, D, E, F Boys Gym, H, I, J, then A. The original A building was torn down to build the new one.



Q: What current teacher has been teaching here the longest?
"I think it's Mrs. Vasquez. She's been here too long."
-**Mia Gonzalez, 11th**

ANSWER: Coach Steve Barlow is the current teacher that has worked here the longest. This is his 26th year teaching and coaching at Holmes.



Q: Which NISD school is Holmes' oldest rival?
"Marshall. People just want to be competitive in something, such as sports or academics."
-**Xamira Garcia, 9th**

ANSWER: When Holmes opened in 1964, it was filled only with underclassmen who moved from Marshall High School. Being the only other NISD school, and with so many students who knew one another, there was a natural rivalry. The first four years, Holmes struggled in athletics, but throughout the 70's and 80's Holmes dominated the rivalry. Since then, it's been back-and-forth in football. Holmes holds the head-to-head lead in wins against Marshall in football for all-time.



Q: Do you know of any famous former Holmes students?
"Uhh... I really don't know of any."
-**Amethyst Gutierrez, 11th**

ANSWER: There are many Huskies that have gone on to success and fame in different fields. Darold Williamson won an olympic gold medal in Athens, John Cornyn is one of two U.S. Senators representing Texas in Washington, D.C., and Steve Earle is a country music legend and actor appearing on hit HBO shows like *The Wire* and *Treme* to name a few.



Rodeo Club's mechanical steer was a big hit at Yukon Days.

Q: What do you think "Yukon Days" were at Holmes?
"It sounds like something to do with math? Like a day where they can celebrate math? I don't know."
-**Raquel Medina, 11th**

ANSWER: Yukon Days was a multi-day carnival held on campus until the late 1970's. A forerunner to Food Fest, students were able to compete in a talent show, ride mechanical bulls, dunk teachers in a dunking booth, dress up in costumes, play games, and eat food. All of the proceeds helped fund groups and clubs on campus.



Q: Do you know the last time Holmes sports were in the playoffs?
"I remember our varsity track team got 4th in District."
-**Destiny Sanchez, 11th**

ANSWER: Along with track appearances in area, regional and state meets, Varsity Girls Basketball just enjoyed their first playoff game in many years this month, and our softball team has been a regular fixture on the playoff scene.



Q: Do you know the words to the famous "Wave Your Paws" cheer?
"Is that a cheer that they do at the games? Husky fight never dies? I don't know."
-**Mario Estrada, 12th**

ANSWER: One of the most beloved cheers at Holmes through the 90's and 2000's, the words were, "Wave your paws, wag your tails, Holmes High Huskies cannot fail!" They included dance motions.



Q: What do you think Crystal Ball was at Holmes?
"It was the winter formal. It was open to all grade levels and was designed to give students a chance to dress up. It was more formal than homecoming and less formal than prom."
-**Psychology & Sociology Teacher Leola McKenna**

ANSWER: Mrs. McKenna got it exactly right! The Crystal Ball was a formal dance from when the school opened until the mid 2000's.



Q: Do you know the words to the Alma Mater?
"No. But I do know our fight song!"
-**Brianna Ruiz, 11th**

ANSWER: Our Alma Mater lyrics were written by our first principal, Jack Jordan's wife, Ann Jordan, who was a teacher here. It was put to music by a student. The words are, "Where stately spires light the sky, majestic to behold, Our hopes and dreams reach ever high, as prideful goals unfold, our colors fly with dignity, the Husky green and gold, we raise our voices ever true, to thee, Oliver Wendell Holmes." The "stately spires" refer to the tall points, or spires, on top of the original round buildings. There was not much built in this part of town in 1964, and the spires were lit and could be seen for miles.

So, who knows Holmes better, teachers or students?
1 teachers | 1 students
It's a tie. Looks like we could all brush up on Holmes history and traditions!

VS

teacher student showdown

by Lucille Gradillas, Creative Director and Devanie Rodriguez, Staff Writer
 Since 1918, when school was standardized in America, it has been the cliché that students and teachers do not understand or “get” one another, especially in an environment like our campus, where teachers and students come from all walks of life. It often seems like the teachers don’t understand the unique struggles of students, and vice-versa. We interviewed eight of our great teachers and eight of our inspiring students to better understand this long-lasting stereotype.

What is the main purpose of school?

“The main purpose of school is to learn about things we won’t learn in the future.”
 - **Isabella Alvarado, 11th**

“The main purpose of school is to get educated for a career in the future, and not become a bum on the street.”

- **Joshua Tamayo, 11th**

“What I hope the purpose of school is, is to prepare kids to do what they want to do after high school, so that we can go out and contribute to society. If schools would teach their kids how to take care of their own community, how to make their community better, then our communities would be better.”
 - **Math, AVID and Debate Teacher Eric Falcon**

“I think the purpose of school has changed because the information is at everybody’s fingertips. So when I was in school, we had to memorize things because we didn’t have Google in our pocket. I think if we would do it right, we would be teaching kids how to be the originators of ideas, instead of just consumers of ideas.”

- **Theatre Teacher Annie Bridges**

Why do you think students work?

“Students are trying to make ends meet at home, which I think is true for a lot of kids. I don’t think it’s true for all kids though. I think some kids work because money gives them power and gives them ownership, and that makes them feel a little bit more grown-up.”

- **AVID Teacher Eric Falcon**

“Mainly to save up for the things they need and to help their parents.”
 - **GT/Leadership Teacher Linda Prendez**

“I think students have jobs because they’re trying to provide for their family.”
 - **Theatre Teacher Kirk Logan**

“I have some students working. They’re supporting their family. They’re working full time. They’re getting off at one and two in the morning. They’re exhausted. I’ve never had as many students work as many hours as I have at this school. So it’s a real issue where I would like to know more about it because it might make a difference if I’ve got any flexibility on a due date.”

- **English Teacher Eileen Krueger**

“Students work either to help support their family, with bills or just spending money for them to spend.”

- **Geography Teacher Cruz Arrieta**

“Students work to benefit themselves in the future or sometimes students have obligations.”
 - **Aniya Carson, 12th**

What does a great student look like?

“A great student is someone who tries really hard. I think being a good student is less about innate intelligence and more about working at it. Someone who is a great student is someone who sees school as almost like a job, and they’re accomplishing tasks, getting things done and working towards goals.”

- **World History Teacher Robert Stafford**

“They’re engaged in class, they show up, they participate. The power that a student has to make that class enjoyable is extraordinary. Someone who comes in for tutoring—I’m impressed with that because now they’re coming on their own time.”
 - **English Teacher Eileen Krueger**

“A great student looks like someone who is willing to learn and wants to be involved in the conversations that are happening in a class.”

- **Theatre Teacher Kirk Logan**

“A great student is one who tries their best, not necessarily getting perfect scores, but they’re always trying to learn, so they never give up. They also understand that it’s not all about them. They’re a part of a community, and so they either try to help others or are at least respectful of others.”
 - **GT/Leadership Teacher Linda Prendez**

“A perfect student is always on top of their work.”

- **Isabella Alvarado, 11th**

How many hours do students work?

“I work six to seven hours in construction with my dad.”

- **Jayden Mata, 11th**

“I hope it’s less than 20 hours a week. Maybe 10 or 15.”
 - **World History Teacher Robert Stafford**

“20 hours. Plus I know a lot of the kids are primary caretakers for siblings or even elderly grandparents, and who have responsibilities at home.”
 - **Theatre Teacher Annie Bridges**

“I work 12 to 30 hours a week.”
 - **Alaina Zahid, 11th**

How long do teachers spend on grading?

“It depends on what kind of assignments, usually I would say about a couple of hours each week.”
 - **World History Teacher Robert Stafford**

“At least two hours, three hours a night. I use my lunch or my conference period, so two hours to three hours a day.”

- **Math Teacher Maria Bustamante**

“I wouldn’t be surprised if they spend less than five minutes on it. Honestly.”
 - **Aniya Carson, 12th**

“Well, my mom used to be an elementary school teacher and grading would take forever—probably three hours or more.”

- **Maria Macias, 11th**

How much time do you think students spend on homework a night?

“On average about 15 minutes.”
 - **Math, AVID and Debate Teacher Eric Falcon**

“In a week, I would guess about 40 minutes.”
 - **English Teacher Eileen Krueger**

“Four hours.”
 - **Felixsha Villareal, 10th**

“A student that feels education is important will spend anywhere from two to three hours a night on homework, and kids that are just going with the flow because they have to be in school won’t do any homework at all.”
 - **Math Teacher Maria Bustamante**

“On average about an hour.”
 - **Kamren Idar, 11th**



What does a great teacher look like?

“One who is flexible, but also firm. One who takes the time to try to get to know their students and knows what they are teaching. I think there’s no way to be a good teacher if you don’t spend more time at school than the hours that you’re paid.”
 - **GT/Leadership Teacher Linda Prendez**

“What they teach is their passion, and because of that passion, they’re prepared for class. They’re on the cutting edge of what’s new in education and are aware of research and data, which will not be effective if you don’t have a good relationship with your students.”
 - **English Teacher Eileen Krueger**

“The perfect teacher is more open-minded. They’re open to hearing different aspects of what the students are going through. They’re also more optimistic than most. There are teachers that are here to help you, but they seem like they don’t want to.”
 - **Aniya Carson, 12th**

“Someone who helps their students and fixes their lesson to fit the students’ learning environment.”
 - **Alaina Zahid, 11th**

“A great Holmes teacher looks different than what you think a great teacher looks like. A great Holmes teacher is very understanding of the students. They respect the students for showing up every day. They’ve taken the time to figure out what makes the kids tick, and when a kid is angry, why they’re angry. A great Holmes teacher has an extra measure of empathy.”
 - **Theatre Teacher Annie Bridges**





Students want more support for problems, mental health

by Janice Ramirez, Executive Editor and Natalia Martinez, Managing Editor

At home, the tension and arguing is only getting worse, and you couldn't sleep last night trying to think of ways to help provide for your family. Now, you're sitting in chemistry, staring at a test, feeling nauseous. Maybe it's nerves from the test, maybe it's that you didn't eat, or maybe it's just the build up of stress taking a toll on your body. The despair takes over. How will you pass this test? Will your family stick together? How much more can you take? You think about talking to your teacher about it, but you see them furiously grading a stack of papers and know that they don't have time for your problems. The despair sets in.

Students on campus are struggling to find the assistance that they need to deal with their problems and overcome mental health challenges. Teachers do their best to help students, but it's usually something they do beyond their assigned duties or without proper support or training. Many school districts in San Antonio and around the country have responded to this crisis by hiring full-time, on-campus social workers to specifically help students with issues at home, and with care for their mental health; however, NISD does not provide campus-specific, full-time social workers.

In NISD, counselors are primarily asked to fill that role, on top of many other responsibilities, the greatest of which is monitoring all students' path to graduation. According to the monthly Counselor Connection newsletter published online by the Holmes Counseling Department, the vast majority

of the counselor's time is taken up with "individual planning," helping students make sure they are getting credits, in the right courses, and on track. With six counselors conducting individual planning for almost 3,000 students, the only time they have to spare is often taken up with responding to students in crisis and meetings with parents. The idea of social workers providing more help on campus is a welcome one to Head Counselor, Dr. Cristella Cantu.

"It would benefit us tremendously," Cantu said. "When we are working with scheduling, they would be available to help students who are in need of speaking to a counselor, whether it be personal or something that has come up in their life, they could speak to that person while we are busy."

Currently, two social workers are available to students on campus through the federal Communities in Schools (CIS) program providing assistance and support for as many students as they can. CIS are not NISD employees, and are funded through the government, so they can sometimes be limited in the scope of help they can provide on campus as well.

Busy students trying to balance school, work and issues at home and in their personal life can find themselves overwhelmed, dealing with anxiety, depression, and panic attacks. They are often on their own for navigating these problems and symptoms.

"When I was going through a lot at home, and school had to be stacked on top of that, it would have been nice to have somebody to talk to and

open up to," Junior Roslyn Clark said.

Clark isn't alone in that experience, and students like senior Marissa Portales believe not having enough support on campus can make matters worse.

"Sometimes I get overwhelmed and stressed from my schoolwork," Portales said. "So then I start crying and no one takes it seriously because 'we're just high schoolers.' But if we had someone who actually takes us seriously, it can change a lot of things."

While counselors and CIS do their best to help any students who express that they need help, students on campus say they don't always reach out for a number of reasons. Some haven't had enough time to get to know their counselors, and don't have trust built up to share these scary problems with them. Others say they fear what will happen to them if they share, like being sent away or hospitalized, and still others have had more success talking through problems with their teachers, but not getting the level of support they need overall.

Students looking for something more in terms of help, could often benefit from actual one-on-one therapy. Since this isn't available to students on campus, many have had to go and find help elsewhere, if they can afford it.

"I did have a therapist. And I can say honestly, with that experience, it was a lot better," Clark said. "I personally saw self-growth within myself, and I think with social workers on campus, kids can do the

same thing.”

Social workers are trained and licensed to both help with the practical needs students have like keeping food on the table and the lights on at home, to being able to provide different kinds of therapy with students, helping them build skills to more effectively manage their stress, anxiety, depression, and more. Austin ISD provides social workers at every high school in their district, servicing the feeder pattern schools as well, and even have additional social workers at campuses with higher need. In town, Harlandale ISD, Judson ISD, Edgewood ISD, and SAISD all provide some kind of full-time social worker dedicated to a campus and/or feeder pattern, while Northside ISD, our school district, does not.

One difference between the local school districts listed above and NISD, is that NISD has a lower percentage of students recognized as economically disadvantaged, while the above districts have between 60 and 98 percent of their students with this designation. Economically disadvantaged students can be under more pressure and stress both on campus and outside of school for a variety of reasons. While the majority of NISD schools have fewer students dealing with these issues than not, Holmes and John Jay are the exceptions, with our campus having 78 percent of our students body labeled as economically disadvantaged, and Jay with 71 percent.

Despite these high numbers of students under extra stress, NISD does not provide campus social workers even for just the high economically disadvantaged campuses.

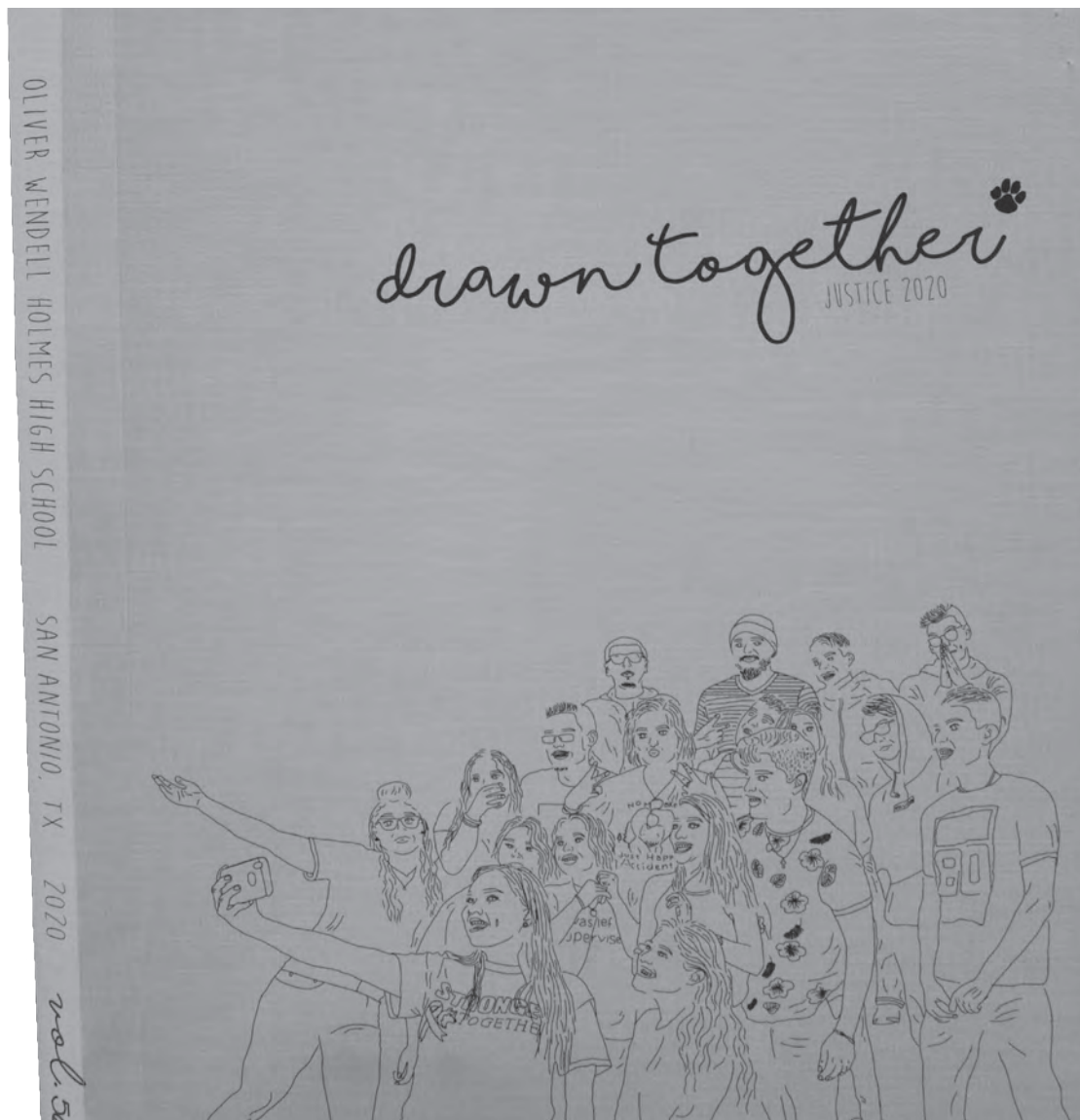
According to the School Social Work Association of America’s website, “School Social Workers are trained mental health professionals with a degree in social work who provide services related to a person’s social, emotional and life adjustment to school and/or society. School Social Workers are the link between the home, school and community in providing direct as well as indirect services to students, families and school personnel to promote and support students’ academic and social success.”

The NASW (National Association Of Social Workers) believes that social work services should be provided to students at least at a ratio of one social worker for every 250 students and at the ideal level, one social worker for every 50 students.

At Holmes and Jay alone, that would mean the district hiring 10-12 social workers for each campus.

“It would make it easier for people to come out if they have problems, and they could have someone to go to,” senior Monique Menchaca said. “And it would be really beneficial for the teachers as well. Our grades probably wouldn’t be as bad because we wouldn’t be as stressed out about our problems.”

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WHAT MAKES A TEACHER GREAT?



Teacher attitude is key to unlocking student achievement

by Alma Rodriguez, Online Editor

Tapping his fingers on the desk, he shifted uncomfortably in his seat, looking back at the clock every ten seconds. He looked down to the worksheet on his desk, questions lingering in the back of his mind, with the prominent thought of how he could figure it out on his own before the teacher could get involved. Before he could think any further, he overheard the teacher raising her voice slightly at a student that had asked her something. Feeling discouraged, he shoved the worksheet in his backpack as the bell finally rang, leaving the classroom as he thought about his slipping grades in that class.

With all the hectic things students go through, sometimes the thing that can affect students the most is the attitude that their teachers have towards them in the classroom. Although many people think that all teachers should have a relationship with their students just so they know how to teach them better, sometimes what really matters is the attitude present and the way things are being presented to students which can impact them and their overall mood.

According to the academic journal *Educational*

Leadership, a study at the College of William and Mary describes how effective teachers have “personal traits such as a positive and caring attitude, fairness and respect for students, enthusiasm, dedication and reflective teaching,” and further research indicates that effective teachers with these traits and others are the single most important factor in a student’s achievement. An effective teacher makes all the difference, and the teacher’s attitude and way of communicating with students plays a large part in their effectiveness.

Attitudes that are brought into an interpersonal interaction can influence people, especially attitudes of teachers, as they are adult figures and play important roles in a students’ life.

“For a lot of students the messages teachers give can shape not just how students view themselves as students but how they view themselves as people,” AP World History teacher Robert Stafford said. “It’s kind of like if any adult makes negative comments towards a student, it can impact them differently than even if their peers make a negative comment

or something like that--it is just a different result.”

A teacher’s attitude can sometimes overshadow what they’re presenting if they’re not thinking about the way in which they’re presenting it, and can influence the class in a positive or negative way.

“Teacher’s attitudes go a long way in helping the environment,” Stafford said. “I think that when teachers are positive about what they do and what we’re doing in class, that naturally rubs off on students and students get a more positive outlook on the course as well.”

Whether it’s a negative or positive attitude, it can change the way students feel not only about the teacher, but the way they feel about and how they decide to apply themselves during that class.

“Having a good attitude towards students really does brighten someone’s day or overall attitude about going to school, or at least going to that class,” sophomore Karen Vela said. “And when teachers have a bad attitude, it really just disconnects the student from ever wanting to try hard or at

least want to go to your class.”

Although attitudes matter a lot, the relationships made are just as important, as they can change the way a student feels about a teacher which can influence them on how hard they work and how much effort they put in for certain teachers.

“I think all kids put teachers into two categories,” AVID teacher and Holmes graduate Eric Falcon said. “You know which ones care and which ones don’t, so sometimes it feels a little heavier on one side, so it makes my heart happy when teachers take the time to get to know kids and build those relationships, because they matter.”

Even though not all teachers can have strong relationships with their students, sometimes they can still affect the students with their careless attitude, whether they realize or not.

“One of my teachers doesn’t give me feedback and it kind of has started affecting me and how I want to pursue my future,” Vela said. “Before I got into the class, I was like, ‘Yeah I want to do this for a career-- I really want to do this,’ but the teacher’s attitude and not really caring has kind of made me doubt myself and made me want to step back and be like, ‘Well maybe I shouldn’t do this anymore.’”

When careless behavior and attitudes are present, sometimes students can feel discouraged and that can affect their academic life as they don’t see the reason to try at all, and as a result those students can become hard to deal with when teachers try to work with them.

“When teachers don’t have good relationships with students, it complicates everything--not just for the teacher, but for the students especially,” Stafford said. “It’s difficult as a teacher sometimes to have strong relationships with so many students, but I think overall having a positive relationship goes a long way in making both sides successful.”

Even if teachers sometimes can have bad attitudes and can spread those negative feelings to their students, the same thing can happen with positive attitudes and feelings which helps the learning environment and the people in it. With the change in the environment, it can make things not only easier but more enjoyable for both teachers and students.

“Teachers who feel comfortable and confident in what they’re doing express that to students and help students build confidence in themselves,” Stafford said. “Happiness and confidence in what you’re

doing often go hand in hand, and teachers who are happy and confident help their students become more happy and confident as well.”

Teachers can not only impact a students’ academic life, but their personal life as well. Students take those examples learned from their teachers and spread them onto the world and grow as a person and it can change how they see everyone around them.

“I remember my teacher was like, ‘You know you’re a really great student, you help around a lot,’” sophomore Serena Rivera said. “She had a lot of positive attitude and that caused me to be a positive person and now I have helped uplift everybody in the room. We got rid of the negative emotions and had positive emotions, all because our teacher was positively influencing us.”

An effective teacher doesn’t only have a good attitude and impacts students and their surroundings, but it actually makes students learn and pushes them to the best of their abilities, bringing the most out of them.

“I think a good teacher is one who really helps to make students better students and people than when they first got into the class,” Stafford said. “I think that’s the most important thing. I think a good teacher is one who pushes the students to

be better and does it in a way that’s respectful, but doesn’t lower expectations or make things easy just for the sake of making everybody happy either.”

The attitude of a teacher can make or break a student’s experience at school, and that plays a big part in a student’s school life as it is a determining factor on a student’s productivity. Teachers who are negative, sarcastic, discouraging to students, and who point out the all of the student’s failures and shortcomings, create negative experiences and feelings in students about school and themselves, causing students to shut down. Teachers who choose positivity, encouragement, and seeing the best in students, give students a positive feeling about themselves and bring the best out of their students academically and personally.

“I had a teacher in the second grade who always encouraged me, always helped me whenever I needed help and always wanted the best for me,” sophomore Marina Rivera said. “Her attitude helped me learn better and helped me succeed and grow as a person and as a student. She helped me absorb knowledge better.”

“For a lot of students, the messages teachers give can shape not just how students view themselves as students, but how they view themselves as people.”

-AP World History Teacher Robert Stafford

GREAT TEACHER ✓ CHECK

According to research reported by Bonni Gourneau of the University of North Dakota, effective teacher attitudes and actions ultimately make a positive difference in the lives of their students. In her article, *Five Attitudes of Effective Teachers: Implications for Teaching Training*, she presents the following five attributes as the most prominent in great teachers:

- Demonstrating caring and kindness**
Genuine caring, interest and concern in students’ lives creates a safe, trusting environment that students need to learn.
- Sharing responsibility**
Great teachers don’t blame the students alone when an assignment, lesson or test goes poorly. They share responsibility with students and find ways to fix what went wrong.
- Sensitively accepting diversity**
Students of all different backgrounds, personalities, cultures, sub-cultures, races, religions, ability levels and interests will feel they are respected and accepted in a great teacher’s classroom.
- Fostering individualized instruction**
Because all students are different, a great teacher is flexible, experiments and adjusts in order to make learning and assignments work for individual students. Great teachers believe work should be equitable, but that it doesn’t have to be exactly the same.
- Encouraging creativity**
The best teachers find ways to engage student’s creativity and interest on assignments, and avoids work that is repetitive and dull. They move work out of textbooks, off of worksheets, and into projects that engage student interest, passion, and students’ real-world problems.

COLLEGE:

ready or not

OPINION: Major changes needed to make us college ready

Staff Editorial

According to the latest Texas Education Agency report card for our campus, only 53.4 percent of students graduating from Holmes are designated as "College, Career, and Military Ready." That means that barely half of our student body is getting the education they need, and of that half, many are designated as "ready" for the military or the workforce, but not for a college education, the one thing that can best lift families in our community out of difficult financial situations. Communities like ours, simply do not send students to college like other campuses. Students who are going into college are not prepared for the rigorous curriculum nor do they obtain the necessary study and organizational skills to be successful in their education. Only a handful of students are getting prepared for life after high school, but not the rest.

As students, we spend a lot of time in the classroom, doing stacks of homework, and we are still not being properly prepared for life after high school. This has to change.

Many students here can agree that they aren't being taught what they need. Most have an idea of what they should be learning which are all around the same topic; finances. Different students share the same opinion here on campus which is 'learning how to pay taxes, how to pay bills, insurance, how to move on after high school, and how to simply suc-

ceed in college.'

We are not provided classes that teach us about these topics. In economics and government during senior year, taxes and finances are discussed, but are not reviewed for as long as it should be, with each class only a semester long and hardly any of it touching on the financial situations of the 77 percent of our campus who are labeled as economically disadvantaged. These topics should be gone over until they are learned, and students are empowered, instead of just enough to pass a test.

Our students have an opportunity to learn more about college readiness in AVID, but not everyone is taking it. AVID provides a curriculum and support system in which students learn about different career paths, and information about colleges. Along with the focus on college, AVID helps to build good study and organizational habits, as well as communication skills in order to work properly with others. AVID is effective in helping kids like us get a foot in the door to a better future. The AVID curriculum should be implemented into our classes along with the adding of more classes focused on specific studies, or interests of ours.

AVID prepares those of us who want to go to college and succeed, but what about the students that aren't going to college? Students believe that 'we're not being set up for failure, but we will not exactly

be successful.' During high school it's all about college, but what about life? Many students have different ideas for their future, so we should focus on teaching what's needed for life in general.

We should have classes that prepare us for basic duties of life. A few students claim that we should learn how to write checks, deposit money, how to make rent, and learn what happens when you don't make rent. Maybe instead of just being thrown out into the real world, we can know the basics of adult life.

If we want to see more students leave this campus and make their way through all of the obstacles that face students who are economically disadvantaged, we can't keep doing the same things over and over. What we cover in the curriculum has to be tied to getting out of those very real problems. We cannot keep doing test prep and practice responses for the STAAR or AP tests, without learning how, once we actually get to college or are living on our own, we can even make it through to a stable place in life. We need more classes like AVID, and we need teachers and administrators to know more about the real world and problems we are walking into after we walk the stage, so that they can be creative and make their classes mean something more than a test score for students who really need it.

SM
EXCELLENCE

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Brian T. Woods, Ed.D.

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Super

Assistant Sup. of Administration

SPEAK UP.

Misty Knapp (VP)

Bert Blount, Jr., Trustee

Student Holiday/Staff Work

Teacher & Student Holiday

Student Holiday

(VP)

Ju

Katie N. Reed, Trustee

Labor Day

Columbus Day/Student Holiday

Student Holiday # Dev.

Student-Parent Handbook

OPINION: Campus needs more student input to improve

Personal Opinion Column by Jayce Sibley, Staff Writer

The average student will spend over 16,000 hours in school throughout high school. This is not taking into account extracurricular activities such as sports or clubs; strictly just the classes that fit into a school day. The meaning of all these hours is to teach students all that they need to learn to survive in the adult world or pursue higher education. A student that spends over 16,000 hours in school shouldn't graduate without learning everything they need to. The school system is designed to teach students, but all school rules and policies are made up by teachers without the students affected having any say in them. Student input on campus would help create policies that directly influence learning and the high school experience at Holmes in a positive manner.

Student input can help make teachers' jobs easier, as they no longer have to guess what the confusing minds of teenagers would be stimulated by. There is an obvious disconnect between students and teachers on this campus that has to be fixed. The teacher-student relationship isn't quite as harmonious as it should be. Students feel scared to approach certain teachers or scared to speak up when it should be an environment where no one is scared to speak. Input from students would help eliminate problems like this as well as ones of how students learn best. It must be a two way street though, if teachers are going to implement student ideas, then students have to be serious about the

feedback they give.

Not just teachers see an improvement through student input, but the administration as well. They no longer need to have tardy stations if students are excited, or at least not opposed, to be in class and show up on time. The role of an administrator becomes so much easier if students enjoy class while still learning the important information they're required to. They're not worried about behavior, only how to improve learning and the high school experience, which is what they should be focused on anyway.

Students enjoy the biggest benefit when adding student input to Holmes. Students being able to be involved in teaching strategies and other policies alleviates many problems for students. School isn't nearly as dreadful when you've had a part in how the school or classroom runs. The teacher-student relationship immediately is boosted, as a student, you know that a teacher is receptive to what you're saying if they have already shown to be capable of taking your ideas. This adds trust to the relationship that travels both ways. Learning also isn't nearly as difficult when you're able to have a conversation about how you learn best. It becomes easier to take in information, which is the ultimate goal. Students go on to graduate in better spots because everything taught is geared to their learning style. The most interesting benefit might be to the high school experience at Holmes. Student input doesn't have to be confined to the classroom, but can also be used when directly talking about the campus. Stu-

dents would be able to influence how our campus looks and feels. This would lift morale, which would positively affect everyone at Holmes, from visitors to everyday people who attend Holmes.

There are a multitude of ways that we can take in student input on campus. The administration could give out school-wide student surveys and plan things like the School Improvement Plan based on the feedback for the next year. Teachers could have students write teacher evaluations about what they do well and what they don't, or have students rate the effectiveness of each assignment on how it helped them understand each concept being learned, and teachers make changes based on that.

While students wait for administrators and teachers to open up ways to hear student opinion, there are ways students can take action now. If students feel that they haven't had enough input, then they have traditional ways to submit proposals to administration such as through student council. If more students were a part of the things going on in student council, then it's hard to ignore them all calling for the same things. Each level on campus has their own way of implementing student input into Holmes High School, and students can even attend school board meetings to make their voice heard.

Student input should be something everyone on campus can use. Student input is able to maximize those 16,000 hours we spend in school, and will allow students to reach new heights of success and improve the high school experience.

SPORTS SHORTS

by Alexis Trevino, Sports Director



VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL

Made it to playoffs, were 4th in District

Senior guard Lanay Wheaton sizes up her free throw after drawing a shooting foul just before halftime in their playoff game with Reagan High School, keeping the score close for a competitive first half.



Final Record: 24 W - 8 L

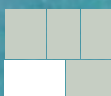
Senior post Alissa Martinez fights around a Reagan Rattler, following her shot to retrieve a rebound in case the ball doesn't drop. The Huskies were competitive in their first playoff game in many, many years.



VARSITY GIRLS SOCCER

Current Record: 4 W - 12 L - 0 T

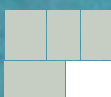
Junior defender Natalia Martinez handles the ball in open space, looking for a passing lane through the O'Connor defense, to her teammates downfield.



VARSITY BOYS BASKETBALL

Final Record: 8 W - 22 L

Senior point guard Robert Gil uses strength and a burst of speed to work the ball past the Taft press and exploit a mismatch in numbers on offense against the Red Raiders.



VARSITY BOYS SOCCER

Current Record: 6 W - 13 L - 0 T

Sophomore forward Albaro Acosta takes his time with good form on a corner kick against John Jay, hoping to find one of his teammates and the goal in the cross.



photo by Raquel Medina



photo by Raquel Medina



photo by Christian Malley

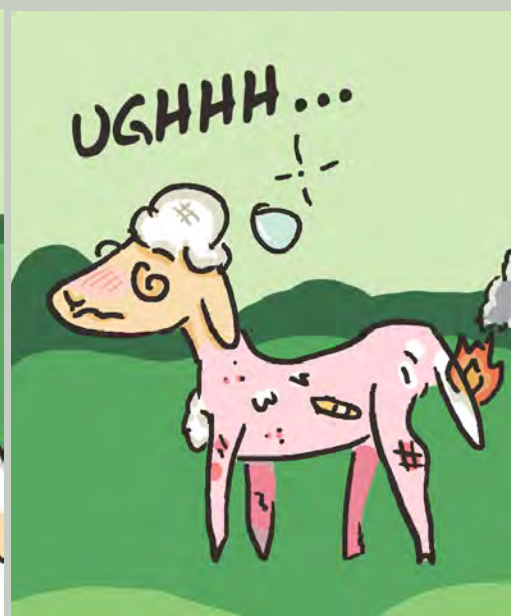


photo by Jaden Alanis



photo by Harmoni Guerrero

COMIC RELIEF



"BAAAAAAD NEWS"

written and illustrated by Lucille Gradillas

SHOUT OUT

The "shout out" section is dedicated to those making a positive impact on our campus, whether it be students, faculty, or organizations.

We appreciate your time and dedication to making our school a better place. In this issue we would like to shoutout:

Speech and Debate Team - Each year they have progressively gotten better, and have made major breakthroughs, especially this year in their latest UIL.

Mrs. McKenna -She always makes it a point to check in on her students and their mental health, putting effort into helping them succeed.

Senior Joe Barrera -Someone who is always there for his friends, and helps them when they're in trouble.