

The Pirates' Hook

THE INVESTIGATIVE ISSUE

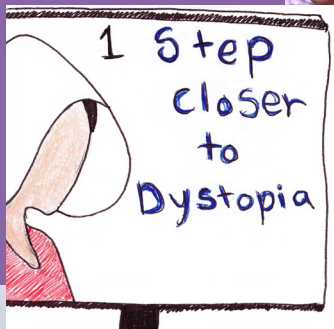
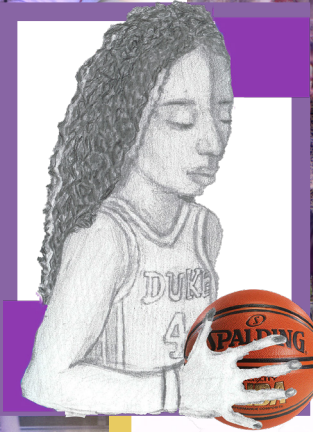


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Editorial

Answering hard questions is hard work

In light of the DPS salary adjustment, the Hook has spent the past four weeks investigating the issue. Long story short, DPS increased many employees' pay rates for the 2023-24 school year. Then district leaders realized they couldn't afford it, so they omitted out-of-state and private experience from employees' salary steps. This change dramatically decreases the pay of 1,300 classified staff members and has resulted in protests, school closings and the resignation of DPS superintendent Pascal Mubenga.

The Hook has published four articles exploring staff views, capturing protests and sharing the facts. Yet, there are still unanswered questions: What will the district do? Will pay steps come back? Will people keep protesting? Are we going to miss more days of school?

Many rumors have been circulating about why pay was changed, and it's important to sort through the misinformation. As journalists, it's up to us to find these answers and share them with the community.

In addition to the recent salary drama, Hook students have been investigating answers to their own questions as well. For the past semester, students have been doing research and interviews to provide comprehensive answers for anything from why people don't watch women's sports to why some students refuse to eat school lunch.

These semester-long projects not only reflect the concerns of Hook staff, but they answer questions prevalent in the Riverside community. In fact, almost all of our investigative content is fueled by interviews and opinions from Riverside students and staff. Abortion access in North Carolina heavily affects the Riverside community, which we explore on page 32 with student Leilani Provencio. The Riverside building is in a declining condition, affecting students of Riverside as seen on page 22. Sleep deprivation affects a large majority of students, which we explore with students on page 16.

Answering these questions is often a messy process, as information, even when it's public, is hard to find, but the Hook serves to bring answers to the community. In times of uncertainty, we hope to ease confusion with articles like those in this edition.

A la luz del ajuste salarial del DPS, Hook ha pasado las últimas cuatro semanas investigando el asunto. En pocas palabras, DPS aumentó las tasas salariales de muchos empleados para el año escolar 2023-24. Luego, los líderes del distrito se dieron cuenta de que no podían pagárselo, por lo que omitieron la experiencia privada y de fuera del estado en los escalones salariales de los empleados. Este cambio reduce drásticamente el salario de 1,300 miembros de empleados clasificados y ha provocado protestas, cierres de escuelas y la renuncia del superintendente del DPS, Pascal Mubenga.

The Hook ha publicado cuatro artículos que exploran las opiniones de los empleados, capturan las protestas y comparten los hechos. Sin embargo, todavía quedan preguntas sin respuesta: ¿Qué hará el distrito? ¿Volverán los pasos de pago? ¿La gente seguirá protestando? ¿Vamos a perder más días de escuela?

Han circulado muchos rumores sobre por qué se cambió el salario y es importante aclarar la desinformación. Como periodistas, depende de nosotros encontrar estas respuestas y compartirlas con la comunidad.

Además del reciente drama salarial, los estudiantes de Hook también han estado investigando respuestas a sus propias preguntas.

Durante el último semestre, los estudiantes han estado realizando investigaciones y entrevistas para proveer respuestas integrales a cualquier tema, desde por qué la gente no ve deportes femeninos hasta por qué algunos estudiantes se niegan a comer la comida de la escuela.

Estos proyectos de un semestre no solo reflejan las preocupaciones del personal de Hook, sino que también responden preguntas frecuentes en la comunidad de Riverside. De hecho, casi todo nuestro contenido de investigación se basa en entrevistas y opiniones de estudiantes y personal de Riverside. El acceso al aborto en Carolina del Norte afecta en gran medida a la comunidad de Riverside, que exploramos en la página [vacío] con la estudiante Leilani Provencio. El edificio de Riverside está en mal estado, lo que afecta a los estudiantes de Riverside, como se ve en la página [vacío]. La falta de sueño afecta a una gran mayoría de estudiantes, algo que exploramos con los estudiantes en la página [vacío].

Responder a estas preguntas usualmente es un proceso complicado, ya que la información, incluso cuando es pública, es difícil de encontrar, pero Hook sirve para llevar respuestas a la comunidad. En tiempos de inseguridad, esperamos aliviar la confusión con artículos como este en esta edición.



Silent Stadiums, Empty Bleachers

Women's teams now have almost equal resources as men's. Why are people still not watching?



(Top) Fans sit in bleachers during women's basketball game against Hillside on January 12. (Bottom) 30 minutes later, the stands fill for the men's game. Although the men's and women's teams have similar resources, there are major differences in fan attendance.

By Piper Winton, Valentina Serrano-Gonzalez & Aureli Dominguez

On Thursday, November 7, the so-called basketball school, Duke University, had only 5,600 in attendance for arguably the biggest game of the women's basketball season against the number one in the nation, South Carolina.

Two weeks later, 9,200 fans watched Duke's men's team beat unranked Southern Indiana during Thanksgiving break, when students weren't even on campus.

Only six miles away is Riverside High School. It's a different world, but the basketball teams draw similarly lopsided crowds.

On January 12 at 6:45 pm, the crowd watching the women's basketball game was almost silent. As the team trailed Hillside in the second half, the few students there were on their

phones and the only people paying attention were family members.

At 7:00, people started to slowly file in and the gym filled in anticipation for the next game: the men's.

As soon as the clock hit 7:15, music started blaring and cheerleaders began performing on the court. The men rushed in from the locker room and the dead gym came alive.

"As the women's game goes on, attendance rises," said men's coach Brian Strickland. "Whether they are excited about the start of the men's game or the end of the women's game, it's not for me to decide."

Resources, funding and social media impact are thought to have a major impact on attention and attendance. But while

all these factors have increased greatly, the gap in fan interest is still wide.

According to Duke Athletics, the women's team had a total attendance of 34,133 across all home games during the 2022-2023 season. The men's had 149,204.

Resource gaps

According to a study on gender inequality conducted by the NCAA, women now receive up to 40% of school athletics funding. While there still is a gap, the increase in funding has been significant.

Majority of resources at the college level are similar between men's and women's sports, if not the same.

"We have a similar amount of staff, but as for resources, their things are a lot bigger," said

Jadyn Donovan, a freshman on the women's basketball team.

Both teams have performance staff, including nutritionists and mental health advisors. There's also media staff, coaches, athletic directors and academic advisors. They both have post-practice meals and practice in the same facility, but the men's training room is bigger. The men's team also has an ice tub, a tv room with video games and reclining seats and only flies private when traveling to away games.

"When you walk into our practice facility, all of their things are very close and convenient and ours is all spread out," said Donovan. "They have their gaming room right next to everything. And I have to walk all the way to the other side of the building just to get to my locker room."

At Riverside, men's and women's teams receive nearly identical resources, but different sports have different needs.

18 counties in North Carolina just received \$68.2 million for athletic facility renovation and upgrades of the state's total \$30 billion budget. Durham is not one of the 18 counties, leaving the district to rely on federal and private funding to supplement their athletics budgets.

Riverside offers 17 sports teams over the course of a year. When operating these sports teams, having the proper equipment, space, concessions, uniforms and coaches are just a few components that teams might need to have a successful season.

At Riverside, each team is provided with these basic necessities.

"Every team, whether they be a boy or girl counterpart team, will get the same thing," said Riverside athletic director Robert Duncan. "There's not a difference in the resources they're given. I think it's a difference in the perception of what people assume was paid for and what the cost of operating that support is."

Duncan, who has also coached football and track and field, explained that all these factors differ depending on the general sports interest and roster.

"It's a huge stock difference just looking at the number of people who participate in those teams," he said. "If you look at a team like soccer, we may carry 30 people for the entire program, whereas a football team may have 30 people per roster, so 30 people in the JV and 30 people on the varsity in a given year."

Junior Zoe Cordell has experienced this herself. She plays for the women's soccer team and was also a kicker for the football team last year.

"There's a lot of equipment, since there's different groups that train, like offense and defense," she said.

Cordell also said that more participants means more equipment, especially for football.

And some teams use facilities like the weight room more than others.

Fundraising is another aspect that plays a big role in athletics at Riverside, and while the amount fundraised does differ per team, it's based on the individuals who support the team, not the school itself.

"Anything that is provided for the team, such as food, comes from fundraising, not from Riverside Athletics," said Strickland. "[For example, my] JV got sent off with snacks and water, and varsity is getting subway tonight. So it all depends on how much we fundraise."

"As far as for men's and women's soccer each team fundraises with the same goal of \$10,000," said Sarah Cade, Riverside's head women's and assistant men's soccer coach.

Besides fundraising and resources, both teams practice during a 90 minute session focused on conditioning and skill and have the same number of paid positions on the coaching staff.

Cordell said that the amount of time teams spend training at school varies widely.

"It's hard to compare football and soccer, because football practices are three hours every day," Cordell said. "You go to the weight room, you go out to the field, and sometimes there's film sessions. It's a lot more commitment."

Instagram and endorsements

Social media is another resource that drives fan interest. These posts share team information such as game times and statistics, as well as highlights, to bring attention to the sport, not just from students and faculty, but also from the community.

At Riverside, the Pirates Athletics Media club promotes all different sporting events. They have students cover games, post on Instagram and keep the school informed about scores and dates. But even though this club is for all sports, men's games get covered more often.

"Men's sports have more people wanting to cover them," said senior Lauren Powrie, president of Pirates Athletics Media.

If no one is signed up to cover a game, Powrie's job is to assign them to one. She often has to assign people to cover sparsely-attended women's sports. This ensures all sports get covered, but the men's coverage is often more comprehensive due to fan enthusiasm.

Throughout the 2023-24 season, the men have had a total of 9 Instagram posts on the Pirates Athletic media account, while the women have only had 4. The account also had a TikTok about men's basketball reach 40 thousand views while their most viewed video about a women's sports team only reached 1,051.

The Riverside women's soccer account, however, is an outlier compared to the low views of the other women's sport teams. A video on the team's TikTok made in April of 2023 reached 34.5 thousand views and an Instagram reels made in November of 2022 got 11.3 thousand. On the other end of the spectrum is Riverside's gymnastics account, which has one video with 32 views.

Frequent posts that share updates, practice info, photos and highlight videos does help grow an audience. Cade has seen this personally. On days when the women's soccer account posts, more people show up for the game.

"I have seen social media play a role in attendance," she said. "The girls team does a really good job of marketing, which definitely helps."

Social media plays a big role in college athletics as well. At Duke, both the men's and women's teams have a social media staff, yet the men's team has 1.3 million followers while the women's has 97.4 thousand.

"We try to post more frequently now that we are in season but I know the men's team posts a lot of IG reels and stuff," said Donovan.

The women's basketball team's content comes from shootarounds, practices and

"The guys would play the same terrible team, and fans would still go."

-Jadyn Donovan

halftime game updates, while the men's content is fan-connected, posting gameday outfits, Coach Schyer high fiving fans, and reels about things barely even basketball related such as TikToks of players dancing.

With 10.4K followers, TJ Power, a freshman on Duke's men's basketball team, is aware of the benefits of having a large social media presence. He has seen firsthand how the women's team is trying to grow theirs.

"The women's coach is great and she's been marketing the team very well," said Power. "Social media presence has gone up a lot. I don't know how quickly that will help with attention or attendance, but I think eventually it's going to start to stack up."

The NIL provides students with the opportunity to earn money from their sport. Before it was enacted in July of 2021, student-athletes could not sign endorsement deals, charge money for autographs or get commission for merchandise before they went pro.

Now, student-athletes have a claim to their name, number and image, which plays a major role in social media presence and attention as well.

"It's just dry either way."

-Shamia Holder



Social media posts from Duke basketball players TJ Power (left) and Jadyon Donovan (right). The men's team has over 1 million more followers than the women's.

Almost every player on the men's team has an agent. Agents can talk to the head coach. They also provide their player with feedback, resources such as personal trainers, potential endorsement deals and connections to the NBA.

"It's like we are getting compensated for the attention we bring to the school and all the work we put in," said Power.

At Duke, athletes are making up to 1 million dollars through the NIL. Out of the top 16, only 1 is a woman, track and field athlete Emily Cole.

"The NIL is still new, so I know we are trying to get more involved in that and I know we have a plan for next year," said Donovan. "[Our coaches] are going to make sure we have similar resources and opportunities for NIL deals as the guys do but, I don't think we will ever be able to match the guys in terms of people who want to interact with them."

Outside of the stadium, the women's team doesn't draw much attention.

Donovan's recognition for being on the women's team is

limited to pictures with old people, while the men are offered NIL deals by simply walking into a restaurant.

"We hang out with [the women's team] a good amount and even in public people ask us for pictures and don't even realize those are women's basketball players," said Power.

"I feel like where it's different is that in men's basketball it is very easy to get paid, but for the women it is like you have to have some sort of extraordinary personality, a certain look about you or an event that sets you off," said Power. "There are increasingly more female athletes getting NIL stuff, especially on the individualized side, like people like [LSU gymnast] Livvy Dunne, where it's based on their image."

Why not watch good basketball?

From being the only girl in her co-ed church league to playing at Duke, Donovan has experienced a lack of attention at every level.



Donovan grew up in Prince George County, MD, and attended Sidwell Friends high school, where she was on the number-one basketball team in the nation. Despite that title, the team was often overlooked.

"Men's basketball was bigger," said Donovan. "We would only have big turnouts when there were big games, and our league was pretty terrible, so no one would really come to our games. But the guys would play the same terrible team, and fans would still go."

On a regular basis, parents and other family members were the women's fanbase at Sidwell Friends.

"Having your school show up for your games was something we really appreciated, but it was rare," says Donovan. "It was annoying because we were really good. Why not come watch good basketball?"

Despite women's team's success, more attention towards the men's team is a common theme.

Power saw the same occurrences at his high school, Worcester Academy, where he and his sister were on the

basketball teams.

"We had some high-profile kids on our team, so we pulled in a lot of people," said Power. "We probably had 600-700 people at a game, and when playoff time came around, it was in the thousands."

The women's team at Worcester had high-profile players as well, like Aliyah Boston, the WNBA's number-one pick in 2022, and Oluchi Okanawa, the twenty-seventh-ranked player in the class of 2023 who now plays for Duke. But attendance still lagged.

"There was definitely an attention dropoff between the boys and girls," said Power. "I would say there would probably be 150 people at the women's games. It's a lot less."

Riverside has had star players on women's teams, too.

The Pirates had their best season in school history 2014-2015, finishing 22-3 overall and 9-1 in the conference. Ranked number-one in the state at times, the team's top three players all landed division-I scholarships.

It was then-captain Moné Jones' senior year. Jones was the conference player of the year, all-state selection and McDonald's All-American nominee.

Even at its best, she said the women's team didn't truly have the spotlight.

"[Students are] always going to support the guys, whether they're good or bad," Jones told *The Pirates' Hook* during a 2022 interview. "They're always going to show up for those games."

And as more students recognized that the team was really good, more came to games and backed the team.

"It varied," she said. "We did have a decent crowd. But for women's basketball, if you're good or not, your crowds are

just not going to be the same as men's," she said.

Nearly a decade later, even though the resources and commitment to each team is similar, the gap in attendance is still big.

Riverside basketball players Corey Hairston Jr. and Sham-eia Holder have seen the same problems at their games. The stands during the women's games are primarily empty, with a few families watching, but during the men's game, families from both sides show up and the student section is overflowing.

"Opponent doesn't even play a big role in our game," said Holder. "It's just dry either way."

Cordell sees similar trends at Riverside in other sports.

"For football, our home side is mostly filled," she said. "But for girls soccer games sometimes we'll get like eight people. If we're nice to the boys

team they'll come."

Getting students to attend high school games can be a challenge. Assignments, work, practice and income are all factors, but they aren't gender specific.

"We've tried to incentivize people to come with the athlete pass," said Strickland, who is also Riverside's assistant athletic director. "I mean \$10 isn't cheap. It's tough for our demographic and our school to do 10, 11 home games, paying \$10 each game."

Even for schools where games are free, like Worcester Academy, women's games are severely under attended. And attendance deficits can grow even larger in college athletics.

"In high school, we at least had outside support, so we didn't feel as bad," said Donovan. "But at Duke, there's not nearly as much. It is really really

obvious when it's a women's basketball game versus a men's game."

The atmosphere at Duke men's basketball is a big reason Power chose Duke.

"Our crowd gives us super-powers," he said. "The energy they bring makes you feel like you can do something you never thought you could do."

None of that energy shows up for the women's games.

"It's just like a couple of old people, like love them, but really that is our only fanbase," said Donovan. "Sometimes there might be grad students who have nothing better to do though."

"It's disappointing because, like, this is D1 basketball," said Donovan.

Nellie Purdy also contributed to this story.

• PHOTO BY PIPER WINTON



Shamia Holder high fives teammates during basketball game versus Hillside. Even when the team is doing well, attendance lags.

"It's disappointing because, like, this is D1 basketball."

¿Los estudiantes de ESL están realmente involucrados en el principal de Riverside?

POR DELIA AGUILAR, GIOVANNI VARELA-BENITEZ & ARELA VARELA-ARROYO

Riverside High School está llena de estudiantes diversos de todo tipo de orígenes étnicos diferentes, pero no siempre ha sido así.

En 2011, alrededor del 17% de los estudiantes de Riverside eran hispanos. En 2024, será del 39.3%, lo que lo convertirá en el grupo demográfico más grande de la escuela.

Cómo creció la población hispana, tanto dentro de la escuela como en todo Durham, y lo que esto significa tanto para Riverside como para los estudiantes, es una historia casi tan diversa como la escuela misma.

A lo largo de la historia de Estados Unidos, muchas familias han venido a Estados Unidos en busca de una vida y una educación mejores, muchas de las cuales no hablaban inglés. Cuando eligen mudarse a Durham y asistir a Riverside, es el programa de inglés como segundo idioma (ESL) lo que los lleva a tener éxito en la escuela.

Al comienzo del año escolar 2023-24, Riverside tenía menos de 100 estudiantes inscritos en el programa ESL, pero a medida que avanzaba el año, el número se disparó a 467 y sigue contando.

"Definitivamente ha aumentado en los últimos seis años," afirmó Karen Keim. "La población de estudiantes identificados como estudiantes de inglés ha crecido enormemente."

Keim la entrenadora de graduación de ESL, ha estado trabajando en Riverside durante seis años. Y cree que las clases de refugio, que brindan una forma sencilla de aprender, no son una buena idea para los estudiantes de ESL porque el objetivo para estos estudiantes es integrarlos en la cultura escolar convencional. Kiem quiere los estudiantes de ESL eventualmente se integraran a la cultura escolar convencional.

The Pirates' Hook preparó una encuesta para un grupo de estudiantes de ESL haciéndoles

preguntas sobre sus antecedentes. De 17 personas, nuestros datos nos mostraron que la mayoría eran de Honduras.

En otra pregunta, mostró que de los 17 estudiantes de ESL que respondieron la encuesta, la mayoría de los estudiantes dijeron que habían vivido en los Estados Unidos durante dos a cuatro años.

Pero los estudiantes de ESL no son sólo hispanos. Hay niños de todo el mundo que están obligados a tomar estas clases.

"Por ejemplo, en Irak o en los países africanos, normalmente llegan a través de una organización de refugiados," dijo Keim.

Últimamente, ha habido un aumento de estudiantes de Afganistán que toman clases de ESL, lo cual es uno de los cambios en la demografía a lo largo de los años de tener ESL.

"No creo que hubiera ningún estudiante afgano cuando comencé aquí," dijo Jeremiah Safford. Safford imparte dos clases este semestre, estas clases incluyen inglés cuatro y ESL.

Ha estado enseñando en Riverside durante cinco años. Y aunque sus estudiantes de ESL provienen de todo el mundo, la mayoría de ellos son hispanos.

Mientras ayuda a sus estudiantes a aclimatarse al idioma inglés y a las escuelas estadounidenses, una de las partes más desafiantes de su trabajo es ayudarlos a acceder a las mismas oportunidades que la población estudiantil general de Riverside.

Afirma que la representación de los estudiantes hispanos podría ser mejor y un ejemplo de ello podría ser que el gobierno estudiantil incluya a más estudiantes hispanos. Destacando también que el programa ROTC acoge a una gran cantidad de estudiantes hispanos y también al equipo de fútbol.

En su perspectiva, afirma que escuchó que la gente en general ha tenido problemas para ser sociable,

pero cree que eso ha unido a los estudiantes hasta cierto

punto. Lo que significa que los estudiantes pueden hablar sobre las cosas que les gustan o no les gustan de la escuela.

Para algunos de sus hijos, el inglés es de hecho su segundo idioma, pero en muchos casos, tenía estudiantes que ya venían con 3 o más idiomas aprendidos.

"ESL no debería consistir en intentar reemplazar el otro idioma, ¿verdad? Debe tratar de respetar a ambos," dijo Safford.

Él anima a sus alumnos a seguir practicando sus lenguas maternas y a practicar ambos idiomas al mismo tiempo porque puede ayudar a desarrollar el cerebro de muchas maneras. Además, la capacidad de hablar varios idiomas es una habilidad valiosa.

"Les está ayudando a encontrar los recursos que necesitan y a comprender lo que sucede a su alrededor. Y eso es lo que realmente me gusta de ESL," dijo Safford.

A Safford le gustaría ver más oportunidades para que los estudiantes de ESL tomen clases de honores y AP, pero señaló que es difícil porque las clases avanzadas tienen más contenido y, a menudo, avanzan más rápido.

También afirmó que puede haber obstáculos sociales que impidan que los estudiantes de ESL también tomen clases AP y Honores.

"Especialmente si la mayoría de las personas son hablantes nativos de inglés," dijo Safford. "He oído de estudiantes que se sienten intimidados, no quieren hablar."

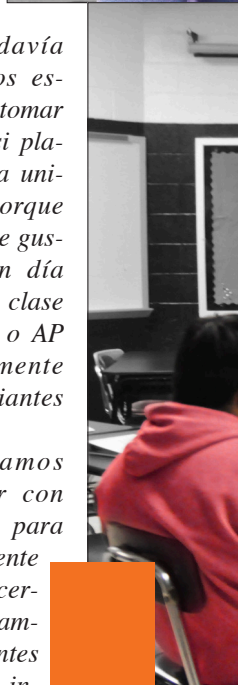
Cuando los estudiantes lleguen por primera vez a los Estados Unidos tomarán clases de ESL. Una

vez que tienen, se les asigna a clases regulares, pero una de las clases se mantiene como clase protegida.

"Mantendremos la clase de inglés como clase de ESL como refugio," dijo Safford.

Pero todavía anima a los estudiantes a tomar clases AP si planean ir a la universidad porque es gratis y le gustaría algún día ofrecer una clase de honores o AP específicamente para estudiantes de ESL.

"Tendríamos que contar con el personal para ello, y la gente tendría los certificados y también suficientes estudiantes interesados," dijo Safford.



(Top) Al graduat teaches

Are ESL students truly part of mainstream Riverside?

BY DELIA AGUILAR, GIOVANNI VARELA-BENITEZ & ARELA VARELA-ARROYO

Riverside High School is full of diverse students from all types of different ethnic backgrounds, but it hasn't always been this way.

In 2011, about 17% of Riverside students were Hispanic. In 2024, it's 39.3%, mak-

ing it the largest demographic in the school.

How the Hispanic population grew, both within the school and throughout Durham, and what it means for both Riverside and the students, is a story almost as diverse as the school itself.

Throughout America's history, families have come to the US in search of a better life and education, many of whom did not speak English. When they choose to move to Durham and attend Riverside, it's the English as a Second Language program (ESL) that leads them to succeed in school.

At the beginning of the 2023-24 school year Riverside had less than 100 students enrolled in the ESL program. But as the year progressed, the number shot up to 467 and counting.

"It's definitely increasing over the last six years," said Karen Keim. "The population of students who are identified as English language learners has grown tremendously."

Keim, Riverside's graduation coach, has been working at Riverside for six years. Some of the students she works with take sheltered classes, which are for ESL students only and provide language support

in addition to the course content.

Keim wants ESL students to eventually integrate into mainstream school culture.

The Pirates' Hook put together a poll for a group of ESL students asking them questions about their background. Out of 17 people, the majority were from Honduras.

On another question, it showed out of 17 ESL students that took the survey, the majority of students said they had lived in the U.S for two to four years.

But ESL students aren't just Hispanics. There are kids from all over the world taking these classes.

"For instance, Iraq, or African countries, they come usually through a refugee organization," said Keim.

Lately, there has been an increase of students from Afghanistan who are taking ESL classes which is one of the changes in the demographics throughout the years of having ESL.

"I don't think there were any Afghan students when I started here," said Jeremiah Safford.

Safford teaches two classes this semester, these classes include English four and ESL.

He has been teaching at Riverside for five years. And while his ESL students come from all over the world, the majority of them are Hispanic.

As he helps his students acclimate to the English language and American schools, one of the most challenging parts of his job is helping them access the same opportunities as Riverside's general student population.

Safford believes the Hispanic students could be better represented in student government, but notes that the ROTC program and soccer teams have a large amount of Hispanic students.

He thinks that people in general have been having trouble with being social, but the ESL program has brought students together to some extent. Students can talk about the

things that they like or don't like about school.

For some of his kids, English is indeed their second language. But in many cases, he had students that came with three or more languages already learned.

"ESL shouldn't be about trying to replace the other language, right?" Safford said. "It needs to be about having respect for both."

He encourages his students to keep practicing their home languages and practice both languages at the same time because it can help develop your brain in many ways. Plus, the ability to speak multiple languages is a valuable skill.

"It's helping them find the resources that they need and helping them understand what's going on around them," Safford said. "And that's what I really like about ESL."

Safford would like to see more opportunities for ESL students to take honors and AP classes but he noted it's difficult because advanced classes have more content and often move faster.

He also stated that there may be social obstacles that may stop ESL students from taking AP and honors classes, too.

"Especially if it's the majority of people who are native English speakers," he said. "I've heard from students that they feel intimidated. They don't want to talk."

When students first arrive in the U.S. they will take ESL classes. Once they have, they are put into mainstream classes but one of the classes is kept as a sheltered class.

"We'll keep the English class as an ESL class as a shelter," said Safford.

But he still encourages students to take AP classes if they are planning to go to universities because it's free. He would also like to someday offer an honors or AP class specifically for ESL students.

"We'd have to have the staff for it, and people would have the certificates and also enough students who are interested," he said.



ex Ramirez teaches his ESL class. (Middle) Riverside graduation coach Karen Keim (middle). (Bottom) Julie Farkas teaches her ESL class.

• PHOTOS BY DELIA AGUILAR

35 hours a week online

Has school become too tech dependent?

BY NELLIE PURDY & AUSTIN WYMORE

English teacher Barry Varela is one of few educators at Riverside who prefers to teach using mainly paper and pencil assignments rather than online materials.

Varela is only in his second year of teaching. On his first day of work, he asked his students if they'd rather have physical or online assignments.

"I was very surprised that the vast majority of the students told me that they would prefer to read on paper," he said.

Before teaching, Varela worked as an editor. This was his job since before computers and modern technology were introduced to education and the writing industry. He was sent hard copies of books, which he then read through, annotated, and sent back with edits.

After witnessing how technology has changed academia and the writing industry, he believes the modern wave of tech isn't entirely beneficial.

"If everything is being done online... ChatGPT and other AI resources are temptations for students to do less of their own work," he said.

Beyond student opinions, he finds many digital platforms, like Canvas, and online resources frustrating.

"Some information processing tools are far more complicated than the average person needs," he said.

Still, Varela assigns essays digitally and uses his projector to share videos and instructions with his class.

His teaching style may not be popular, but he stands with his choice.

"We all spend enough time as it is looking at our phones and at our screens," he said.

Some of Varela's students prefer online assignments.

"We have a lot of work on paper that we do," said sophomore Vince Spencer. "If things are online, it's easier and it's cleaner to take care of. If you don't have internet at home or if the site isn't working then you can't access your work. If everything is on paper, you can lose a paper and have to get another one, it can just get messy in your backpack."

Sophomore Conrad Hamel agrees.

"I like having everything online to be honest," he said. "If I just feel lazy, I can do it at home."

Hamel understands Varela's low-tech approach, but thinks teachers should know how to use the platforms to help prepare students for college and careers.

"I feel like it's an issue when teachers don't know how to use technology," he said. "You have this system that's sort of built around technology, and when not everyone knows how to use it, it becomes a problem."

Modern technology has been used in classrooms since 2009, but virtual learning didn't become the standard until the COVID-19 pandemic.

When current students' parents went to school, they used little more than paper, pencils and books. Personal computers existed, but class sets were rare.

According to the Educational Testing Service's policy information report around 85% of schools in America today have adopted chromebooks. The internet, cell phones and artificial intelligence are the new normal.

An unprecedented amount of technology accompanies today's generation of students to and from school. As social media, cell phones, video games and the internet evolve, their significance, prominence and place in students' lives does too.

Although technology has provided many benefits, there is still more to learn about the negative effects it may have.

Riverside attempts to issue each of its almost 2000 students a personal Chromebook with access to their DPS account. This year it took about three weeks to distribute Chromebooks. It took even longer for many students who were new to the school or district.

IT Support Assistant Coach James Carter gets daily visits from students with technology issues. At the beginning of every school year new students scramble to him for help setting up their DPS account. Many teachers integrate the chromebooks into their coursework at the very beginning. That leaves up to a third of the school at risk of falling behind until their accounts get fixed.

When power outages or internet losses occur, most teachers' lesson plans become impossible to follow.

"Sometimes [connection problems are] just as easy as resetting something and I can do that," said Carter. "If it's not something I [can] do I have to pass it along to our DPS people downtown."

Computers are not always reliable, either. They can shut down, break, have software issues and sometimes require maintenance, which most students can't perform.

The most common problem Carter is ap-



PHOTO BY RORY O'CONNOR

Students work on their school-issued chromebooks. Most classes require assignments be turned in online.

proached with is Chromebook repair, most of which can't be done on campus.

"I have to send them to the warehouse for [district IT] to fix," he said. "It takes at least a week."



Science teacher Tavia Webley has been teaching longer than her students have been alive. In her 25-year career, she's watched a lot of devices come and go.

"The use of technology has grown tremendously," she said. "[When I started teaching] we had overhead transparencies. The overhead machine was sitting in the front with that big, bright light. You wrote on the clear transparencies, and students could see it projected"

Cell phones weren't around back then. The earliest phones could only make and receive calls. When flip phones were the only available handheld devices, students rarely had them out during class.

Then came text messaging, and over time phones changed from a means of communication to what seems like an extension of its owner.

"Now, cell phones are out on a regular," Webley said. "I think, after the pandemic, students may have thought of cell phones as their best friend."

To accommodate these changes, DPS developed policies surrounding the technology use of students. At first, phones were prohibited. Then the district allowed students to use them for assignments, but only when teachers permitted. The current rule in Riverside's current parent and student handbook, is:

"Unless specifically authorized by a teacher or school administrator, students shall not use, display, or have in the "on" position any personal electronic communication or entertainment device, including cell phones, pagers, music players, electronic games, or similar items, during instructional time or mandatory school assemblies and activities."

Any device possessed or used in violation of this policy may be confiscated and held for return to the student's parent or guardian"

At this point, many rules about phone use

during class are left to teachers' discretion.

"I wish everybody was on the same page," said Grayson Knotts, a junior in Webley's class. "Going from one class and not using your phone to another and being able to use it whenever you want is a little weird."

Webley uses all types of technology in the classroom. For example, students review concepts using Kahoot and use internet search engines to find more information about course content.

"I like to use it for the students to do research [and] understand how our particular concept that we're learning," she said.

There are times, however, when she struggles to keep her students off their phones before and after those activities.

"Now it seems like students feel it is their right...to have a cell phone in a classroom," Webley said. "They don't understand the flip side, how it is a distraction. It is really impeding them communicating with people, as well as completely engaging in the content that's being taught."



Matt Smith has taught English at Riverside since 2003. Early in his career, long before programs like ChatGPT existed, he remembers students cheating on assignments.

"A student handing another student paper copy of homework, and then copying, was really common," he said. "I feel like I never see that anymore."

For about the past 10 years, he's used digital writing assignments, especially Google Docs, because it allows him to track student edits throughout the writing process.

"It's great because a student shares it with one time and then we have an archive of all of our interactions and annotations all the way through," he said.

He acknowledges that technology can positively and negatively impact student learning. Students are able to research and use primary sources through the internet, but much of the



Sophomore Lucas Dodge charges his chromebook. Many RHS classes take tests online now.

time the answers submitted are identical to the first Google result. In Smith's experience, today's high school students lack research and citation skills.

"They don't have any sense of what's valid and invalid source," he said.

But Smith is still careful to use technology in his classes.

Smith believes that because everyone has a smartphone in their pocket and access to apps that can do math for you and show work, or AI engines that can simulate voice, they don't have to copy a classmate's homework anymore.

"It's just become so easy [to cheat]," he said.

To combat students' urge to take shortcuts, Smith collects handwritten work samples at the beginning of his writing-intensive courses to get a sense of his students' voice. He uses it as a reference to compare later work to, and observe any big changes in writing level or style.

"Maybe I'm not that great a teacher, but it's probably more likely that they're using one of the AI bots," he said.

"It's crazy to use a robot to help you cheat, but you can still learn from it," said junior Brendan Lee-Tate, a student in Smith's class. "It'll explain everything and break it down."

Smith also became the sponsor of the AI club.

"I'm fascinated by it and curious to see what will happen with it in the classroom."

For some, it's easy to be tempted to plagiarize or use AI when you want to find the quickest and easiest way to complete a boring assignment. But for students in advanced classes, Smith has observed a different motive. Even prior to AI becoming mainstream, he caught students plagiarizing to maintain their GPA.

"We have a lot of students taking AP classes who don't remember ever getting a B," he said. "It was like 'I'm in the top 15 of my class. I can't afford to get a B in this class. And I know that cheating was wrong, but the grade is more important than the academic integrity.'"

Whether as a learning tool or as a cheating method, AI likely isn't going anywhere. Smith believes that AI writing will become a larger part of education, but as the technology advances it also will be tough to navigate.

"I think that we are going to see writing-intensive classes move back to pen and pencil," Smith said.

**"Students shall not use, display, or have in the "on" position any personal electronic communication or entertainment device."
-Riverside's current parent and student handbook**

Stereotypes and misconceptions

Antisemitism is on the rise in Durham and worldwide



Children light a Hanukkah menorah at Beth El Synagogue in December 2023. Originally located downtown, Beth El was founded in 1892.

• PHOTO COURTESY OF BETH EL SYNAGOGUE

By HANNAH POSNER & SADIE IRBY

Senior Ranon Greyber vividly remembers receiving unwanted attention in school because of his religion.

"I was in middle school," Greyber said, "We were going through World War II Jewish propaganda, and I swear half the class turned around and looked directly at me."

Uncomfortable conversations surrounding the topic of antisemitism, or anti-Jewish prejudice, are a common predicament for American Jews.

Durham's small but active Jewish community, and the experiences of Jewish Riverside students, reflect broader national trends relating to how American Jews build community and deal with the threat of antisemitism.

From seemingly harmless microaggressions to violent hate crimes, antisemitism's nuanced history can make it difficult

to identify in a contemporary context.

"The longest hatred"

The Holocaust—or the murder of six million Jews by Nazi Germany—is modern history's most extreme and well-known form of antisemitism. However, antisemitism did not start or end with the Holocaust. Antisemitic beliefs can be traced back as early as ancient times, lingered through the twentieth century and appear to be on the rise again in the modern day.

Though there was no official start to antisemitism, it is commonly traced back to the misconception that Jews were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, who was actually crucified by the Romans.

As a religious minority in Europe, Jews were considered outsiders and pressured to convert to Christianity. In 1492, all Jews in Spain were forced to either convert or leave the

country they had lived in for over a thousand years.

Starting in the Middle Ages, false allegations of blood libel—or the use of the blood of Christian children for ritual purposes—led to violent riots against Jews called pogroms. Pogroms continued in Europe into the 20th century. Nazi propaganda often included accusations of blood libel.

Jewish people have been used as a scapegoat throughout history, blamed for events such as the Bubonic Plague and the German loss of World War I. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "[the Nazis] exploited the general population's readiness to scapegoat Jews by enacting laws that targeted the freedoms of the Jewish people."

Through their propaganda, the Nazis depicted Jews as a greedy people who had infiltrated German society. They viewed Jews as racially inferior to the German

race, or the "Aryans."

The perception of Jews as an inferior race originates in Social Darwinism, or the pseudo-scientific theory of "survival of the fittest," that some people are innately better than others.

"To Hitler, survival of the German 'Aryan' race depended on its ability to maintain the purity of its gene pool," according to a History.com article about Social Darwinism. "The Nazis targeted certain groups or races that they considered biologically inferior for extermination."

Contemporary American antisemitism

According to the ADL, antisemitic incidents in the US are at their highest levels in 40 years.

From extreme examples, such as the murder of 11 worshippers in a Pittsburg synagogue in October 2018 and the holding of four hostages in a Texas synagogue in January 2022, to minor examples, such as graf-

fitted swastikas or hate speech, these incidents can make Jewish Americans feel unsafe.

In the past decade, security has increased at synagogues due to the fear of violent antisemitic attacks. It has become common for one or more police officers to stand outside of synagogues during weekly services and other events.

The ADL has observed a nearly 400% increase in antisemitic incidents in the US such as harassment, vandalism, and assault since the beginning of the war between Israel and Hamas.

Many of these incidents, such as an individual shouting “I am Hamas” and making death threats to a group of Jewish people in Los Angeles, are fueled by the misconception that American Jews are responsible for the actions of the Israeli government.

In 2020, the ADL found that 24% of Americans agreed with the statement “Jews are more loyal to Israel than to America.”

In a 2019-2020 Pew Research Center survey, 82% of American Jews said that “caring about Israel is essential or important to what being Jewish means to them.” However, this connection to Israel does not mean disloyalty to the United States, and it should not be assumed that all American Jews are connected to or support the actions of the Israeli government.

Zionism, or the belief in the right for a Jewish state to exist, is thought to be common among American Jews, though there is not sufficient data on how many self-identify as Zionists.

A 2019 Gallup poll found that 95% of American Jews have favorable views of Israel. However, this data was obtained from a subsample of 128 Jews out of all Americans, and there has not been further research into American Jewish opinions on Israel since the war.

Not all Jews are Zionists, and not all Zionists support Israeli policy relating to the

Israel-Hamas war.

Though antisemitism is commonly associated with the political right, it has become more common on the left, guised as criticism of Israel and as ‘anti-Zionism.’

“I think it's very easy for people to confuse criticism of Israel with antisemitism,” says Greyber. “The media and general discussion don't give enough attention to separating those two things. Whenever there is a rise in criticizing Israel it opens more room for antisemitism unrelated to Israel.”

According to Zioness, an organization that believes in progressivism and Zionism, “It is inherently antisemitic to suggest that an American Jew is not sufficiently progressive unless they qualify their Zionism—or, in many circles today, declare themselves to be ‘anti-Zionist’—by criticizing/demonizing Israel or its government.”

“Criticism of the policies of Israeli governments is not necessarily antisemitic,” according to the Anne Frank House museum. “However, denying the State of Israel's right to exist does constitute antisemitism...Comments such as, ‘What Israel is doing to the Palestinians now is the same as the Nazis' systematic extermination of Jews during the Second World War’ are not only inappropriate and inaccurate but also antisemitic.”

This new flavor of antisemitism has become especially common on college campuses.

The organization Jewish on Campus has reported over 2,000 instances of antisemitism on college campuses since 2020. The most common forms were microaggressions, hate speech and vandalism.

On November 2, the House of Representatives passed a resolution condemning the support of Hamas and other terrorist organizations on college campuses.

In a December 5 congressional hearing on campus antisemitism,

Antisemitic tropes & their origins

According to WRAL News, antisemitic acts were up 78% in 2023 in North Carolina compared to 2022.

The US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) defines antisemitism as “prejudice against or hatred of Jews.”

Antisemitic stereotypes, even when framed in a complimentary way, are considered “dehumanizing” and “demonizing” by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

There are many common stereotypes about Jewish people originating centuries ago and prevailing currently, such as:

“Jews are good with money”/“Jews are greedy”

“The stereotype of Jewish greed took hold in the Middle Ages, when Jews were frequently associated with money,” according to the Anti Defamation League. “Jews typically had restrictions placed on their economic activity and were sometimes prohibited from owning land...sometimes the only option available to earn a living in such circumstances was through high-interest crediting, a role for which Christian rulers sometimes recruited Jews, as Christians were prohibited from it.”

“Jews control the media/government”

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, European nations established equality under the law and dropped restrictions on the places religious minorities could live and the jobs they could have.

Since Jews were suddenly able to own land and enter more professions, many European Christians were left with the impression that Jews were overrepresented, and were replacing non-Jews. According to the USHMM, this was especially true for professions such as finance, medicine, law, journalism, art, literature, and theater.

“Jews are disloyal to their country”

Before the nineteenth century, Jews were prohibited from serving in the military or holding positions in state service, so they were perceived as disloyal.

Once they were permitted to enter these fields, they were still seen as secretly disloyal, only serving their countries for material gain.

University of Pennsylvania, Harvard and MIT presidents evaded questions on whether calling for the genocide of Jews would be against the university's code of conduct. University of Pennsylvania president Elizabeth Magill resigned four days later, and Harvard president Claudine Gay resigned on January 2.

Durham's history

There are approximately 5,000 Jewish people in Durham County, or 1.15% of the total population, according to Jewish For Good (the Jewish Community Center for Durham and Chapel Hill).

Jewish For Good expects another 1,000 Jewish households to move to the Triangle in the next 15 years.

"The Durham Jewish community traces its origins to the 1870s when German and Eastern European immigrants arrived to peddle and open stores in the growing tobacco town," according to the Beth El Synagogue website.

"In the early 1880s tobacco magnate James B. Duke contracted with a young Ukrainian immigrant, Moses Gladstein, to bring more than a hundred East European proletarians from New York to roll cigarettes in his factory," according to the Jewish Virtual Library. "These Jewish rollers formed a chapter of the Cigarmaker's Progressive Union and later an assembly of the Knights of Labor."

In 1884, the growing Durham Jewish community founded a cemetery on Morehead Avenue. They began holding services on the second floor of a Main Street shop.

Beth El was founded in 1892 as an orthodox congregation,

originally located near the current downtown library. A Jewish neighborhood of mostly East European immigrants grew around the synagogue, home to a kosher bakery, grocery and butcher shop.

"[North Carolina's] Orthodox Jews maintained regimens of daily prayer with a quorum [minimum group] of ten men," according to NC-Pedia, an online encyclopedia of

North Carolina. "The early immigrant rabbi was often an unordained, self-proclaimed 'reverend' who served as a religious master of all trades. As one Durhamite recalled, 'He circumcised you, married you, buried you, and killed your chickens.'" (animals like chickens need to be slaughtered in a specific manner to be considered kosher, and thus acceptable to be eaten.)

Until the late 1930s, the Orthodox leaders gave sermons in Yiddish, a language spoken by European Jews that combines German and Hebrew.

In the 1940s, more Jewish Americans relocated to Durham to work at Duke and UNC. These newcomers were not as inclined toward Orthodox Judaism.

"Many in the congregation judged that a more modern liturgy and a new synagogue close to Duke would attract professional newcomers," according to the Museum of Durham History.

"Despite significant internal tensions, the congregation shed its dominant orthodox ethos by the mid-

50s, buying land on Watts Street in 1954 to build a contemporary designed 'American' synagogue – the home of Beth El since 1957."

Though Beth El has been a conservative synagogue since the

Antisemitism did not start or end with the Holocaust.

"He circumcised you, married you, buried you and killed your chickens."

1950s, they do have a small Orthodox kehillah (congregation) that has separate services from the main congregation.

"In 1961, a handful of local Jewish families dreamed of a Reform congregation for the Durham and Chapel Hill, NC area," according to the Judea Reform Congregation website. "They combed the telephone directories, university faculty lists and community rosters to spread the news. They held services in their basements."

Judea Reform was officially founded in 1971. It is located on Cornwallis Road, near Jewish For Good.

In addition to Judea Reform and Beth El, there is also a Hillel and a Chabad house at Duke. These branches of national organizations provide religious and cultural opportunities for Duke students, as well as the local Jewish community.

On October 3, Jewish for Good and Judea Reform received a fake bomb threat and had to evacuate their occupants.

On November 11, three Starbucks stores in Durham were vandalized with anti-Israel graffiti including crossed-out Stars of David.

Students navigate Jewish identity

Despite Durham's small Jewish population, Riverside students have managed to cultivate a Jewish community at school through shared experience, culture and connection to local synagogues and Jewish youth groups.

Senior Rachael Ades and junior Ella Cohen founded a Jewish Student Union (JSU) this year. Its first meeting was a Hanukkah celebration on December 11. Students ate latkes (potato pancakes traditionally eaten on Hanukkah) and created dreidels

(spinning tops) out of candy.

"We both felt that there was a necessity to create a space that welcomed Jewish people and our cultures, where we could share, connect and celebrate who we are," said Ades. "I think [JSU] is very important because I, and many others, feel the lack of understanding and recognition from our non-Jewish peers."

At the JSU's second meeting on January 24, students celebrated the holiday of Tu Bishvat. The club plans to celebrate the upcoming holiday of Passover, as well as hold meetings geared towards sharing and discussion.

"It's very easy to confuse criticism of Israel with antisemitism."

According to the JSU Instagram page, the club is "open to anyone who identifies with Judaism! (Religiously, culturally, or curious!)"

"What makes up my Jewish identity is really the community," said Cohen. "Especially growing up in an area that doesn't have a lot of Jewish people... there's so few of us that having that shared cultural connection and that similar way of being raised just makes me feel already closer to someone."

Many Jewish students stress the importance of the community aspect of Judaism.

"My community is what I feel like makes me Jewish," said sophomore Shana Gordon. "Going to services or doing things with my youth group, that's when I feel most connected to my Judaism."

"The kind of cultural aspect [of Judaism] is probably more important to me than the actual religious aspect," said junior Elijah Foster.

Students usually do not get school off for the high holidays, which are the most important Jewish holidays of the year, and take place yearly around September.

"Lack of school days off in



Jewish Student Union Co-Presidents Rachael Ades and Ella Cohen present information about a tree planting activity at a Jan. 24 meeting in room 169. Ades and Cohen started the Riverside JSU in December 2023 to create a community for Jewish students.

respect of Jewish holidays is still extremely disappointing,” said Ades.

On September 25, Durham Public Schools had an optional teacher workday for Yom Kippur, one of the Jewish high holidays.

“I think culturally as a school district, they’re starting to acknowledge and becoming more welcoming, understanding, and embracing [of Jewish holidays]” said English teacher Emily Ericson.

How welcoming is RHS?

Last May, eight Riverside students got suspended for antisemitic hate speech after group chat messages were leaked.

“There wasn’t a lot of acknowledgement about it,” said an anonymous student. “It was kind of news for a little bit, and then people just brushed it off their shoulders.”

“People were so nonchalant about it,” said junior Samuel Ostrovsky.

Was this an isolated incident, or evidence of an unsafe environ-

ment for Jewish students?

Jewish students have had diverse experiences in navigating antisemitism at Riverside. Some have dealt with microaggressions or hate speech, while others find that no one treats them differently due to their religion.

“There are a lot of different people at Riverside, and I feel like in general, people are pretty accepting,” said Foster.

Greyber has never personally experienced antisemitism.

“I count myself very lucky that pretty much any community I’m a part of is filled with very inviting people and has a lot of room for open discussion,” he said. “I’ve very rarely seen antisemitic things that have been said.”

However, Greyber did see swastika graffiti on a bathroom stall in November.

“I’ve had a bunch of microaggressions at [Riverside] and my elementary school,” said an anonymous student. “My brother went here 4-5 years ago and faced antisemitism. It was really bad.”

This student has received insults for wearing openly Jewish clothing, such as shirts from

Jewish for Good.

“With the exception of isolated incidents, I don’t necessarily see Riverside being hostile [for Jewish students] by any means,” said Ericson. “And also, I’m not sure really if there’s any school in DPS that is specifically making space for Jewish students.”

Ostrovsky has found Riverside to be more welcoming compared to his previous schools.

“I was literally the only Jewish kid in my elementary school,” said Ostrovsky.

“People were often not understanding of what Judaism was... a lot of people constantly telling me I was gonna go to hell.”

When Ostrovsky was in fifth grade, two students— one from his school and one from another— logged into his DPS account and put several swastikas onto a school presentation.

“If that happened here [at Riverside], there would’ve been a complete outrage. It could’ve made news stories... but they re-

ally wanted to keep it a little bit on the down-low,” said Ostrovsky.

The student from his school was not allowed to use his Chromebook for the rest of the year.

“They’re like, ‘Well, okay, so the solution is taking away your hacking device, not maybe telling you why that was wrong,’” said Ostrovsky.

Ades has also had a better experience at Riverside than her previous schools.

“I, and many others, feel the lack of understanding and recognition from our non-Jewish peers.”

“I went to a charter school for elementary and middle school,

and was basically the only practicing Jew,” said Ades. “So compared to that, RHS’s Jewish community feels very whole and welcoming to me.”

“The Christians that go to [Riverside], in my experience, are not people that want to isolate other religions. They’re typically more progressive, nicer people,” said Ostrovsky.



Forever tired

Despite a late start time, are Riverside students still sleep deprived?

BY NICO JORDAN, LUCINDA DORRANCE & NORAH LUBEK

According to a November 2023 *Pirates' Hook* survey 73% of students wish that they slept more.

Students cited several reasons why, but many blame their screens.

"I'm pretty sure most of the kids here are just using their phones before bed," sophomore Marsden Francis said.

Sleep deprivation has always been a problem in high schoolers, but how, exactly, does it affect students?

Research suggests that teenagers need 8-10 hours of sleep per night, but most teens get

less than 7.5.

One of the main causes of sleep deprivation in teenagers is screens. Putting electronic devices away an hour before going to bed can increase the amount of sleep individuals get by over 20 minutes per night.

In 2016, the start time at Riverside was changed from around 7:30 to 9:15. Some teachers thought that this would help students get more sleep because they could wake up later. Other teachers thought that this would be a change for the worse, because students would wind up staying up later because they didn't have to wake

up early for school.

Only 40.9% of survey respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the amount of sleep they get. 54.3% of students said that they sleep 7-8 hours a night, 27.6% of students said that they sleep 5-6 hours a night and only 15.2% of students said that they get 9-10 hours of sleep a night.

According to The Cleveland Clinic, Sleep deprivation is "when you aren't sleeping enough, or you aren't getting good, quality sleep."

Sleep is a basic human need and is vital to good health. According to The National Institutes of

Health, sleep deprivation has previously been linked to chronic health problems, including heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, obesity, poor mental health and depression.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that teenagers ages 13-18 should get between 8-10 hours of sleep within 24 hours. As an adolescent, the production of melatonin (sleep hormone) shifts and creates a different circadian rhythm that may not be typical for younger children or adults. Studies done by the CDC suggest that about 70% of high school students do not get enough sleep on school nights.

Multiple aspects of a high school student's life make it difficult to get the recommended amount of sleep. Over 30% of students surveyed by The Pirates' Hook said that homework was the largest barrier for going to sleep at a reasonable hour. Students also often have extracurricular activities, jobs and social lives. Multiple Riverside students said they typically use their phone two to three hours before going to bed.

Despite what many people may believe, teenagers need more sleep than younger children. This specifically was the reason for the change in bell schedules for Durham Public Schools in 2016. The schedule standardized start times for elementary, middle and high schools, with openings set at 7:45 a.m., 8:30 a.m. and 9:15 a.m., respectively.

The current bell schedule, 9:15 to 4:15, brings varying opinions. Some like the later start time, but it also means more students miss class to leave early for sports. Students are also more likely to stay up later on a screen when they know they don't have to be at school at 7:30 AM.

"I understand the reason for starting school later and what the research said but I don't know if I agree with that," said health/PE teacher Michael Whitfield. "I think that it causes students to still get the same amount of sleep, but because we start later, they stay up later."

DPS Board Member Natalie Beyer disagrees. "I believe the district's shift to later start times for adolescents has enabled our high school students to improve both the quality and quantity of their sleep," she said. "This policy change was designed to more equitably address the health and wellness needs of students and families."

Beyer was part of the decision-making committee that shifted the start times. The changed times for DPS school schedules was the most logical decision considering buses have to run three routes each morning and afternoon to accommodate elementary, middle and high school.

"We took a lot of consideration and time when voting on the switch," she said.

Despite the fact that little research has been done about the effects of the switch on testing scores and grades, Beyer hopes that high schoolers are more awake in the morning and prepared to pay attention in their first period class.

Many students agree.

"I think it's the perfect time to get up and get to school," sophomore Ariana Lambar said. "I think I wouldn't like it if it started even later because I would be getting home even later and it would offset my night."

Data collected from Riverside students said 78.1% of students believe they would get less sleep if the school started at 7:30 AM and ended earlier instead.

"I was just in middle school (which started at 7:30 AM) and I know for a fact that I'm getting more sleep than I did before," one student responded.

About 27% of students believed that electronics is the biggest barrier when it

came to their ability to get enough sleep. Multiple students said they spent two to three hours on their phones before sleeping.

Multiple studies, including one at Northwestern University, suggest that the artificial light that is admitted impacts humans sleep-wake cycles. Humen's circadian rhythm become disrupted not only from the light from screens but also house lighting. The study found that a reduction in the production of melatonin results from this extra exposure to light at late hours.

Students' survey responses support that research.

"It is physically impossible for me to fall asleep before 10:00 pm," one responder wrote. "I go to bed at 11 but I only ever fall asleep around 1 AM" and "I tend to wake up a lot in the night," others wrote.

In order to combat the effects of sleep deprivation on their students, some Riverside teachers have changed how they implement deadlines and late penalties. Anna Allman, an AP United States History and Economic and Personal finance teacher at Riverside, has noticed the effects of lack of sleep on her students.

"You can see it in the quality of work they turn in, and obviously it's all

time stamped on Canvas," said Allman. "The essay someone turns in at 4 p.m. is not as good as the essay someone turned in at 7 p.m."

"I would say [it's] a significant problem, across all students, all grade levels, all abilities," Allman said. "They're all tired."

To keep students from staying up late, Allman doesn't take any late points off on assignments and assigns earlier submission hours.

"In my AP class my deadline on Canvas is 9 pm, as opposed to 11:59 pm, because I don't want [students] to feel the need to stay up till 11:59 to get something in on time."

Allman attended Riverside when school started at 7:30. She remembers being sleep deprived herself.

"It's important to do school work, but it's also important to take care of yourself," Allman said. "I wish someone when I was in high school had told me I don't need to stay up to 4 a.m. doing my AP Psych homework. Like, just take the L. You'll be fine."

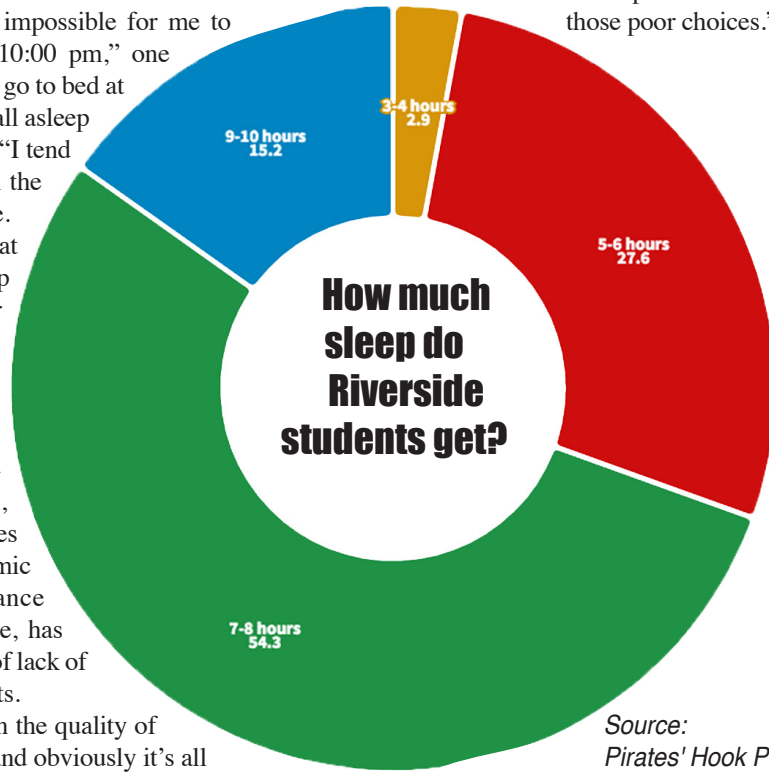
Allman believes homework has a place in school because it helps further familiarize students with the content gone over in class through repetition. However, it becomes difficult to balance with jobs, sports and other extracurricular activities.

"I think it is important to know that your student is not just a student for you," she said. "They have other teachers [and] they have other classes in addition to their life in general."

By removing the pressure of deadlines Allman thinks this takes away the temptation for students to make poor choices.

"Sometimes, that pressure leads to 'I'm so desperate to turn it in on time that I'm going to use Chat GPT, or I'm going to ask my friend,'" Allman said. "Hopefully removing that pressure removes the temptation to make those poor choices."

"It's physically impossible for me to fall asleep before 10:00 pm"



Source: Pirates' Hook Poll



Leaping into the air, Meaghan Nalley tries to reach the ball before her opponent. Nalley graduated from Riverside in 2011.

Pirates versus Knights: The tale of an age-old rivalry



(Left) Reaching for the ball, Michael Tillotson (44) begins a home game against Northern. Tillotson graduated in 2013. (Right) Al Hughes takes control of the ball in hopes of scoring. Hughes also graduated in 2013.



Chauncy Burgess (3) escapes from a tackle as he sprints down the field during an intense game against Northern. Burgess graduated in 2010.

BY CHANDLER CATES, ISAIAH HEINZ & SADIE ALLEN

Todd Spell will never forget the game that sparked the Riverside football team's one and only run to the state championship game. One of Riverside's first and longest football coaches, Spell was on the sideline in 2006 when the Pirates lost to Northern.

"It was a game that we should have won," he said. "But it ended up we lost."

The already bitter rivalry reached new heights when information surfaced after the game that Northern had played ineligible players.

"[The players] didn't have the attendance, or grades weren't checked or something like that," Spell said. "They had to forfeit that game, and we went on to the state championship."

"The only team [that] had been in a state championship in Durham had been Northern," Spell said.

"They went in 1991 and '92."

Riverside lost in the state title game in 2006. Much has changed since, but the rivalry remains strong.

When the Rivalry Began

Riverside High school was built in 1991 just down the road from the old Northern High school. Because of the increasing enrollment at Northern, Riverside pulled from Northern's established population.

"When Riverside was built, it pulled a large portion of people who were historically from the Northern historical district," Riverside athletic director Robert Duncan said.

Northern was well-established before this transition, opening in

1955 as one of the first public high schools in Durham County.

Shortly after, a rivalry formed between the two schools. Students from both schools anticipated rivalry games in all sports.

"It's always been a rivalry," Duncan said. "I started here in 2007. Even just walking in, that was always told to be the rival game. In any sport, whether it's basketball,

football, they are the school that we have the most history with. And it's honestly because of proximity."

Riverside social studies teacher Anna Allman graduated from Riverside in 2014. Allman can recall the intense games against Northern.

"You're either fully with Riverside or you're fully with Northern," said Allman. "I can remember go-

"You're either fully with Riverside or you're fully with Northern."

- Anna Allman

ing to some of the volleyball games where it was us versus Northern, and it was still very much 'beat Northern we're better!' We're gonna hype up our own team."

Coaches contribute to the feud, too

While this heated rivalry is largely due to the proximity between the two schools, coaches play an important role in establishing intensity, too.

"The first head football coach at Riverside was Monty Davis," said Spell. "Monty had coached at Southern Durham for a long time. When he retired, he came back to start this program here at Riverside. There was always that rivalry because he always played against Northern, when Northern was Southern's rival. So [the rivalry] sort of built up from there."

This instance is not unique to Riverside. When coaches move from one school to another in the same town, it adds even more history.

"Hillside's rival is now Southern, but really that originally was always Jordan," said Spell. "And now that you got a coach that used to be at Hillside, now a coach at Jordan, it adds more fuel to the fire."

Antonio King was previously the head coach of Hillside's football team. King guided the Hornets to an undefeated season and state championship in 2010. In all, he led them to a 72-20 record and winning six straight conference titles.

Before becoming the head coach of Jordan's football team, he briefly held coaching positions at East Carolina University, Cedar Ridge High School, Hargrave Military Academy and North Carolina Central University.

His move to Jordan sparked conversation among both high school football players and coaches.

But athletes contribute to the rivalry, too. And as transferring becomes increasingly prevalent in high school athletics, rivalries only grow in intensity.

Transfers and their impact

Riverside's varsity men's basketball player, Mekhi Sneed, recently transferred to Riverside from Jordan.

"I just felt like it was best for me, basketball wise," said Sneed. "I could play the position I wanted to play."

While athletic transfers seemingly have little impact on the historical aspects of these rivalries, they bring awareness to the competition between schools.

"[Athletic transfers] actually play a big role in my eyes, because as a transfer, you have more eyes on you," said Sneed. "If you're playing at your old school it's definitely gonna be different."

While athletic transfers add an interesting element of competitiveness to rivalries, they aren't always well received.

"[Transfers] play a big role," said Spell. "The problem that we have in Durham now is that, realistically, nobody's enforcing the rules. Anybody, realistically, can try to come to the school for very loose reasons. And nothing is enforced by it. That's the problem."

In February 2008, a Northern basketball player was found ineligible to play due to 'attendance issues'. At the time, Northern had won the PAC-6 conference game and was headed to the playoffs, all while boasting a 15-11 season record. Northern was forced to forfeit all of their games.

It was later revealed that the player's ineligibility was due to controversy surrounding their place of residence. The player was suspected to have had a different residence than the one documented by the school.

"I think nowadays young kids get caught up in too much of a 'hype' thing," said Spell. "I had a kid here years ago. He was a heck of a player and a great kid. And, you know, he had people yapping in his ear, 'you come over here' 'come over here' 'come over here.'"

The rivalry between Riverside and Northern will always be strong. With time, students can expect to see a growth in intensity between the two schools.

• PHOTOS BY TATE GASCH



Scenes from the Jan. 26 rivalry game on Northern's home court., which the Knights won by three points. The men's basketball team's season finale was at home against Northern on Feb. 16.

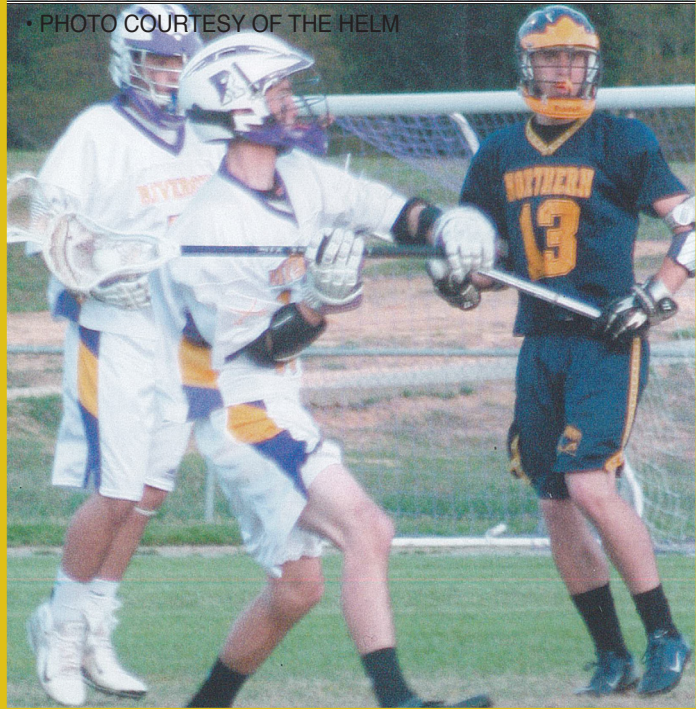
• PHOTO BY ISAAH HEINZ



• PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HELM



• PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HELM



What's it like over there?

Men's lacrosse coach Luke Beauchaine went to Riverside, then coached at Northern.

Luke Beauchaine has strong ties to both Riverside and Northern.

Two years after graduating from Riverside in 2013, he went to work at Northern as a lacrosse coach for seven years.

"I was a [Northern's] assistant coach in 2015," he said. "Then, I was the head coach in 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23."

But when Conner Bolen left RHS last spring, he found his way back to take over the Riverside program.

Unlike some of the other coaches, Beauchaine hasn't experienced any issues from coaching at rival schools.

"I've never really dealt with rudeness in Northern and Riverside on the lacrosse side," Beauchaine said.

However, the pressure of the rivalry still exists.

"At Northern, speaking to the

lacrosse side specifically, really the one game that mattered was Riverside," he said.

This year the lacrosse team has grown large enough to have a junior varsity team, and Beauchaine is hopeful.

"We're trying to get over the hump and get into the playoffs," he said.

Coaching aside, he was ready for a career change.

"I was ready to do something else, as a teacher," he said. "But getting to come back and coach at my alma mater was a cool opportunity."

Beauchaine teaches social studies in trailer 2.

"In the fall, I taught economics and personal finance and AP World history and now I'm teaching AP World history and honors world history,"

"It's good to be back," he said.

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(Top) Coach Beauchaine in his classroom. (middle) Steven Greer prepares for the opening face off in a 2008 game. (Bottom) Alex Rand passes to an open teammate.

Is RHS Built To Last?

A deep dive into Riverside's facility issues

BY TALİYAH COOPER, LANA MCLLAVINE & EMMETT FLYNN

When English and Yearbook teacher Erin Roth walked into her room before the start of the school year, she wasn't expecting anything special. But she also wasn't expecting a strange smell and mold.

"It was musty and really foul smelling," said Roth. "The ceiling tiles over by the wall were covered in red, green and black mold. In addition to the ceiling tiles, there were two teacher chairs that were covered in mold, and a portable card that also had mold on it."

It's not uncommon for classrooms to need maintenance, but this felt different.

"We always have ceiling tiles that go funky every year," said Roth. "But these just seemed way worse."

Not only did it smell disgusting, but it was a health hazard as well. Black mold commonly worsens

asthma and causes eye irritation, coughing and sneezing.

"I broke out in hives after being in the room for 40 minutes," said Roth. "I got a doctor's note the first week back at school that said I could not be in an environment that has that kind of contamination. I've been asthmatic since I was seven and it has been well controlled, but I don't need to provoke it."

Some of Roth's students said that lack of consistency of room location led to more tardies and confusion.

With the declining condition of Riverside's building and the construction of Northern's new building, it feels like the district should begin to look into new building plans for Riverside. Other older schools still maintain a priority for funding, but those projects will eventually be completed. Riverside will not stand forever,

but how much longer it will last?

Roth is not the only person at Riverside who's facing issues with the building.

During interviews with The Pirates' Hook throughout the fall semester, students and teachers alike shared a variety of concerns.

One of the most prominent issues is the damaged heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) units throughout the school. The HVAC unit affects temperature, humidity and air circulation. It's an important factor in air quality; without it, pollutants, allergens, bacteria and mold can run rampant.

A proper system can even improve productivity in work environments. HVAC systems that do not remove carbon dioxide from the air fast enough displace the amount of oxygen that reaches the brain, causing a decrease in productivity, drowsiness and headaches.

According to Conditioned Air INC, an HVAC unit like River-



side's can last 15 to 25 years and can range in price from \$5,000 to \$34,000. Riverside's models include units from Bard Manufacturing.

AP US history and economics teacher Anna Allman has faced issues with ventilation and temperature due to a faulty HVAC unit in trailer seven.

"My classroom was no longer appropriately cooling, so the air was moving but it was not actually as cool as it needed to be," said Allman. "A few weeks after that, they put in a new thermostat. But, it made things worse because the air wouldn't circulate and was just stifling. As we got into October, it became cold. I walked in one morning and tried to turn the heat on and that wouldn't turn on, either."

"I didn't like [moving to different classes every day] because it made things confusing," said junior Lila Phillips, a student in Allman's class. "Loud, annoying noises, and the temperature in here always being really weird made it difficult to concentrate in class," said Phillips.

Because the environment was not suitable for learning, Allman moved from classroom to classroom every day.

"I would go to someone who had second period planning with my second period kids... and then I would go somewhere else with third and somewhere else with fourth, trying to find a room that had enough seats for all of us and was at least somewhat comfortable for us to be in," said Allman.

Allman's trailer is not the only one with HVAC issues. Trailers one, two and twenty-one in addition to

various indoor classrooms have all faced the same issue.

"I do have a lot of frustration, but I also have a lot of sympathy," said Allman. "It's not like Mr. Bradshaw can come down and fix these things. It's not like I have the expertise to fix these things."

"Is it that the company we're working with won't come out here fast enough? Is it someone else downtown who won't submit one order form? I don't know what the hold up is and so that is deeply frustrating for me."

Riverside assistant principal Darryl Bradshaw is in charge of handling facilities-related maintenance requests and work orders. Most of the work and repair is handled by the district. Bradshaw did not respond to requests to comment.

Less than five miles from Riverside, a brand new Northern High School opened in September.

The original Northern was built in 1955 and received a new building for the 2023-2024 school year. The construction for the new building and campus was funded by a \$96 million bond. Features of the building include an open cafeteria space (atrium-style), a large media center, large teaching spaces and spaces for various activities.

Durham Public Schools also have a

plan in place to replace Durham School of the Arts (DSA) by 2026. DSA's current building, which was originally Durham High School, was built in 1906.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, most schools are abandoned after 60 years. Between 20 to 30 years, equipment should be replaced and between 30 to 40 years, roofing and electrical equipment should be replaced. Riverside was built in 1991, and is currently (December 2023) in its 32 year of operation, the beginning of noticeable deterioration.

Although DPS has received money for the school from bonds, which are issued by governments and corporations when communities want to raise money, increased material and labor costs have left a \$100 million deficit for renovation funds. There are

many other DPS schools waiting for renovations and new construction, too, and Riverside is far from the front of the line.

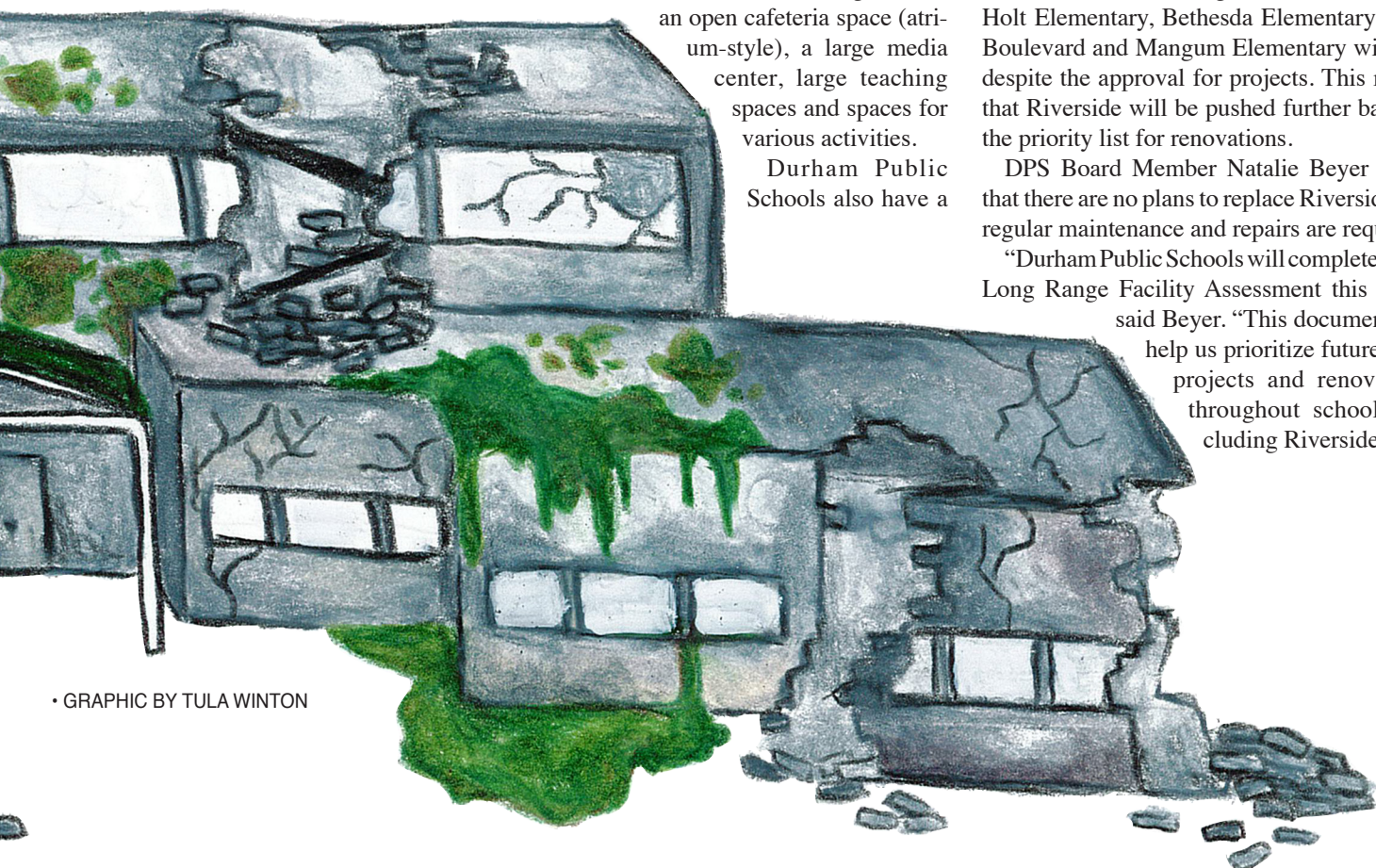
In addition to DSA, Murray-Massenburg Elementary, a new elementary school, is scheduled to open in South Durham in August, 2024. Morehead and Glenn Elementary schools will also receive new buildings and renovations, but Holt Elementary, Bethesda Elementary, Club Boulevard and Mangum Elementary will not, despite the approval for projects. This means that Riverside will be pushed further back on the priority list for renovations.

DPS Board Member Natalie Beyer stated that there are no plans to replace Riverside, but regular maintenance and repairs are required.

"Durham Public Schools will complete a new Long Range Facility Assessment this year," said Beyer. "This document will help us prioritize future bond projects and renovations throughout schools, including Riverside."

"This is a problem that is larger than Dr. Woods-Weeks. This is larger than the assistant principals. This is a district level problem that is not being addressed with urgency."

Erin Roth



• GRAPHIC BY TULA WINTON

Beyer also mentioned the importance of maintaining diverse and limiting overcrowding school populations. A new DPS plan called "Growing Together" will redraw school district lines.

As Northern surpassed its building life expectancy, the facility condition required a new campus. Riverside still has a few decades left, but will require major replacements (like electrical systems) and renovations in the coming years.

"[Riverside] had roofing addressed in 2018 and 2019 but the [facility condition index] remains at a poor level," according to DPS building services. "Projected maintenance needs over the next ten years that includes typical items such as a 20 year cycle renovation, site improvements, repair of a structural issue related to a veneer wall, replacement of food service equipment, and mechanical, electrical and plumbing system upgrades."

For Riverside, the facility costs a total of over \$30 million to maintain. That includes new construction, 20 year renovations, theater arts renovation, drainage, landscaping, irrigation, athletic fields, parking lots, fencing, lighting, roofing, windows, exterior walls, food services, plumbing, HVAC, electrical, security and intercom.

Additionally, The Riverside Facility Report for DPS claims that Riverside is in a state of overcapacity, with enrollment peaking in the 2023-2024 school year.

Roth moved back into her original room after returning from Winter Break.

However, upon entering her "newly cleaned room," she found a dead lizard splayed on top of her teaching podium. "We named it Mushu because it was in the spiritual realm when we met him," said Roth, referring to the dead lizard.

"It feels really good to be back, I really missed the space," said Roth. "It is really hard traveling from one room to the next."

Roth said the most frustrating

part is the circular chain of command.

"I had spoken to Dr. Woods-Weeks about moving into [room 143] because it's empty...Dr. Woods-Weeks sent me to Dr. Okun to check with him, he sent me to Ms. Patterson, Ms. Patterson said 'I have no idea, go check with Dr. Woods-Weeks.' I went back to Dr. Woods-Weeks and she said that we were unable to use this room because it is a CTE room and it's federally funded," said Roth.

"I feel it's very circular. I feel it's exhausting," said Roth. "Although our administrators are willing to listen to what our concerns were, either their ability to correct a situation of this magnitude is limited or it gets lost in the day to day."

Junior Maria Gant, a student of Roth's, was finally able to return to the original classroom.

"I want to say finally, but I also want to say 'they took too long,'" said Gant. "They didn't do as much

as they could have done about [the mold]."

Students also acknowledged that it won't be the last time they deal with a building-related issue.

"[HVAC issues] get a little annoying because it is either frigid or sweltering in different rooms, it really just depends on where you are in the school," said junior Ayla Wolfson.

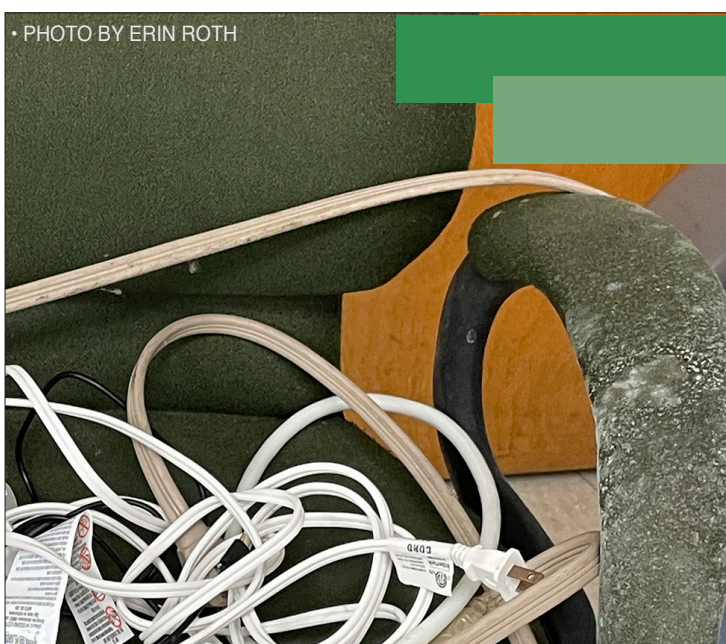
"I feel like [building issues] are not being taken care of, like in the G-hall bathroom there was only one stall that actually worked," said senior Indeya Holden. "The school needs to do a better job with taking care of the building instead of waiting until the minute to do it."

Despite Allman and Roth moving back in, the constant issues of confusion, poor communication and the district's lack of timeliness remain the same.

"This is a problem that is larger than Dr. Woods-Weeks. This is larger than the assistant principals," said Roth. "This is a district level problem that is not being addressed with urgency."

"I feel like [building issues] are not being taken care of."

Indeya Holden



• PHOTO BY ERIN ROTH



• PHOTO BY ELENA PAGES-WILES



• PHOTO BY DELIA AGUILAR

(Top) A chair in Erin Roth's classroom covered in mold. (Middle) Water and mold stains on ceiling panels in Roth's classroom. (Bottom) A hole in the wall of one of the girls bathroom stalls.



SPORTS SPORTS SPORTS SPORTS SPORTS SPORTS SPORTS SPORTS

WEST BECOMES EAST HOW CONFERENCE REALIGNMENT AFFECTS ATHLETES

BY TATE GASCH & JADEN BUTLER

Jaylen Coleman never thought he would be an ACC football player. He actually never thought he'd be a college football player at all. Coleman grew up in Mathews, NC, a suburb of Charlotte. He played football throughout high school, but was hardly utilized as a receiver during his first two years. It was on the track where he excelled. In 2018, he ran a time of 10.83 in the 100 meter dash to win the NC 4A State title. His success in track and field led to the assumption that he would run in college, so he was surprised when his career turned in a different direction. It wasn't until the summer be-

fore his senior football season he started getting noticed by football programs. He realized he didn't yet have the times to get a full track scholarship, so he adjusted his focus to football. Averaging 17 yards per rush only 2 games into the season, Coleman was known for his explosiveness and versatility. His perfect GPA helped, too. He received offers to join the football programs at schools like Yale and Princeton, but knew they didn't offer the athletic scholarships he would need to cover the cost of an Ivy League tuition. "I considered them for a while, but my parents [only make] enough to where I'd have to probably do football, school and work on top of

that. Which would have been absolutely ridiculous," Coleman said. Duke University discovered Coleman at the end of that summer. "I went to a camp at Duke and I just fell in love with the campus," he said. "I knew Duke [had] a really strong engineering program, and that was number one on my list: where can I go to get a good education on top of playing football?" "Once they offered, it was kind of a no-brainer, this is where I want to go," Coleman said. "Hands down the best decision I ever made." Duke is undeniably a powerhouse when it comes to athletics. The Blue Devils have won five NCAA Men's Basketball Championships, 13 consecutive

conference titles in women's golf, and just brought home the 2023 women's track and field Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) title, to name a few. However, football is not often the first sport associated with Duke athletics. In the past few years, the football program has been trying to make a name for itself in the ACC and beyond. After hiring head coach Mike Elko in 2021, the Blue Devils finished each of the past two seasons with a winning record. "The SEC (South Eastern Conference, including Ole Miss, Alabama, and Louisiana State) and maybe the Big Ten (Based up north, with schools like Ohio State and Michigan) get looked at as being strong football conferences,

but I think ACC, we definitely get overlooked,” Coleman said. “[It’s] a really tough conference.”

A case can be made for Coleman’s claim. Clemson, who Duke defeated in their season opener this year, was the last ACC school to win an NCAA title only five years ago. The AP College Football (CFB) Top 25 Poll consistently included ACC schools this season, including Duke in the first few weeks.

The ACC is a part of a group of conferences referred to as the Power Five. This is considered the highest level of collegiate athletics available in the U.S. Just below that, is the Group of Five.

The Group of Five is, in short, the worst of the very best. It consists of five (slightly) less competitive conferences, but still at the Division I level. Group of Five schools are generally smaller, and considered to have weaker athletics programs than Power Five schools, although they compete against each other often.

This past year, a number of schools from the Group of Five had outstanding seasons and were ranked among undefeated Power Five teams. However, a lot of their success was undermined by the fact that they are not members of the Power Five and, as a result, are rarely broadcast on national television.

These overlooked programs are a driving force in conference realignment as schools look to gain more overall influence.

WHAT IS CONFERENCE REALIGNMENT, AND WHY IS IT HAPPENING IN THE FIRST PLACE?

The short answer: money.

The long answer requires background on the conferences themselves and how they were originally made.

The ACC was founded in 1953, largely to address the Southern Conference’s (SoCon) two groups at the time: major colleges and minor institutions.

Revenue sharing was unheard of at the time of the original SoCon. The tiny schools intended to prevent anybody other than the

conference champion from participating in bowl games. (Bowl games are widely televised games, sponsored by a company or brand name. This makes them highly desirable for teams to qualify. In order to be bowl-eligible, a team must win at least 6 games in that season.)

In 1953, the larger schools in the SoCon decided enough was enough. Maryland, North Carolina, Clemson, North Carolina State, Duke, South Carolina and Wake Forest broke away from the SoCon to create the ACC. Georgia Tech and Florida State left their smaller leagues in search of stronger competition and joined the ACC in 1983 and 1991, respectively. Miami, Syracuse and Boston College left the Big East for the ACC in the early 2000s.

By 2014, the ACC was 15 teams strong. It’s been that way ever since, but that is about to change.

Broadcast money is altering conference realignment across the entire country. When schools are in bigger or more challenging conferences, they are likely to get more attention from the public. The more people that watch sporting events, the more ad revenue broadcast companies make. The more money broadcast companies make, the more money schools see returned to their athletics budget, which improves their athletics program and creates this positive feedback loop.

The Big 10 and the SEC both make nearly double the revenue of the ACC and the Pac-12. That gap is nearly one billion dollars, and increases dramatically for Group of Five conferences.

On the contrary, the Pac-12 (which will soon have only two teams: Oregon State and Washington State) is struggling to find new media partners willing to give its schools a competitive rate in comparison to other conferences in terms of their media rights deals. PAC-12 teams began looking for better options, even if it meant abandoning regional and traditional rivalries.

Some schools believe they have better chances in other conferences. Just recently, Florida State University expressed disappointment with the ACC. FSU finished



PHOTO COURTESY JAYLEN COLEMAN

Coleman and his father at a Duke football game. He also has a sister who cheers at Wake Forest.

with a 13-0 regular season record and swept the ACC title game, but were excluded from the CFB playoff. Their coach shared that their program was hurt and angry with both the ACC and the playoff committee, which decides who makes the playoff.

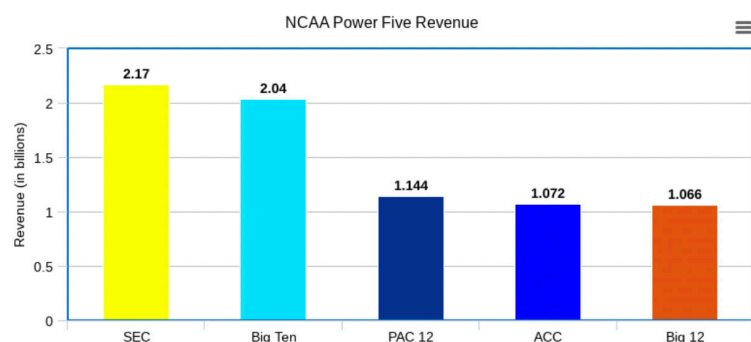
FSU believed that the ACC has not done a good job handling multimedia rights and undermined members’ revenue options. They wanted out.

To finish up the season, FSU

faced Georgia in the Orange Bowl. That day ended in an embarrassing fashion, as Georgia dominated 63-3.

FSU and the ACC have continued to butt heads since. The ACC claims that FSU violated their contract and seeks to undermine the conference’s goals, and FSU is still looking for a way to leave.

While FSU may have a better shot in a different Power Five, the process to leave is thorough and very costly.



GRAPHIC BY JADEN BUTTLER. SOURCE: BLAZE RADIO

WHAT DOES SCHOOL REALLY LOOK LIKE FOR A DIVISION I ATHLETE?

Coleman scored the first touchdown of Duke's 2022 season, made the All-ACC academic team, and played in 30 career games. Despite this, he is not exclusively pursuing football as a future career. Coleman has a successful engineering startup and is months away from graduating with a degree in Biomedical Engineering.

Coleman became interested in biomedical engineering as a teenager.

"When I was in high school, I didn't really know what I wanted to do," he said.

His dad, a pharmacist at a Charlotte hospital, brought Coleman into the lab one day to see his work.

"We were actually making cancer medications. The coolest part for me was delivering it to the cancer patient in the hospital," he said. "Just the look on their face when they got the medication forever changed me, and from that point on I knew I wanted to do something in healthcare."

Now, Coleman hopes to use his degree in biomedical engineering to help people.

"I was watching Star Wars, and [they] made Luke a prosthetic hand, and for me, at the time, that was like the coolest thing ever," he said, laughing. "I had a dream of being able to make something like that...one of my goals is to make better prosthetics for people."

In addition to his interest in prosthetics, he participated in a research project that worked on designing a better model of a young kid to use for car crash and sports

collision studies.

Coleman's degree requires a lot more time than most of his teammates. He has to sacrifice a lot of his social time in order to keep up with his schoolwork and his football schedule.

"I don't have a lot of time to just hang out, but I really do enjoy learning and problem solving," he said. "Overall, it's been really rewarding."

At a lot of schools, football play-

ers are often regarded as athletes before students. They are considered for "easier" majors with less challenging classes. Biomedical engineering does not fall into that category.

"Some guys, I hate to say it, just skip class 'cause they can. But for me, it was always important to be in class," he said. "This really makes me sound like a nerd, I'm sorry. But for me it was cool because I get to interact with

professors that are number one in their field. Getting to talk to them about what it is they do and what they're passionate about."

Despite a passion for learning, the commitments of a Division I collegiate student-athlete prove to be challenging to even the most dedicated students. Classroom and one-on-one time with professors is sacrificed for travel and training not to mention the effects of jet-lag, time zones, and complicated transportation itineraries.

As this article goes to print, FSU and the ACC have still not reached an agreement. The PAC-12 is nearly non-existent, and the ACC is almost 20 teams strong.

Conference realignment is far from being a settled dispute, and this is just the beginning of its impact on collegiate athletics as a whole.



• GRAPHIC BY DUNYA OMAR

"I'd have to probably do football, school and work on top of that. Which would have been absolutely ridiculous."

-Jaylen Coleman

REALIGNING MY COLLEGE DECISION

BY JADEN BUTLER



• PHOTO COURTESY JADEN BUTLER

Jaden Butler poses at a Duke football recruiting event this fall. He has received 13 Division I offers, but has not committed yet.

I have always taken academics seriously. In addition to receiving several football scholarship offers, I've maintained a 4.0 GPA throughout high school. So, when it comes to college, I'm looking for a mix of strong academics and athletics. I also want a school with a supportive campus community that prioritizes the well-being of its athletes.

When all the changes to the athletic conferences were announced, I had to consider what that meant for my decision. Many recruiters didn't talk about the schools that would be coming and going from their conferences. But my perspective changed. The thought of the competition being more challenging meant that the school would be looking for other recruits for my position. Lastly, the addition of west coast schools to the ACC will increase travel time significantly.

Schools like Stanford and Cal are automatically a day plus travel to any ACC schools besides SMU. Would I really feel comfortable in a school that puts me at a disadvantage when it comes to my athletic performance?

The realignments have their pros and cons. It's exciting for the fans. The schools joining the SEC, ACC, and Big Ten will create even more competition for the athletes.

I haven't decided between offers yet, but I plan on majoring in psychology or engineering. Having a chance to explore the country at the university's expense is hard to pass up, but I'm not sure if I'm on board with traveling from coast to coast multiple times every fall.

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Riverside students eat lunch in the cafeteria. The cafeteria staff also serves breakfast. • PHOTO BY CULLEN MCALLISTER

Healthy or hungry?

America has a long history of trying to balance school lunch nutrition with flavor.

BY TOBIAS RANGEL & CAYDEN PEGG

Poor quality. Disgusting. Not enough options. These are opinions shared by Riverside students about the school lunch they eat every day in the cafeteria.

A common target for criticism, both at RHS and most other public schools, school lunches have a long and interesting history in American society.

The history

By the end of the nineteenth century, Philadelphia and Boston had become the first two cities in America to introduce school lunch programs. The programs were made due to the effort from welfare organizations.

Emelyn Rude, in her 2016 *Time Magazine* article, wrote that it was considered successful and received praise from teachers, critics and students. The programs “not only provided growing bodies with nutritious foods, but they were also teaching children healthy eating

habits and helping them learn to choose their food wisely.”

During the Great Depression, many families were struggling for food. The American government saw school lunch as an excellent solution. By 1941, federally run school lunch programs were operating in all states, with over 2 million lunches being served daily.

The programs were also made to help young American men be fit for war. According to the Illinois School Nutrition Association, the National School Lunch Program was made largely due to “claims that many American men had been rejected for World War II military service because of diet-related health problems.”

In the 1960s, both Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon decided to increase school lunch funding. In 1966, the Child Nutrition Act was passed, adding more subsidies for low-income children and also adding school breakfast programs.

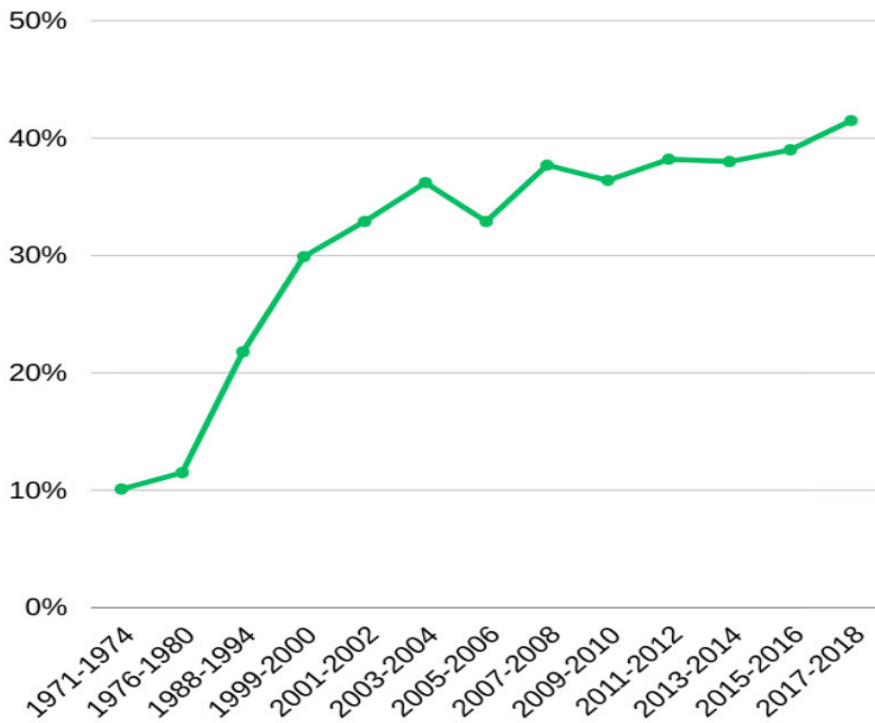
However, when President Ronald Reagan took office, his administration took away \$1.5 billion of funding from school lunch programs.

As a result, schools reduced lunch portions, and the number of children eligible for government subsidized meals. Reagan also infamously declared ketchup a vegetable. A 1981 Reuters piece stated "ketchup, which has a high sugar content, was defined under new Government rules as a vegetable."

This led to school lunches becoming largely privatized and nutrition standards no longer being important. Child obesity rates skyrocketed, and nutrition became a big part of the school lunch debate.

In 2010, Congress passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, attempting to return to the original purpose of school lunch. The Department of Agriculture overhauled school lunches in order to meet the new nutritional standards, with the goal of making students healthier. The food being offered in school cafeterias was completely changed, with menu items such as whole wheat pizza crust, roasted potatoes and salad. Here at Riverside, menu items include whole wheat pepperoni pizza, salad and soy butter sandwiches.

Child Obesity Rates by Year (Ages 6-19)



Source: CDC

Admin opinion

Assistant Principal Gregory Goble has worked in many different schools and seen a variety of different ways to feed kids.

Goble believes that school lunch is crucial to a student body, especially since the other alternatives include unhealthy fast food.

“Considering that a large portion of students qualify to get free or reduced lunch...I think it's critical that we continue to offer it,” Goble said.

According to district data, 51.46% of Riverside students qualify for free or reduced lunch, which is slightly less than the DPS average of 55.98%.

The federal government requires schools to include “a variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; set limits on saturated fat and sodium; and set both minimum and maximum calorie levels” in their school lunches.

“That also lends itself to things that students don't necessarily want to eat,” Goble explained. “Sometimes, I question the stuff that they're serving as, how it meets that standard, but I trust that they do the job that they're supposed to do.”

Riverside's food selection meets the MyPlate criteria. On January 5, 2024, the cafeteria served chicken sandwiches as protein and grains, carrots and peas as vegetables, different kinds of fruit, juice and milk as dairy.

However, Goble believes that Riverside is doing a good job in organizing how students are receiving lunch from the cafeteria.

“I like that we have kiosks with options to not go to the cafeteria,” Goble said. “You can certainly see that on days where it's cold outside, or it's raining outside. It makes it

pretty uncomfortable in the cafeteria. Having options for students to go to classrooms to eat or alternative areas is certainly good.”

Goble also praises the organization of free breakfast kiosks at the front entrance of the school in the morning.

Many students have the opinion that school lunch looks “terrible and is disgusting,” a common stigma relating to school-offered food. Goble disagrees with the stigma, believing that opinions like that are students being picky and judgemental.

“I see the school lunch every single day, and very rarely do I think that something doesn't look exceptionally appetizing,” he said. “There are times where maybe something is overcooked, or maybe there is a food that is not my preference, but there's always more than one option. What I've had has been pretty appetizing and delicious, to be honest with you.”

This school year, Durham Public Schools returned to a free or reduced lunch format. The district moved away from the free for everyone format that was used during the pandemic.

Many students at Riverside are opting to not eat anything instead of eating school lunch. This choice concerns school leaders, as nutrition is crucial for student learning and well-being.

“Everything that affects a student's development is a concern to me,” said Goble. “A lot of people have tried to help. I know a lot of teachers keep snacks in their classrooms. There are a great amount of people in this building that care about a student being hungry and I think they have done what they can.”

"Without us here, the kids would not be eating."

-Amira Nada



(From left) Amira Nada, Janette Harris, Julie Jones, Sallie Hicks, Pamela Morton, Wini Fred Smith, Henry Flournah, Courtney Daye, Carrie Shaffer, and Sarah Degroat. Robert Evans and Cynthia Guy are also members of the staff but are not pictured. • PHOTO BY TOBIAS RANGEL

Meet the manager

Amira Nada turned down other jobs to join Riverside's cafeteria staff

Amira Nada is the cafeteria manager at Riverside.

Although she has a law degree, she originally wanted a job in the central office, but was offered a position in sanitation at Riverside. She took on the challenge and has been the cafeteria manager here at Riverside for eight years.

Nada has 15 years of experience in food and nutrition, including a supervisory position at the local Millenium Hotel near Duke University. She feels the cafeteria staff are crucial for students' well-being.

"Without us here, the kids would not be eating," she said.

Nada believes students are being well fed at Riverside.

"We don't have the problem of if students are being fed or not," Nada said. "Some students try to eat two times because the food is so good, and we have to tell them that they can only have one lunch."

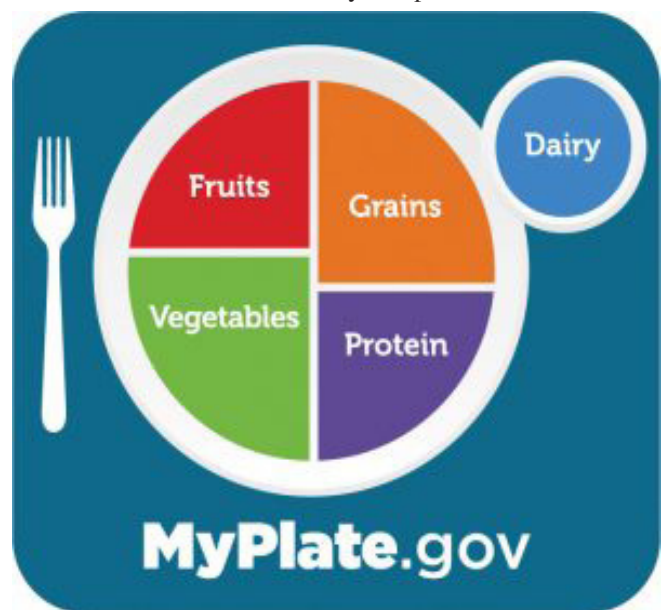
The cafeteria caters to around 500 students daily. Students have the ability to fill out a free or reduced lunch form based on their

family's income. These forms are sent to the food and nutrition director, and if the student qualifies they are provided with free or reduced lunch, ensuring that they are able to eat the meal every day.

There are 14 members of the cafeteria staff team, and each works on an individual task to ensure seamless functionality every day. While 75% of the food is pre-cooked and heated in the oven, some menu items are crafted from scratch. In the morning, the staff work on preparing and serving breakfast. Then, they transition to working on lunch.

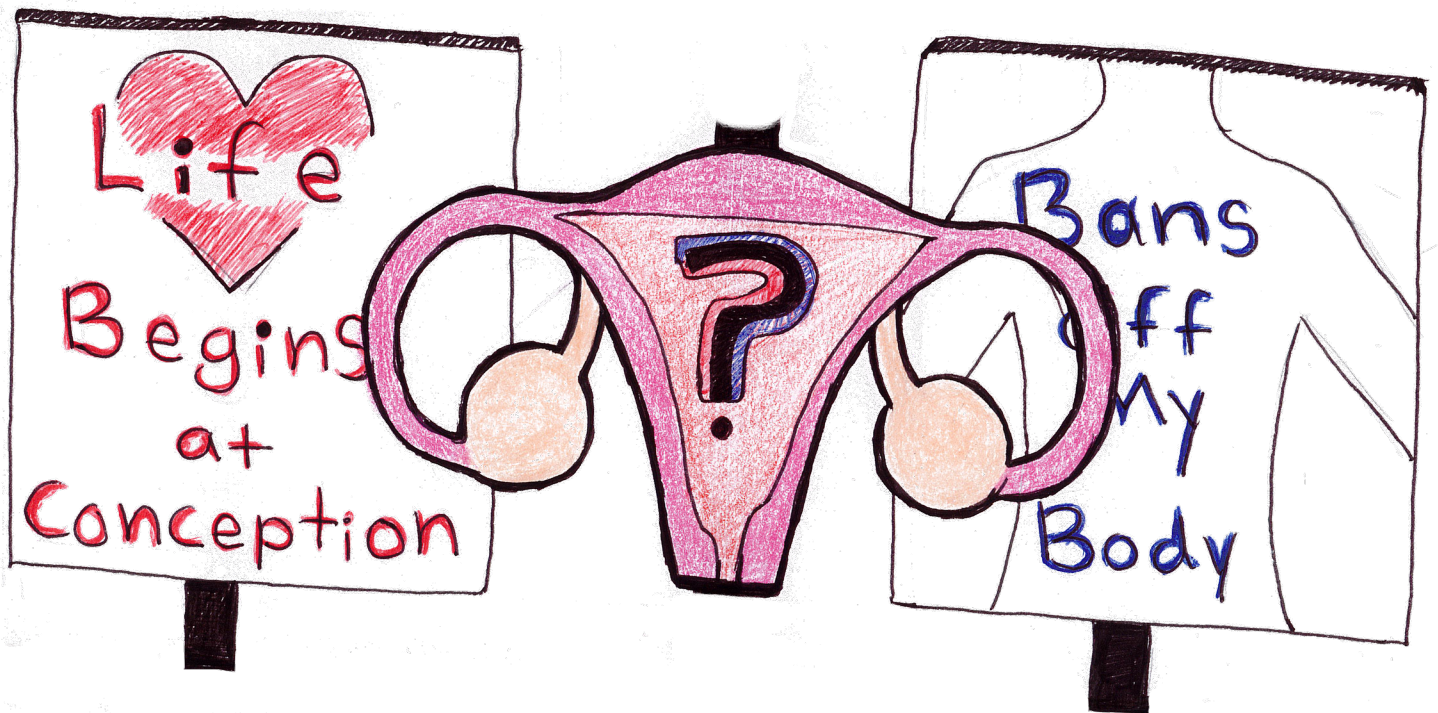
Cooks are split based on specific parts of a meal, with some cooking vegetables, others working on the main part of the menu item and some making dessert for the students.

This system is utilized to ensure every meal has the necessary components.



Public schools are required to follow federal nutrition guidelines, such as the MyPlate plan. American schools had lunch programs in all states by 1941.

Murder or Healthcare?



• GRAPHIC BY DUNYA OMAR

It depends who you ask.

Regardless, prospective mothers have less time to decide.

BY ELENA PACES-WILES & SAUL JANIAK STEIN

16 years old, 5 weeks along and completely conflicted, when senior Leilani Provencio realized she was pregnant, she did not know what to do.

She told her partner and her dad as soon as she found out. Then, she scheduled a Planned Parenthood appointment and considered her choices. "I was weighing my options and I had a lot of pressure on me," she said.

A year ago, she would have had more options. North Carolina lawmakers passed a restrictive abortion law in June that left North Carolinians

with many questions.

The new law bans most abortions past 12 weeks, with exceptions only for rape, incest, fetal abnormalities or instances in which the mother's life is threatened.

In cases involving a life-limiting anomaly, the procedure may be performed up to 24 weeks of pregnancy.

The ban also put restrictions on where abortions can be done. Clinics must be designated as "ambulatory surgical centers," which very few are.

WHAT'S AN EMERGENCY?

Reproductive health workers struggle to navigate the legality of their work under the law.

A national right to abortion was established by *Roe v Wade*, a 1971 supreme court ruling. It was overturned in June 2022.

"We never ever, ever assumed that there would be a day where *Roe* would not be the law of the land," nurse-midwife and Riverside parent Jill Sergison said. "So there really wasn't that urgency around it that there is now."

She was inspired to join Pro-Choice NC, a grassroots organization which she now chairs.

Lucy Schenkman is a generalist OBGYN in the Duke Health System. Although abortions are not her primary focus, they are still well within her work.

Since many clinics in the Duke system were not designated as ambulatory surgical centers, they had to move their abortion operations after the bill was passed.

Now spending more time administering professional advice, it can be harder for doctors to make decisions.

"What's difficult is, what's an emergency? When is she sick enough?" Schenkman said.

A Texas ruling sparked national debate over these very questions.

"There's a woman right now in Texas [who aborted] her 20 week girl child," said Laura Macklem, the press and political director of NC Values, a pro-life organization. "Well, I know someone who has a grandchild who was born at 20 weeks and is a thriving 12 year old."

The woman she's referring to is Kate Cox. She already had two children and planned to welcome her third into the world when the fetus was diagnosed with Trisomy 18, a fatal genetic condition. Most children with this diagnosis do not live past the first two weeks of life. After being denied the procedure in Texas, she decided to travel out of state. Carrying the pregnancy to term could have jeopardized her future fertility, according to the *Washington Post*.

Although the law is not as strict as in other

states, Pro-Choice NC is worried.

"Any ban is a bad ban," Sergison said. "Anytime we inflict these bans, it basically creates a condition of forced birth, forced pregnancy. It's really bad as it stands right now."

The current legislation leaves a lot of room for medical interpretation. Doctors must decide if an abortion is necessary based on their judgment of the severity of the situation. If they interpret the situation incorrectly, they could face legal prosecution.

"How long do you wait? Do you wait till she has a seizure? Do you wait till she starts bleeding internally?" Schenkman said. "I think it's very dangerous, and many more women will die in North Carolina."

Although effective intensive care can be found in Durham through the Duke Health System, the same cannot be said everywhere. Many rural towns do not have the same care available and there is often increased stigma around abortions.

"I am grateful I am in Durham," Schenkman said. "But in small town North Carolina where you have a district attorney whose goal is to get rid of abortion and somebody sick comes in, they could be scared."

Under the bill, counseling now has to be done in person. Traveling twice to hospitals to complete counseling is a luxury many people do not have.

"That's a huge huge burden on people who are having trouble getting there in the first place," Sergison said.

Often, doctors have to send NC residents out of state where care is more accessible.

Sally Howland is a nurse coordinator at the Duke family planning clinic.

"I get phone calls frequently from women in-state," she said. "I give them phone numbers of clinics who can see them in Virginia and also Washington DC."

A DIFFICULT DECISION

When Mira Prater gave birth to her son three years ago, her maternity leave only lasted 30

"Any ban is a bad ban. Anytime we inflict these bans, it basically creates a condition of forced birth, forced pregnancy. It's really bad as it stands right now."

Jill Sergison

• PHOTO COURTESY OF JILL SERGISON



Nurse-Midwife Jill Sergison speaks at a fall 2023 reproductive health conference. She also chairs Pro-Choice NC, a grassroots reproductive justice organization.

“All life is important. You don't rip an unborn child, limb from limb in the womb for convenience. You don't do it at all.”

Laura Macklem

days, and it was unpaid. She was then forced to use her sick days. This year, a provision in the bill gave her paid time off after she gave birth to her second child on October 7 2023.

“I am on my maternity leave right now. The eight weeks is paid leave and I am very grateful for that,” Prater said. “It was a peace offering. It was a way to make amends for a really horrific thing they are passing. It's not enough.”

A married mother of two, Prater fits the profile that conservatives claim they are trying to protect. But she doesn't see it that way.

“I think it is disgusting that any lawmaker believes that they can make decisions about a woman's body,” she said. “It is appalling that anybody believes they can make decisions about anybody else's body.”

Her experience with an unviable pregnancy showed her just how important abortion access is.

“I had a miscarriage last October,” Prater said. “And I was able to receive the health care that I needed.”

But many women do not have the same access. Prater was able to get an ultrasound after nine weeks due to a pre-existing condition, but most women don't get an appointment until they are 11-12 weeks into the pregnancy.

“And then at 11 weeks is when I had to have a DNC, which is the procedure that everyone calls an abortion,” Prater said. “That was three weeks of me knowing that my pregnancy wasn't going to come to fruition, and then having the procedure done.”

Her procedure would not have qualified as a ‘life threatening’ exception to the 12-week ban.

This means that if a woman has her initial appointment at 11 weeks, she would not be scheduled for a DNC until about 15 weeks. Under the 12-week ban, she would be unable to go through with the procedure.

Prater urges lawmakers to understand the magnitude of the decision to terminate a pregnancy.

“It was the worst thing I have ever experienced in my entire life, the absolute worst thing,” Prater said. “There are so many feelings and it's so horrific. Nobody ever makes that decision lightly. Nobody uses that as a means of birth control. And that's what lawmakers are refusing to understand.”

Riverside social worker Kisha Bardonille fears that women could be gradually losing rights. She often provides counsel to pregnant Riverside students.

“I think we're moving towards some Handmaid's Tale stuff where you keep stripping rights from women and you have men making decisions about our bodies and our reproductive health,” she said.

Fenale Brandon taught Parenting and Child Development, a

class that is not currently offered at Riverside but available at other schools in the district.

“I had students that were pregnant at the time,” she said. “Some of them look to me for advice on how to handle that or how to talk to the parents if they got in a bind,” Brandon said.

Faculty understand how individual each situation is.

“I remember how precious life is and it takes me to the time of holding my baby,” Bardonille said. “But as a social worker and someone who is working in a field where so many things are impacted by your socioeconomic, your access to resources, your education and your healthcare eligibility, you just cannot omit all those things.”

She's worried about the impact this bill could have on women's rights.

“Desperate times call for desperate measures,” she said. “I feel like we're going to feel that in some way as women's rights continue to be knocked down.”

Brandon's experience at Riverside taught her that every situation is different.

“It's not my place to tell them go get an abortion,” Brandon said. “I just tell them where I stand with it and that's something between them and their parents.”

Her religion is against abortion, but an incident ten years ago caused her to change her mind.

“We had a student that went into one of our bathrooms down the hallway and tried to do their own abortion,” she said.

AN ISSUE OF FAITH

The bill also permits healthcare providers to opt out of abortion procedures based on personal ethical grounds, without fear of disciplinary action.

Conservative Christians claim that fetuses are living beings with the same inalienable rights as other living people.

Macklem's personal religious beliefs influence her view on abortion.

“All life is important,” Macklem said. “You don't rip an unborn child, limb from limb in the womb for convenience. You don't do it at all.”

“I am a Bible-believing Christian,” she said. “Our organization is a Christian organization.”

She cited Psalm 139:13-16.

“We believe life begins at conception,” she said.

Macklem also listed unique fingerprints, DNA and the presence of a heartbeat at six weeks to support her beliefs.

Pepper Elliott is the youth pastor at Cross Assembly, a nondenominational church affiliated with the Assemblies of God. It is his



Senior Leilani Provencio holds her son, Zaire. He was born in January.

• PHOTO COURTESY OF LEILANI PROVENCIO.

responsibility to help youth manage difficult situations, including pregnancy.

He claims it's not just religion; it's science.

"When a baby is conceived, at that moment, two cells come together, a unique DNA strand is formed between the sperm and the egg, and that actually is what crafts a new person," he said. "And in that regard, this is no longer the woman's body."

He claims that some pro-life advocates lean more towards total abortion abolition than others.

"I lean toward abolitionist from the perspective of care," he said. "I can't necessarily say that every church does care for those in their community and their situation the same."

He thinks abortion should be criminalized.

"If we give consequences, it will change how people go about doing it," he said.

Even among Christians, many disagree.

45% of Christians think abortion should be legal under all or most circumstances, according to a 2014 survey by the Pew Research Center. 51% think it should be illegal under all or most cases, with the remaining 4% being undecided.

NC Values lobbied for many of the policies passed in the bill. They initially advocated for a six week ban.

"It's a great first step," Macklem said. "And we'd like to see further protections for the unborn."

They also lobbied for increased funding to crisis pregnancy centers.

"They are generally for women in crisis, people with unplanned pregnancies, often impoverished women," Macklem said. "They can get free counseling, diapers, clothing and some places also give money to help with housing."

Sergison disagreed.

"They get many millions of dollars from the state because they say they help people with their pregnancies but they don't," she said. "They're just these really fraudulent organizations that prey on pregnant people."

LESS TIME TO DECIDE

Out of 139 responders on a November 2023 Pirates' Hook Instagram survey, 60% reported they had not heard of the 12-week ban. Out of 131 people, 79% were opposed to the ban. 7% voted in support of the ban while the remaining 15% replied they do not care about the ban.

While high schoolers are not the largest demographic getting abortions, they are some of the most vulnerable.

There has been a large increase of women

coming into Schenkman's clinic for sterilization at young ages, for fear of getting pregnant and not being able to get the care they need.

"Teenagers, young people, they're definitely at risk," Schenkman said. "A lot of them don't know their bodies as well so maybe they don't know they are pregnant early enough."

Parental consent is necessary for minors to get an abortion, unless they have a judicial override which allows for teenagers to have an abortion without parental consent. But it takes time to get a court appointment.

"With only 12 weeks, you're not dealing with a lot of time," Sergison said.

Financial burdens also make it difficult for teenagers to get the care they need.

"I'm always worried that our most vulnerable ladies are not getting [financial assistance] despite people's best efforts," Sergison said.

Macklem disagrees. She cited the bill, noting that funds are available for teens who choose to go through with the pregnancy.

"We were really excited about all the things in it for women because this is pro-women legislation," she said.

While teens under 18 still need consent from their parents for care such as abortions, they often visit clinics for contraceptives. Since teens can not undergo sterilization and the bill had no effect on the availability of or restrictions on contraception, it is still a very valuable tool.

"We see teens can come in for contraception and do not require parental consent," Howland said.

Back at Riverside, Provencio reflected on her pregnancy. Her healthy baby boy, Zaire, was born on January 3 and she hopes to return to

school in February.

Her personal experiences strengthened her belief that women should be allowed to make their own decisions.

"It was very hard because not a lot of people know what you're going through," she said. "I felt alone most of the time."

Her family encouraged her to get an abortion but after some consideration, she ultimately decided against it.

"I'm pro-abortion. Like, I'm all for it," Provencio said. "But I didn't think it was the option that I wanted to do."

Without her father's support, she might have made a different choice. Although he originally advised her to get an abortion, he told her he would support her through any decision.

"I definitely think women should be given more time, more than 12 weeks," Provencio said.

She supports abortion access and believes it should be more accessible.

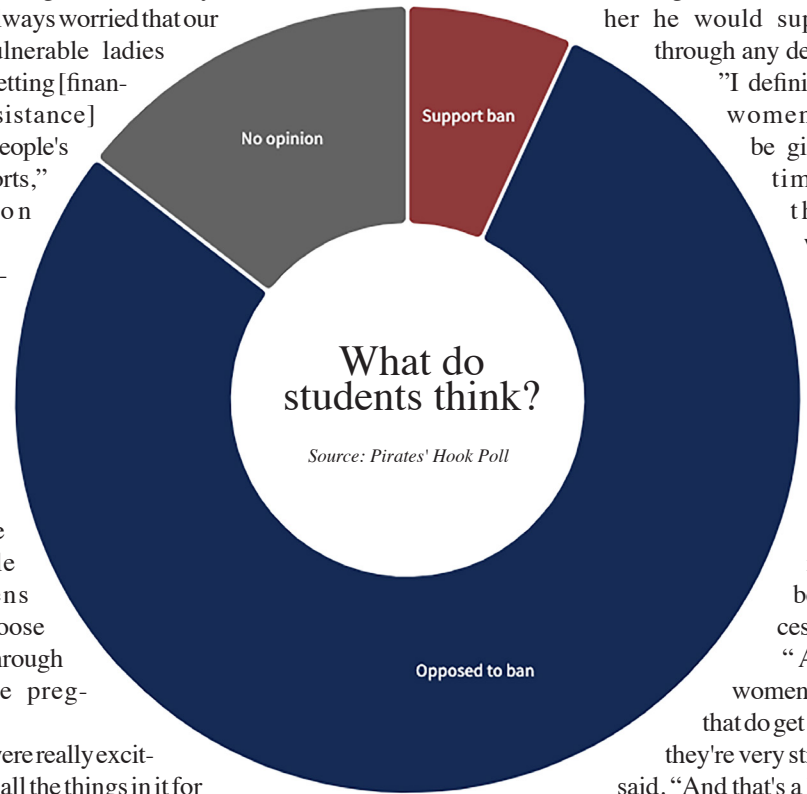
"All the women out there that do get abortions, they're very strong," she said. "And that's a hard decision to make and I commend them for making a decision that is best for themselves."

Despite everyone else's opinions, Provencio decided to do what she felt was best for her.

"I'm very grateful that I have an amazing family that I don't have to worry about anything except for giving birth and taking care of my baby," she said. "A lot of people don't have that option, especially at such a young age."

She feels fortunate she had the opportunity to choose how to proceed with her pregnancy.

"It is my choice because I'm going to have to live with this decision for the rest of my life," Provencio said. "They aren't."



"It is my choice because I'm going to have to live with this decision for the rest of my life. They aren't."

Leilani Provencio



• GRAFICO POR GIOVANNI VARELA-BENITEZ

Atención Médica

O

Homicidio?

Depende a quien le preguntes.
Independientemente, las futuras madres tienen menos tiempo para decidir.

POR ELENA PACES-WILES & SAUL JANIAK STEIN

TRADUCIDO POR YADIRA MARTINEZ-REYES

Con 16 años, 5 semanas de embarazo y completamente en conflicto, la estudiante Leilani Provencio se dio cuenta que estaba embarazada y no sabía qué hacer.

Se lo contó a su pareja y a su papá inmediatamente después de enterarse. Luego, hizo una cita con Planned Parenthood y consideró sus opciones.

“Estaba contemplando mis opciones y tenía mucha presión sobre mí,” ella dijo.

Hace un año, habría tenido más opciones. Los legisladores de Car-

olina del Norte aprobaron una ley restrictiva sobre el aborto en Junio que dejó a los habitantes de Carolina del Norte con muchas preguntas.

La nueva ley prohíbe la mayoría de abortos después de las 12 semanas, con excepciones sólo en caso de violación, incesto, anomalías fetales o casos en los que la vida de la madre esté en peligro.

En los casos que impliquen una anomalía que limite la vida, el procedimiento se puede realizar hasta las 24 semanas de embarazo.

La prohibición también impuso restricciones sobre dónde se pueden realizar abortos. Las clínicas deben designarse como “centros quirúr-

RESTRICCIONES PELIGROSAS DE ATENCIÓN MÉDICA

Los trabajadores de salud reproductiva lucharon con cómo navegar la legalidad de su trabajo conforme a la ley.

El derecho nacional al aborto fue establecido en Roe contra Wade, una declaración de la Corte Suprema en 1971. Fue revocado en junio de 2022.

“Nunca, nunca jamás asumimos que llegaría el día en que Roe dejaría de ser la ley del país,” dijo Jill Sergison, enfermera partera y madre de un estudiante de Riverside. “Así que realmente no había esa urgencia que hay ahora.”

Se inspiró para unirse a Pro-Choice NC, una organización de base que ahora ella preside.

Lucy Schenkman es obstetra y ginecóloga generalista en el sistema de salud de Duke. Aunque los abortos no son su enfoque principal, todavía están dentro de su trabajo.

Como muchas clínicas del sistema de Duke no fueron designadas como centros quirúrgicos ambulatorios, tuvieron que mover sus operaciones de aborto después de que se aprobó el proyecto de la ley.

Ahora que dedican más tiempo administrando consejos de profesión, los médicos pueden tener más dificultad para tomar decisiones.

“Lo difícil es ¿qué es una emergencia? ¿Cuándo estará lo suficientemente enferma?” dijo Schenkman.

Una declaración de Texas provocó un debate nacional sobre estas mismas cuestiones.

“Ahora mismo hay una mujer en Texas [que abortó] a su hija de 20 semanas,” dijo Laura Macklem, directora política y de prensa de NC Values, una organización pro-vida. “Bueno, conozco a alguien que tiene un nieto que nació a las 20 semanas y es un niño próspero de 12 años.”

La mujer a la que se refiere es Kate Cox. Ya tenía dos hijos y planeaba dar la bienvenida al tercero al mundo cuando al feto le diagnosticaron trisomía 18, una enfermedad genética mortal. La mayoría de los niños con este diagnóstico no viven más de las dos primeras semanas de vida. Después de que le negaron el procedimiento en Texas, decidió viajar fuera del estado. Llevar el embarazo a término podría haber puesto en peligro su fertilidad en el futuro, de acuerdo al Washington Post.

Aunque la ley no es tan estricta como en otros estados, Pro-Choice NC está preocupada.

“Cualquier prohibición es una mala prohibición,” dijo Sergison. “Cada vez que imponemos estas prohibiciones, básicamente se crea una condición de nacimiento a la fuerza, embarazo a la fuerza. Es realmente malo ahora.”

La legislación actual deja mucha libertad a la interpretación médica. Los médicos deben

decidir si es necesario un aborto basándose como ven la gravedad de la situación. Si interpretan la situación incorrectamente, podrían enfrentar un enjuiciamiento legal.

“¿Cuánto tiempo esperas? ¿Esperas hasta que tengas una convulsión? ¿Esperas hasta que empiece a sangrar internamente?” dijo Schenkman. “Creo que es muy peligroso y muchas más mujeres morirán en Carolina del Norte.”

Aunque en Durham se pueden encontrar cuidados intensivos efectivos a través del sistema de salud de Duke, no se puede decir lo mismo en todas partes. Muchas ciudades rurales no cuentan con la misma atención disponible y muchas veces existe un mayor estigma sobre el aborto.

“Estoy agradecida de estar en Durham,” dijo Schenkman. “Pero en un pequeño pueblo de Carolina del Norte, donde hay un fiscal de distrito que tiene el objetivo de deshacerse del aborto y alguien enfermo llega, podrían asustarse.”

El proyecto de ley declara que el asesoramiento ahora debe realizarse en persona. Viajar dos veces a los hospitales para recibir asesoramiento es un lujo que muchas personas no tienen.

“Esa es una enorme carga para las personas que, en primer lugar, tienen problemas para llegar allí,” dijo Sergison.

Muchas veces, los médicos tienen que enviar a los residentes de Carolina del Norte fuera del estado, donde la atención es más accesible.

Sally Howland es coordinadora de enfermería en la clínica de planificación familiar de Duke.

“Recibo llamadas de teléfono con frecuencia de mujeres del estado,” dijo. “Les doy números de teléfono de clínicas que pueden atenderlos en Virginia y también en Washington DC.”

UNA DECISIÓN DIFÍCIL

Cuando Mira Prater dio a luz a su hijo hace tres años, su licencia de maternidad sólo duró 30 días y no recibió pago. Tuvo que utilizar sus días de enfermedad. Este año, una disposición del proyecto de ley le concede tiempo libre remunerado después de dar a luz a su segundo hijo el 7 de octubre de 2023.

“Estoy en licencia de maternidad en este momento. Las ocho semanas son vacaciones remuneradas y estoy muy agradecida por ello”, dijo Prater. “Fue una ofrenda de paz. Fue una forma de enmendar algo realmente horrible que están pasando. No es suficiente.”

Prater, casada y madre de dos hijos, encaja el perfil que los conservadores afirman estar tratando de proteger. Pero ella no lo ve así.

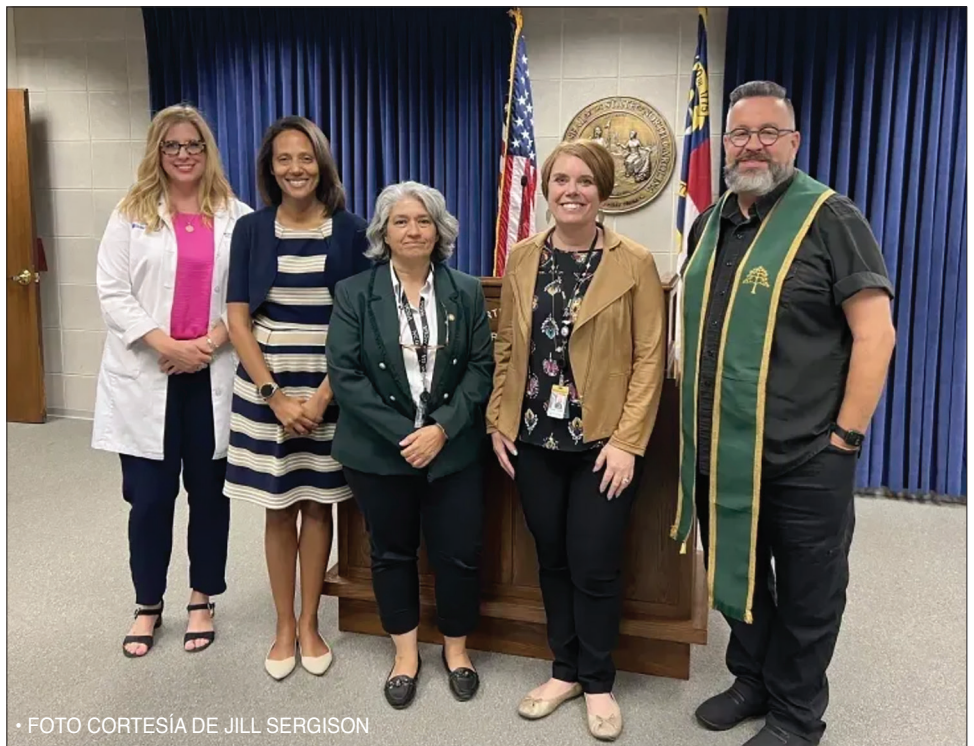
“Creo que es asqueroso que cualquier legislador crea que puede tomar decisiones sobre el cuerpo de una mujer,” dijo. “Es espantoso que alguien crea que puede tomar decisiones sobre el cuerpo de otra persona.”

Su experiencia con un embarazo inviable le mostró lo importante que es el acceso al aborto.

“Tuve un aborto espontáneo el pasado Octubre,” dijo Prater. “Y pude recibir la atención médica que necesitaba.”

Pero muchas mujeres no tienen el mismo acceso.

Prater pudo hacerse una ecografía después de nueve semanas debido a una condición preexistente, pero la mayoría de las mujeres no



• FOTO CORTESÍA DE JILL SERGISON

La enfermera partera Jill Sergison posa con los miembros de la Asamblea General. Habló en nombre de los derechos reproductivos.

**“Es mi
decisión
porque
tendré que
vivir con
esta de-
cisión por
el resto de
mi vida.
Ellos no.”**

Leilani Provencio

consiguen una cita hasta las 11 o 12 semanas de embarazo.

“Y luego a las 11 semanas fue cuando tuve que hacerme un DNC, que es el procedimiento que todos llaman aborto,” dijo Prater. “Fueron tres semanas en las que supe que mi embarazo no iba a concretarse y luego me sometieron al procedimiento.”

Su procedimiento no habría calificado como una excepción “en peligro de muerte” a la prohibición de 12 semanas.

Esto significa que si una mujer tiene su cita inicial a las 11 semanas, no se le programará una DNC hasta aproximadamente las 15 semanas. Bajo la prohibición de 12 semanas, no podría realizar el procedimiento.

Prater insta a los legisladores a comprender la magnitud de la decisión de terminar un embarazo.

“Fue lo peor que he experimentado en toda mi vida, absolutamente lo peor,” dijo Prater. “Hay tantos sentimientos y es tan horrible. Nadie toma esa decisión a la ligera. Nadie usa eso como método anticonceptivo. Y eso es lo que los legisladores se niegan a entender.”

La trabajadora social de Riverside, Kisha Bardonille, teme que las mujeres estén perdiendo derechos gradualmente. Ella aconseja a estudiantes embarazadas de Riverside.

“Creo que nos estamos moviendo hacia el cuento de Handmaid’s Tale en el que se siguen despojando a las mujeres de sus derechos y los hombres toman decisiones sobre nuestros cuerpos y nuestra salud reproductiva,” dijo.

Fenale Brandon enseñó Crianza y Desarrollo Infantil, una clase que ya no se ofrece en Riverside pero está disponible en otras escuelas del distrito.

“Tubo estudiantes que estaban embarazadas en ese momento”, dijo. “Algunas de ellas me piden consejo sobre cómo manejar eso o cómo hablar con los padres si se encuentran en una situación complicada,” dijo Brandon.

Los profesores entienden que individual es cada situación.

“Recuerdo lo preciosa que es la vida y me recuerda el momento de tener a mi bebé en mis brazos,” dijo Bardonille. “Pero como trabajadora social y alguien que trabaja en un área de trabajo donde tantas cosas se ven afectadas por el nivel socioeconómico, el acceso a los recursos, la educación y elegibilidad para la atención médica, simplemente no se puede omitir todas esas cosas.”

Está preocupada por el impacto que este proyecto de ley podría tener en los derechos de las mujeres.

“Tiempos desesperados exigen medidas desesperadas,” afirmó. “Siento que vamos a sentir eso de alguna manera conforme los derechos de las mujeres sigan siendo derribados.”

La experiencia de Brandon en Riverside le enseñó que cada situación es diferente.

“No me corresponde a mí decirles que se hagan un aborto,” dijo Brandon. “Simplemente les digo cuál es mi posición al respecto y eso es algo entre ellos y sus padres.”

Su religión está en contra del aborto, pero un incidente, hace diez años, la hizo cambiar de opinión.

“Tuvimos un estudiante que entró en uno de nuestros baños al final del pasillo e intentó hacerse su propio aborto,” dijo.

UNA CUESTIÓN DE FE

El proyecto de ley también permite a los proveedores médicos optar por no someterse a procedimientos de aborto basado en sus éticos personales, sin miedo de medidas disciplinarias.

Los cristianos conservadores afirman que los fetos son seres vivos con los mismos derechos inalienables que el resto de personas vivas.

Las creencias religiosas personales de Macklem influyen su perspectiva sobre el aborto.

“Toda la vida es importante, y no despedazar a un feto, miembro a miembro en el útero, por conveniencia, no se hace en absoluto,” dijo Macklem. “Toda vida es preciosa.”

“Soy una cristiana que cree en la Biblia”, dijo. “Nuestra organización es una organización cristiana.”

Citó el Salmo 139:13-16.

“Creemos que la vida comienza en la concepción,” dijo.

Macklem también enumeró huellas dactilares únicas, ADN y la presencia de un latido del corazón a las seis semanas para apoyar sus creencias.

Pepper Elliott es el pastor de jóvenes de Cross Assembly, una iglesia no denominacional afiliada a las Asambleas de Dios. Es su responsabilidad ayudar a los jóvenes a manejar situaciones difíciles, incluido el embarazo.

Afirma que no es sólo religión; es ciencia.

“Cuando se concibe un bebé, en ese momento, dos células se unen, se forma una cadena de ADN única entre el espermatozoide y el óvulo, y eso es lo que realmente crea una nueva persona,” dijo. “Y en ese sentido, este ya no es el cuerpo de la mujer.”

Afirma que algunos defensores de la vida se inclinan más hacia la abolición total del aborto que otros.

“Me inclino por el abolicionismo desde la perspectiva del cuidado,” dijo. “No puedo decir necesariamente que todas las iglesias se preocupen de la misma manera por los miembros de su comunidad y su situación.”

Cree que el aborto debería penalizarse.

“Si damos consecuencias, cambiará la forma en que la gente lo hace,” dijo.

Incluso entre los Cristianos, muchos no están de acuerdo.

El 45% de los Cristianos creen que el aborto



La profesora de inglés Mira Prater sostiene a su hijo, Elliot. El semestre pasado estuvo de baja por maternidad remunerada, permitida por una disposición de la factura.

debería ser legal en todas o en la mayoría de las circunstancias, según una encuesta de 2014 realizada por el Pew Research Center. El 51% creen que debería ser ilegal en todos o en la mayoría de los casos, y el 4% restante está indeciso.

NC Values presionó a favor de muchas de las políticas aprobadas en el proyecto de ley. Inicialmente lucharon por una prohibición de seis semanas.

"Es un gran primer paso," dijo Macklem. "Y nos gustaría ver más protecciones para los no nacidos."

También presionaron para que se aumentara la financiación de los centros de crisis de embarazos.

"Por lo general, son para mujeres en crisis, personas con embarazos no planificados y, muchas veces, mujeres pobres," dijo Macklem. "Pueden obtener asesoramiento, pañales, ropa gratis y en algunos lugares también se les da dinero para ayudar con la vivienda."

Sergison no estuvo de acuerdo.

"Reciben muchos millones de dólares del Estado porque dicen que ayudan a las personas con sus embarazos, pero no lo hacen," dijo. "Son simplemente estas organizaciones realmente fraudulentas que se aprovechan de las personas embarazadas."

MENOS TIEMPO PARA DECIDIR

De 139 encuestados en una encuesta de Instagram de Pirates' Hook de noviembre de 2023, el 60% informó que no había oído de la prohibición de 12 semanas. De 131 personas, el 79% se opuso a la prohibición. El 7% votó a favor de la prohibición, mientras que el 15% restante respondió que no le importaba.

Mientras los estudiantes de secundaria no son el grupo demográfico más numeroso que aborta, sí son de los más vulnerables.

Ha habido un gran aumento de mujeres que entran a la clínica de Schenkman para ser esterilizadas a edades tempranas, por miedo a quedar embarazadas y no poder recibir la atención que necesitan.

"Los adolescentes, los jóvenes, definitivamente están en riesgo. Muchas de ellas tampoco conocen su cuerpo, entonces tal vez no sepan que están embarazadas con suficiente antelación," dijo Schenkman.

El consentimiento de los padres es necesario para que las menores puedan abortar, a menos que tengan una anulación judicial que permita a las adolescentes abortar sin el consentimiento de los padres. Pero se necesita tiempo para conseguir una cita judicial.

"Con solo 12 semanas, no tienes mucho tiempo," dijo Sergison.

Las cargas financieras también dificultan que los adolescentes obtengan la atención que necesitan.

"Siempre me preocupa que nuestras mujeres más vulnerables no reciban [asistencia financiera] a pesar de los mejores esfuerzos de la gente," dijo Sergison.

Macklem no está de acuerdo. Citó el proyecto de ley y señaló que hay fondos disponibles para las adolescentes que decidan continuar con el embarazo.

"Estábamos muy entusiasmados con todo lo que incluye para las mujeres porque se trata de una legislación a favor de las mujeres," dijo.

Mientras los adolescentes menores de 18 años todavía necesitan el consentimiento de sus padres para cuidados como abortos, muchas veces visitan clínicas para obtener anticonceptivos. Dado que los adolescentes no pueden someterse a esterilización y el proyecto de ley no tuvo ningún efecto sobre la disponibilidad o las restricciones sobre la anticoncepción, sigue siendo una herramienta muy valiosa.

"Vemos adolescentes que pueden entrar para recibir anticonceptivos y no requieren el consentimiento de los padres," dijo Howland.

De regreso a Riverside, Provencio reflexionó sobre su embarazo. Su bebé sano, Zaire Provencio, nació el 3 de Enero y ella espera regresar a la escuela en Febrero.

Sus experiencias personales fortalecieron su creencia de que a las mujeres se les debería permitir tomar sus propias decisiones.

"Fue muy difícil porque no mucha gente sabe lo que estás pasando," dijo. "Me sentí sola casi todo el tiempo."

Su familia la animó a abortar, pero después de considerarlo un poco, finalmente decidió no hacerlo.

"Estoy a favor del aborto. Estoy totalmente a favor," dijo Provencio. "Pero no pensé que fuera la opción que quería hacer."

Sin el apoyo de su padre, podría haber tomado una decisión diferente. Aunque originalmente le aconsejó que abortara, le dijo que la apoyaría en cualquier decisión.

"Definitivamente creo que a las mujeres se les debería dar más tiempo, más de 12 semanas," dijo Provencio.

Ella apoya el acceso al aborto y cree que debería ser más accesible.

"Todas las mujeres que abortan son muy fuertes," dijo. "Y esa es una decisión difícil de tomar y las felicito por tomar la mejor decisión para ellas."

A pesar de las opiniones de los demás, Provencio decidió hacer lo que sentía mejor para ella.

"Estoy muy agradecida de tener una familia increíble y no tengo que preocuparme por nada más que dar a luz y cuidar a mi bebé," dijo. "Mucha gente no tiene esa opción, especialmente a una edad tan temprana."

Se siente afortunada de haber tenido la oportunidad de elegir cómo proceder con su embarazo.

"Es mi decisión porque tendré que vivir con esta decisión por el resto de mi vida," dijo Provencio. "Ellos no."

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