

The Pirates' Hook



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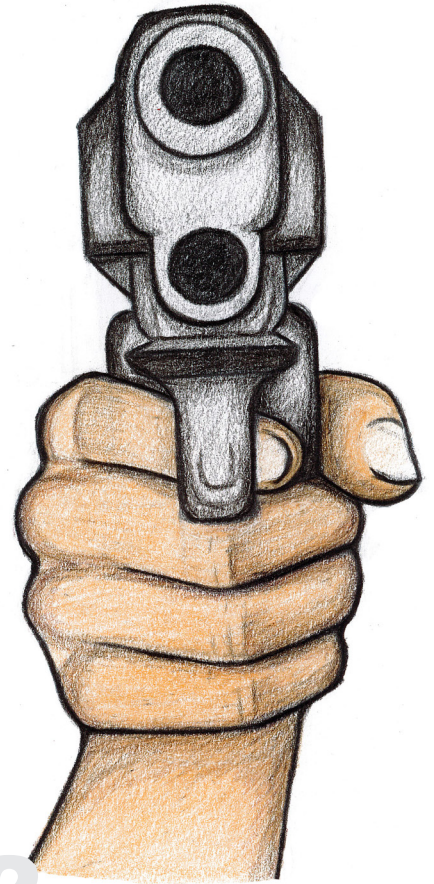
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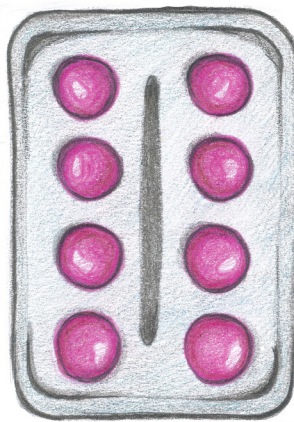


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The power of curiosity

At the Pirates' Hook, we work to keep the Riverside community informed with regular news coverage. However, we also see the importance of doing deep dives into a multitude of different subjects.

Last year, in collaboration with the Ida B. Wells Society, we published investigative stories ranging from hyperlocal, in-depth investigations of the culture in Riverside's engineering program and why so many native Spanish speakers take Spanish 1, to statewide issues like problems with our public school system and North Carolina's place in the national abortion debate.

This year, we have continued our investigations with the knowledge and expertise provided by the Ida B. Wells Society, but no longer with their regular seminars and weekly advisory sessions with local reporters. These stories have led us to talk to everyone from Durham's Sheriff to an Olympic volleyball player.

We have chosen to present the following stories in a new format: an investigative magazine. Along with our regular content on our website and social media, this magazine is the culmination of a semester's worth of writing and research coupled with a more creative design.

Our publication is by students for students, and these stories play a critical role in our work to explore the complex issues in our community.

El poder de la curiosidad

En el Pirates' Hook, nosotros trabajamos en mantener la comunidad de Riverside informada con cobertura de noticias regulares. Sin embargo, también vemos la importancia de hacer investigaciones más profundas sobre temas diversos.

El año pasado, en colaboración con la Sociedad Ida B. Wells, publicamos historias de investigación que van desde investigaciones hiperlocales y profundas de la cultura en el programa de ingeniería de Riverside y por qué tantos hispanohablantes nativos toman Español 1, hasta temas estatales como problemas con nuestro sistema de escuelas públicas y el lugar de Carolina del Norte en el debate nacional sobre el aborto.

Este año, hemos continuado nuestras investigaciones con el conocimiento y la experiencia proporcionados por la Sociedad Ida B. Wells, pero ya no con sus seminarios regulares y sesiones semanales de asesoramiento con reporteros locales. Estas historias nos han llevado a hablar con todos, desde el alguacil de Durham hasta un jugador olímpico de voleibol.

Hemos optado por presentar las siguientes historias en un nuevo formato: una revista de investigación. Junto con nuestro contenido regular en nuestro sitio web y redes sociales, esta revista es la culminación de un semestre de escritura en investigación junto con un diseño más creativo.

Nuestra publicación es de estudiantes para estudiantes, y estas historias juegan un papel fundamental en nuestro trabajo para explorar los problemas complejos de nuestra comunidad.

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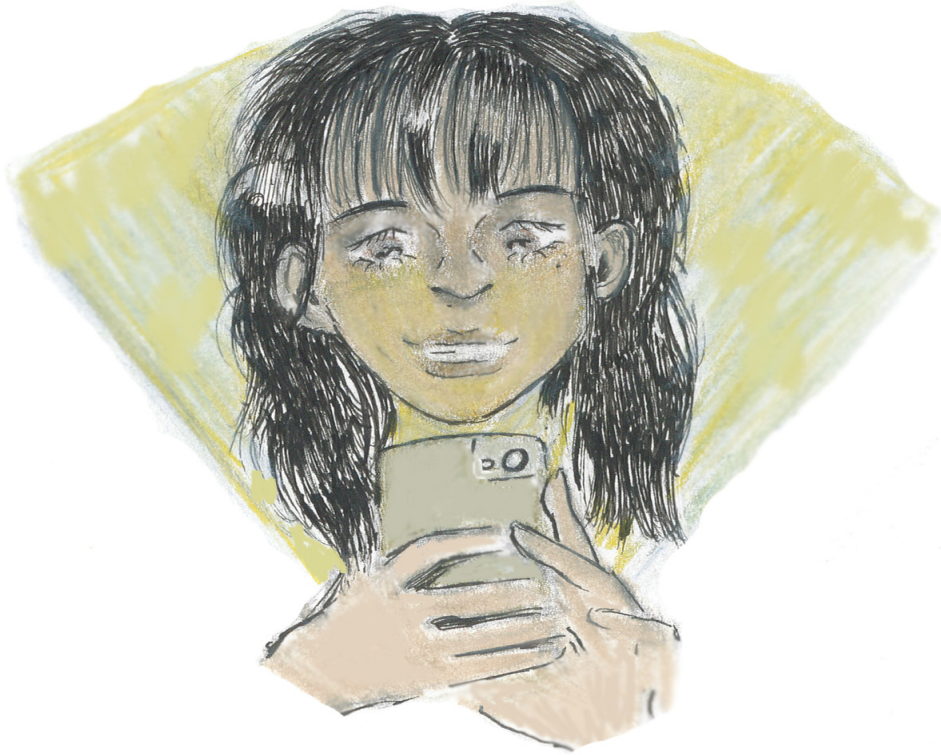
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FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS: HOW ARE RIVERSIDE STUDENTS EXPRESSING THEMSELVES?



BY LANA McILVAINE AND SADIE IRBY
* ART BY SADIE IRBY

At Riverside, student expression is seen every day. The ability to voice opinions is encouraged, fashion is varied, and clubs are abundant. The Riverside Democrats' Club speaks every Thursday about current political issues.

Even if it is hard to see, student expression is everywhere. Smaller-scale conversations between friends demonstrate the ability for students to self-express.

There have even been student walk-outs to protest or express opinions in the past. For example, in May 2022, Riverside students organized a walk-out to protest the overturning of Roe v Wade.

Junior Keili "Kat" Orozco-Velasquez says their style can be used as "a conversation starter."

"I think self expression is important because you get to show who you really are or what you like."

"I think self expression is important because you get to show who you really are or what you like," said Orozco-Velasquez.

Orozco-Velasquez's style is pastel and "cutesy," and is inspired by Japanese fashion.

"I know I stand out from a crowd of a bunch

of students wearing black hoodies," she said.

Expression through fashion can be used to build community within Riverside. Sophomore Casey Dwyer appreciates how much freedom students have to choose what fashion looks like at Riverside.

"I think a lot of people just wear whatever they want, which is really nice," said Dwyer. "They just dress how they want... something that expresses who they are."

Freshman Alyss Tran, a member of the Art Club, feels like they can freely express themselves at school.

"It's not like I can just do whatever I want, but I can express who I am," said Tran.

Besides fashion, there are other forms of student expression, like art. But this year, art programs have been noticeably empty. Both art club and sketch club have very little student involvement and it seems to be lacking in building community and expressive

opportunities for students.

Visual arts teacher Emily Matheson thinks the lack of student involvement in clubs is because of how students treat SMART lunch.

"I'm thinking they're going to hang out with their friends," said Matheson.

Many students treat SMART lunch as an hour to just socialize and not use it how it was intended to be used. Matheson has, however, seen an overall increase in students interested in creative expression through art within Riverside.

"I've started seeing an increase in student engagement," said Matheson.

She mentioned students outside of art classes talking to her and other visual art teacher Crystal Brown about being interested in visual arts.

"My hopes are just for students to continue to take visual arts and be interested and excited about learning about the visual arts community," said Matheson.



A more progressive dress code

Durham Public Schools adopted a more lenient dress code for the 2022-23 school year and beyond.

The updated dress code aims to create "equitable educational access," avoid reinforcing stereotypes and reduce marginalization or oppression of any group.

More specifically, it allows students to wear fitted pants, spaghetti straps, crop tops, and other previously banned clothing.

The old dress code does not allow cleavage to be revealed or skirts and shorts shorter than mid thigh. Pants "below waist level," and "excessively tight or baggy," items were also prohibited.

The revised dress code does state that students must wear "fabric covering all private parts of the body" that isn't "see-through or mesh or transparent." It also still prohibits clothing that is "reasonably likely to create a substantial and material disruption to the educational process" and retains the general rule prohibiting articles that "depict profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, or violence" and "Gang-Related Activity," or that "are reasonably expected to intimidate other students."

The dress code given to Riverside's students and staff does not include a specific policy about hats and hoodies, but according to ABC 11 news, DPS Chief of Staff Tanya Giovanni says there is a rule in place. After meeting with school administrators Giovanni states that, "hats and hoodies will not be allowed," in Durham Public Schools.

Riverside assistant principal Jasmine McKoy says that this rule stands at Riverside. To her understanding, the reason why the dress code does not state this policy is because the DPS board of education didn't include it.

McKoy said she also hasn't seen any changes in the policy or enforcement while she's been working here. Most students don't choose to wear hats or hoodies so enforcement doesn't have to be super strict about it.

McKoy agrees with the current hat and hoodie policy.

"I feel like it should be enforced to ensure that we can identify students properly," she said.

Identifying students is a key component of Riverside and all school's campus security.

McKoy also said hats and hoodies could be a possible distraction to students.

The changes have been met with almost unanimous support from Riverside teachers and students.

Junior Azzuri Davis is relieved to have fewer rules to worry about when choosing an outfit.

"We don't come to school to worry about our clothes," she said. "We are here to do our work."

Junior Divinity Gooch likes that the new rules are more inclusive. She said she was "dress coded" several times in middle school for unintentionally wearing shorts and shirts that were too revealing.

Gooch also said the rules about hairstyles are a welcome change.

"For people who look like me and have hair like I do, hairstyles are a form of self expression."

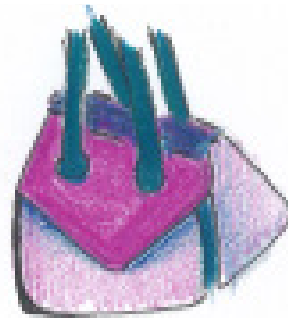
"For people who look like me and have hair like I do, hairstyles are a form of self expression," she said.

While students began the year with fewer restrictions on clothing and therefore fewer

chances to be "dress coded," many haven't noticed the change.

Juniors Cristal Perada and Cameron Daye said they did not know DPS had updated it. However, once they read the new policy, they both agreed it to be better than the old one.

Perada was happy to see that the dress code was for everyone, not just girls, who are usually the targets of these rules. Daye agreed with the rules for high schoolers but said they were too moderate for middle schoolers, who should not be allowed to wear such revealing clothing.



Social studies teacher Janet Heape is also excited about the new changes and freedom.

"I am excited that the new dress code provides students with more choice in what they decide to wear and how they choose to express themselves," Heape said. She also believes this year's change will take away some teacher-student disagreements.

"The idea of professionalism is valid in some settings, but high schoolers should be allowed to be themselves."

Heape, who went to a high school with a very strict dress code, said that her teachers used rulers to measure clothing length and decide if it was appropriate. Her school had rules against tank tops, facial piercings, and aggressively enforced length checks on shorts and skirts.

English teacher Laura Brady said that it is important for students to be able to express themselves.

"The idea of professionalism is valid in some settings," she said, "but high schoolers should be allowed to express themselves."

Brady says the new DPS dress code is "radically different" from the one she had

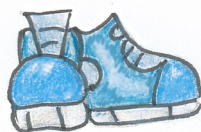
as a high school student, too. Her dress code prohibited certain colors due to gangs and had strict length requirements.

While she doesn't think there is a significant difference between how students dress this fall and last, Brady believes the revisions will ultimately make her job a little easier.

"[It's] not my duty to prevent students from wearing clothing that reveals their shoulders but to keep disruptive, offensive clothing from disrupting the classroom community," she said.

Other forms of expression at Riverside

Schools are allowed to punish students for leaving class without an excuse, even if for political reasons. Following Riverside's walkout last year, no known students faced repercussions for leaving class to participate in the protest. There was communication with administration beforehand to ensure safety and understanding.

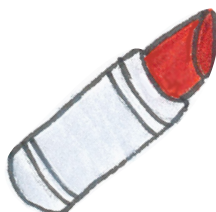


There are times throughout the history of public education in America when student expression has been restrained, and argued against for the protection of free speech under the first amendment of the Constitution.

Circumstances matter, as students are free to express themselves as long as it does not cause a disruption to a learning environment and invade the rights of other students. Schools may also censor expression for educational reasons and if the school does not intend to silence particular unpopular viewpoints. These guidelines are based on the court cases *Tinker v Des Moines* and *Hazelwood v Kuhlmeier*.

Sophomore Colton Alder thinks students express themselves more freely at Riverside than his previous schools.

"There is some cool student expression... there is more creativity here and people express themselves more here, definitely,"



said Alder, who used to attend Person High School in Roxboro.

The Pirates' Hook polled students at Riverside to see if they feel like their expression is limited. 80% of responders feel they can freely express themselves without facing disciplinary consequences. 72% of students believe their expression rights are not restricted at school.

"Expression itself isn't really the issue for a lot of people I know," wrote one student. "If they are going to express themselves then they will. Most of the time the real issue is finding a space filled with people that share the same expression freely."

Almost 17% of respondents felt that their expression is more limited in some programs than others, while 37.5% of respondents were unsure.

Clubs are an essential outlet for students to express themselves at Riverside, and most meet during SMART lunch.

"I only have one class (second period) at Riverside," says respondent Jonathan Ross. "SMART lunch is my only opportunity to talk with close friends and socialize, and there are ongoing efforts to remove it."

Senior, Jonathan "JC" Ross feels like without SMART lunch he can't express who he really is.

" [AASA] encourages members to express themselves as a individual person, as a member of a specific culture, and as a member of society in general."

"A lot of how I express who I am is who I hang out with, my friends," said Ross. "really the only time I get to speak with my friends and talk with them is SMART lunch."

Ross was looking forward to finishing up his last year of high school with his friends, but worries administrators are going to take it away.

"I really feel like I can't really be who I am if I'm not seeing them (friends) like at

lunch," he said."

Riverside also has multiple clubs, like the Queer-Straight Alliance, Black Student Union, and the Asian American Student Association, to allow minority students to gather and connect.

Sophomore Kharmina Mitre is a co-president of Riverside's Asian American Student Association (AASA). She describes how the club encourages minority students communicate ideas and feelings.

"[AASA] encourages the members to express themselves as an individual person, as a member of a specific culture, and as a member of society in general," Mitre said. "I think expression representation is important because it highlights the importance of one's identity and values."

Mitre went on to describe how students can self-express through culture.

"We all choose components of our culture that promote self-acceptance and awareness and help us better comprehend how similar and different from one another through our appreciation of culture," she said.

AASA does different activities in meetings to promote these ideas.

"We are able to share our values and be educated on the other different Asian cultures," Mitre said. "Lately, we've been doing presentations and educating our members about different things such as trivia games which we try to make it educational, but also fun. I also remember one meeting where we discussed Asian hardships, which I really liked because we were able to connect with our members."

NELLIE PURDY, RORY O'CONNOR AND HANNAH POSNER ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY.



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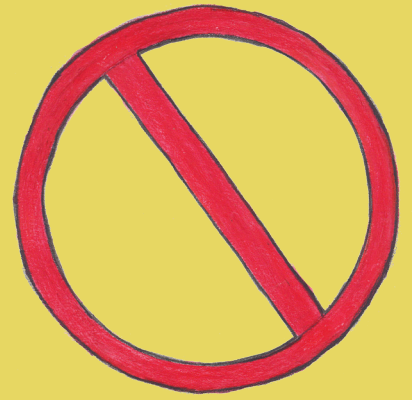
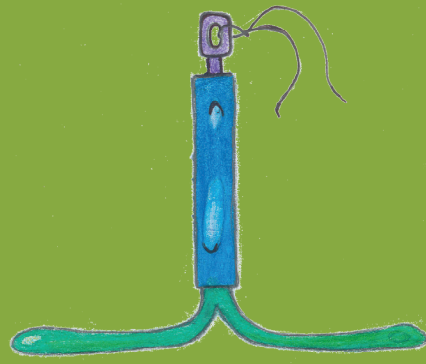
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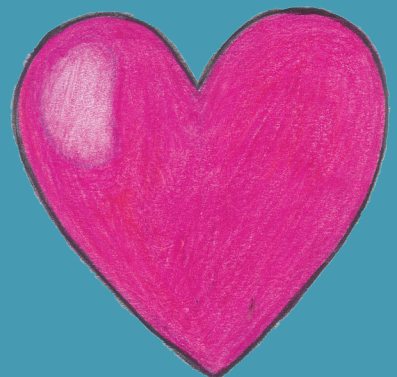
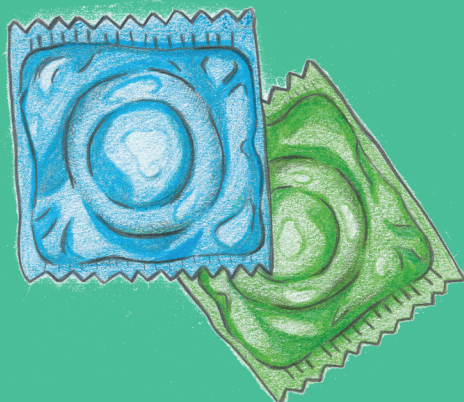
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SEX-ED

Some Riverside students are only being taught abstinence. They're not the only ones.

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Riverside, like many other schools across the state and country, follows loose sex education curricular guidelines, leaving many students without essential information in substandard health classes.
.....



Elinya Black's physical education (PE) class chatted quietly as they completed book work from textbooks published in 2010.

The books, many of which were tattered and vandalized with over a decade of student use, along with the corresponding three page stapled packet the students answered is the extent of their sex education curriculum.

"She just gave us a textbook and told us to fill out the work," freshman Bea McCabe, one of the students in the class said. "All the material was outdated."

The packet was organized into two sections: "Responsible Relationships" and "Choosing Abstinence." The responsible relationship section in the textbook is subdivided into "Physical Attraction and Dating" and "Violence in Dating Relationships," which provides Black's mostly ninth grade students with information about domestic violence and date rape, as well as general information about dating, like "By dating someone, you can learn about his or her interests, personality, abilities, and values."

"I learned more from sex ed in fifth grade," said freshman Tula Winton, who was also in Black's class.

The entirety of the textbook's sex education information lies in a four-page spread under the bright red title, "Choosing Abstinence." The first two pages detail the "Risks of Sexual Intimacy," including damage to one's emotional health, complications to the relationship, and the risk of pregnancy.

The remaining pages in the section provide students with "Abstinence Skills."

"For example, if you are at an unsupervised party, you might feel pressured to have sex," one part of the section reads. "But if you are in a public place, the temptation to engage in sexual activities is not as great."

Nowhere in the textbook, nor in the corresponding packet, is consent explicitly referenced. Assault is not discussed outside of the "Violence in Dating Relationships" section.

In the "Assert Yourself" portion of the "Abstinence Skills" section, the textbook offers strategies on how to practice abstinence. "At

times, however, simply saying no once may not be effective," it reads. "You may need to be firm and say something like, 'No! I said I don't want to do that.' You may need to repeat yourself a few times before your partner realizes you are serious. If necessary, get up and walk away."

But some students found this insufficient.

"Without learning about how to give consent it's harder to have safe sex that both parties are willing to do," Winton said. "Many people have different ideas about what consent actually is."

What are teachers allowed to teach?

North Carolina's legislation surrounding sex education leaves the curriculum up to the county, so long as they cover all topics in the Healthy Youth Act, a 2009 law that added reproductive health and safety education to a curriculum that previously taught abstinence-only-until-marriage.

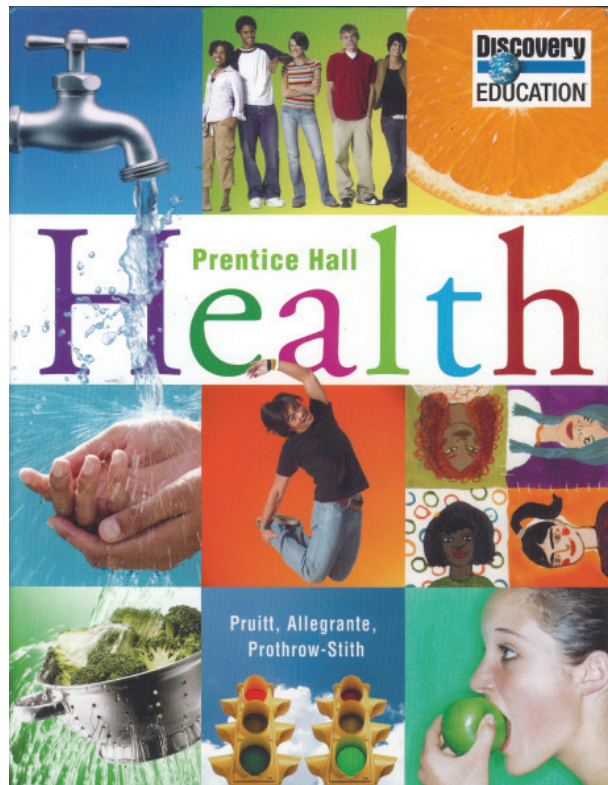
The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction created the Healthful Living Essential Standards document in 2011, which contains all of the curricular material that health teachers must cover in their courses. The content is categorized into five subjects: mental and emotional health, personal and consumer health, interpersonal communication and relationships, nutrition and physical activity, and alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

All of the sex-ed curricula falls under the "Interpersonal Communication and Relationships" section, and is subsequently sub-divided into three essential standards: understand healthy and effective interpersonal communication and

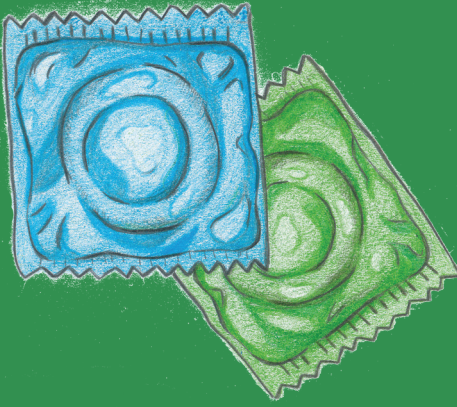
relationships, evaluate abstinence from sexual intercourse as a positive choice for young people, and create strategies that develop and maintain reproductive and sexual health. The third essential standard contains course content ranging from sexual assault myths and prevention to preventing and treating STDs.

"The state doesn't leave things up to the district; they provide a standard course of study," Former Riverside teacher and current DPS Director of Health, PE and Drivers Education David Hackney said. "We don't tell [health teachers] to teach anything. They are trained to provide the state's health standards."

According to Hackney, schools within Durham Public Schools District are provided with state approved textbooks and supplemental materials that cover the state's standards.



Riverside students use textbooks that are over a decade old, and contain outdated information.



However, he also said it's been well over ten years since schools were last provided with new textbooks and materials.

The textbooks Black and other Riverside health teachers instruct from do not contain all of the material outlined in DPI's essential standards. Notably, missing was the required STI prevention and contraception topics from the third essential standard.

"Any textbook we use coincides with the curriculum provided by the state," Hackney said.

"They are used to supplement the state curriculum."

As a result, it is expected that schools will provide students with instruction on topics absent from the textbooks and any additional materials to understand these subjects.

"We rely on guest speakers from the Durham Health Department to come in and share supplemental information," said Michael Whitfield, Health and Physical Education Department. "The last time we offered [the speakers] was pre-COVID."

As a result, current freshmen, sophomores, and juniors have not received any supplemental information beyond the textbook.

"We try to cover information on our own, but we rely on these speakers," Whitfield said.

However, Whitfield believes that the schools should not be responsible for the entirety of sex education.

"As a parent of three kids," he said. "I don't really think it's on the schools to share this information I want to give them at home."

In lieu of guest speakers, teachers are left to supplement material on their own as they

see fit.

"The curriculum rules I follow as a teacher are pretty relaxed," Black said. "We are supposed to touch on the chapters we feel are most important to address to our students today."

Black planned on going over the textbook materials in class and supplementing the

lesson with additional information in a discussion, but during this particular semester the class ran out of time before the semester ended.

"As a health teacher, I believe my role as an educator is to educate safe practices, the 'what ifs' and the 'what could happen,'" she said. "Being realistic in these types of relations is the best route possible in my eyes."

However, she added, "As a class we did not get a chance to go over the sex-ed materials I planned on presenting."

"As a parent of three kids, I don't really think it's on the schools to share this information I want to give them at home."

on saying no to sex or waiting until marriage (67% of females and 58% of males), while less than half of students reported learning about where to obtain birth control (48% of females and 45% of males) or how to use a condom (55% of females and 60% of males).

Since the mid-1990s the United States Federal Government has spent around \$2 billion on abstinence-only programs.

This is a sharp decline from what students reported in 1995, when 81% of males and 87% of females reported receiving instruction on birth control methods. Twenty years later, only 63% of males and 64% of females reported receiving instruction between 2015-19.

"The U.S. federal government began supporting sexual abstinence promotion programs in 1981," according to a study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health in 2017. "Funding was greatly expanded after 1996 and focused on exclusionary programs (i.e., abstinence only), which restricted the provision of other information."

The same study estimated that since the mid-1990s the United States Federal Government has spent around \$2 billion on abstinence-only programs.

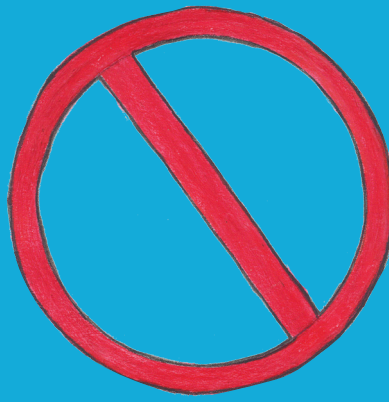
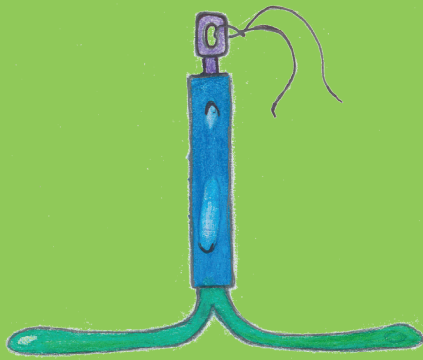
This comes in spite of data from the CDC reporting that 41% of high school students are sexually active, and research from various organizations suggest that not only is abstinence-only education ineffective, it is also unethical because it withholds accurate medical information from adolescents.

Part of a Bigger Picture

Riverside students aren't the only ones missing out on sex-ed.

According to a national study conducted by Guttmacher Institute, around half of adolescents (53% of females and 54% of males) reported receiving sex education classes that meet the minimum standards of Healthy People 2030 in 2015-2019. Additionally, less than half of adolescents (43% of females and 47% of males) received this sex education instruction before engaging in intercourse.

The study also showed the nature of instruction tended to emphasize abstinence over contraception. In 2015-2019 a significant portion of adolescents (81% of females and 79% of males) reported receiving instruction



What do comprehensive curriculums look like?

Planned Parenthood, a national nonprofit organization, offers a different approach to sex education. The organization has been in the political crosshairs around issues of sex-ed and abortion rights, and often loses state and federal funding when republican majorities are elected into office. But it continues to provide educational resources that go well beyond the state standards.

“Our job is to help teens make responsible decisions,” said Monika Thigpen, the Senior Director of Education at Planned Parenthood South Atlantic. “Teens are talking about a lot of things and a lot of issues and we just want to be sure you all are giving accurate information to one another.”

"If you imagine that someone was only taught abstinence sex education and they're in a situation where they don't want to practice abstinence, that can be harmful for the young person not to have accurate information about what to do in that situation."

Planned Parenthood executes this with information provided by the Department for Health and Human services. “Our curriculums are evidence based,” Thigpen said. “That means they have already

High School.” The 12-day course covers the topics: Introduction to Sexuality, Reproductive Anatomy, Gender, Sex & Shared Responsibility, Sexual Identity, Reasons & Methods for Preventing Pregnancy, Preventing STIs and Pregnancy, Sexual Risks and Low-Risk Intimacy, Negotiating in Relationships, Social Media Literacy and Sexuality, Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships, Consent, and Accessing Health Care.

“We focus on comprehensive sex ed so a young person can know what decisions work best for them in any given situation” Karina Martinez Romo, a Community Health Educator for Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, said. “If you imagine that someone was only taught abstinence sex education and they're in a situation where they don't want to practice abstinence, that can be harmful for the young person not to have accurate information about what to do in that situation.”

According to Thigpen, these curriculums aim to create peer leaders who can provide accurate information and context to conversations. To encourage teen participation, Planned Parenthood offers rewards ranging from a pizza party to a \$100 stipend for completing the course.

The courses are free for schools to utilize and implement.

“In order for Durham Public Schools to be involved with planned parenthood, health

been tested and proven to increase knowledge and change behaviors.”

One curriculum Planned Parenthood offers high school classes is “Get Real

teachers can contact Karina Martinez and set a schedule,” Thigpen said.

“I am the lucky person that gets to work with Durham County Schools!” Martinez said. “I would initiate conversations with your health teachers and we would plan the next steps for me to come in and talk to you guys.”

“We don't work with any student that doesn't have parent permission,” Thigpen added. “All students in our program have to have parent permission.”

“We need to break any stigma [surrounding these classes]. It's a subject like anything else and it needs to be taught in schools.”

Many students agree that Riverside students should become some of the 15,000 teens Thigpen estimates her team reaches a year in different capacities.

“I do think sex-ed is one of the most im-

portant things to learn about in health class,” said Jonah Weiss, another ninth grade student who took health class last semester. “It should be prioritized.”

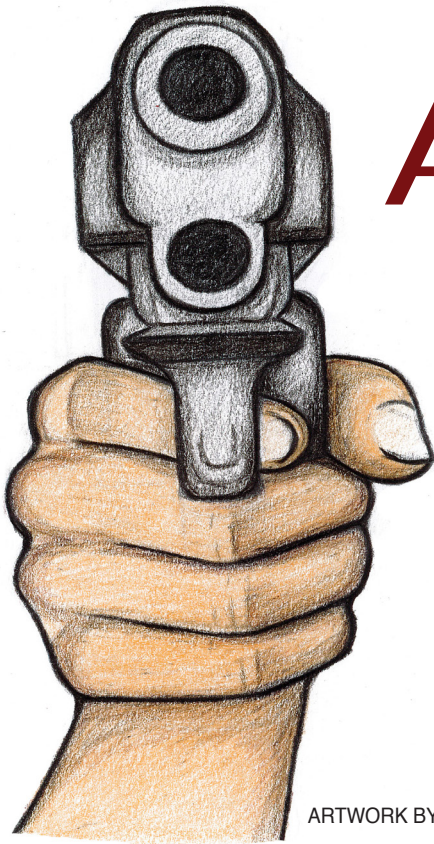
McCabe agreed, “People won't be safe if they aren't educated.”

Whitfield plans to bring back guest speakers as soon as next semester and district leaders are also open to reimagining the current resources.

“I haven't seen [sex-ed] brought to the board in a long time,” School Board Member Natalie Beyer said. “If it's something we need to pay more attention to I would love to learn what we do and what we could do better.”

Beyer believes that a comprehensive sex education curriculum is essential for high schoolers.

“We need to break any stigma [surrounding these classes],” she said. “It's a subject like anything else and it needs to be taught in schools.”



ARTWORK BY DUNYA OMAR

All Too Real

For students, SROs and sheriffs alike, preventing gun violence remains a top priority. But they have different ideas about how to do it.

BY TOBAIS RANGEL, ISAIAH HEINZ AND DONNA DIAZ

Editor's note: On the day this magazine went to print, news broke that two Hillside High School students were shot nearby the school in Durham. One died shortly after the incident, and the other sustained non-life-threatening injuries.

When gunshots filled the Friday night air, Riverside students, athletes and staff scattered.

Around 9:30 pm on Friday, October 1, 2021, following Riverside's 20-0 victory over Northern High School, a car drove recklessly into the main parking lot on the home side of Durham County Memorial stadium and started firing shots.

A 17-year-old Riverside student was struck in the leg.

Police arrived within minutes. The student was taken to the hospital for non-life threatening injuries and was later released and recovered at home.

WHAT THE DATA SAYS

Gun violence is defined as any violence using a firearm, homicide, suicide, and anything in between, according to Amnesty International.

All around the world, there are acts of gun violence happening every minute, but few countries have more gun-related deaths each year than the United States.

According to gunviolencearchive.org, in 2022, there were over 36,000 deaths related to gun violence, including 557 mass shootings and 27 mass murders. These numbers are down from 2018 when there were 54,000 gun violence-related deaths in the US.

While the US numbers are decreasing, they are still very high compared to Canada where, in 2020, there were only 8,300 gun violence-related deaths. While the COVID-19 pandemic could partially cause the low numbers (because their lockdown measures were stricter and longer), the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics reports that the rate was similar to previous years.

"In 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no change in the rate of firearm-related crime nationally compared to 2019," wrote Mary Allen in a 2022 report published by Statistics Canada. "Rates increased in some areas and decreased in others."

Globally, the US stands out with much more gun violence-related deaths than most of the other countries in the world.

According to healthdata.com, the United States is in the top ten of high-income countries with a death rate of 4.12. Out of all countries, the United States is in second place in total gun violence deaths and twenty-second out of firearm-related deaths per 100 thousand members of the population.

According to the CDC's gun violence statistics, Texas had the highest death rate (number of deaths per 100,000 people) in the US at 12.7 in 2019, followed by California (7.2) Florida (12.7) Georgia (15.8) and Ohio (13.3).

North Carolina is seventh on the list, with a death rate of 13.1 and

1,400 deaths.

Inside North Carolina, different counties have vastly different rates. The counties with the highest death rates are Vance (29.58), Robeson (28.56), and Graham county (24.85).

According to everystat.org, Durham's death rate is 12.74 and it is the fifty-third highest in NC. Orange County's is 6.31, Wake's 6.44, and Chatham's 8.9.

Durham's death rate is much larger than surrounding counties. That's due in part to Durham's population being larger, too.

"A MINIMUM OF TWO SROs AT OUR HIGH SCHOOLS"

Sheriff Clarence Birkhead never had his sights set on becoming the Sheriff of Durham County.

"I never dreamed of being the sheriff when I started out as a deputy many, many, many years ago," Birkhead said.

However, through hard work and 38 years of being in service, he was elected in 2018 and again in 2022.

"I'm in my thirty-eighth year. I became a deputy in 1984 in Randolph County," Birkhead said. "In 1984, I was a young deputy, and I worked in every facet of law enforcement."

Now, in his second term of being a sheriff, Birkhead has a lot of responsibilities and duties to fulfill.

"The sheriff is responsible for law enforcement, the detention center, court services, security of court personnel, judges," Birkhead said. He is also responsible for "all civil process subpoenas, evictions, domestic violence orders, everything that's civil."

Birkhead decided to run for Sheriff because he saw things that needed to be changed.

"What really prompted me to run for sheriff was that I saw some things that I thought needed to be changed or modernized," Birkhead said.

One thing he wanted to change was the school resource officer program,

"[I wanted to] Revamp our SRO program, where SROs are truly a school resource officer, not disciplinarians, and not the heavy-handed Gestapo," he said.

Birkhead has encountered active shooter situations in his career as a deputy, and with that knowledge, he is not afraid for his children's lives when he sends them to school.

"My two youngest were educated in Durham Public Schools and I felt very safe when them being in our school system," Birkhead said. "I've never really had that concern for their safety."

Although he feels safe, he'd still like to have a little more protection in our schools. Currently, we have one full-time SRO and a few other SROs that aren't full-time.

"We have some great SROs," Birkhead said. "I would love to have a minimum of two SROs at our high schools."

He wants to make sure our school is as safe as can be, even if that includes adding items like metal detectors to find weapons or other ways of keeping weapons out of the school.

"I think we need to do whatever is necessary to keep our school safe," he said.

However, he acknowledges that SROs and metal detectors can be poorly received at times.

"We do not want to create a police state or an armored compound where students, faculty, and staff don't feel comfortable," Birkhead said.

HOW STUDENTS FEEL

Riverside currently has one full-time SRO: Deputy Quintin Barren. Even with all the protective measures in the school, some students don't feel as safe as they should.

"I kinda feel like any day someone would just walk in with a gun and shoot things up," said one student who asked to remain anonymous. "Not really for any reason of the people in the school, just generally."

Other students feel differently, though.

"I feel safe in school from conflicts that can be addressed, conflicts that can't be addressed such as mass shootings to like white supremacy, obviously there's nothing that we can do about that," Senior Nya Batson reports. "I feel safe enough."

Even though Birkhead thinks we need more School Resource Officers, the students disagree.

"I feel like police in school, just due to the climate around policing, kinda paints an image for students that the school itself is unsafe," Batson said. "I feel like the number of police that we have now is enough."

Others believe strongly that we shouldn't have more SROs in our school.

"I do not think there should be more policemen in our school," senior Olivia Henry said. "I feel like the way that policemen deal with school violence is violence in itself."

Instead of adding more officers and people like this, Henry believe that getting to the problem before it starts is a better way to deal with violence in schools.

"I feel like the way to deal with school violence is, rather than to meet it with violence, fight fire with water," Henry said. "I feel like trying to see where they're coming from and why they're doing what they're doing and counseling them instead of tasing them."

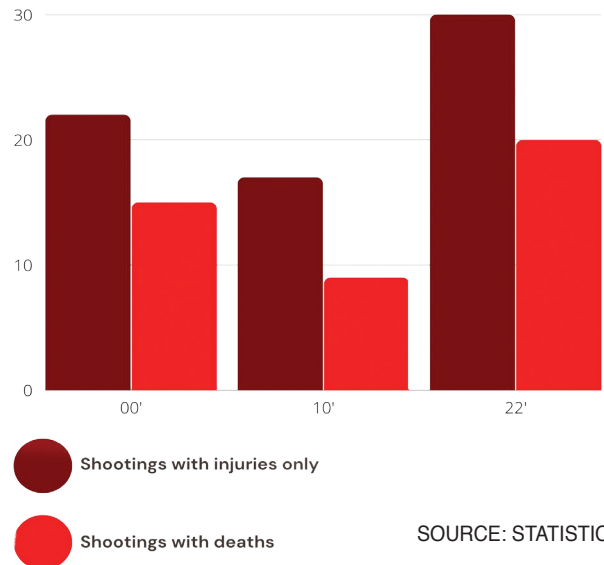
Batson agrees with the calmer approach to solving this issue.

"I don't think that schools need more police officers, but they need more preventative measures for the violence that they see inside of schools," she said. "Maybe group counseling or something to help with situations before they arise."

"What really prompted me to run for sheriff was that I saw some things that needed to be changed or modernized."

Gunfire on School Grounds Sees Sharp Increase

Number of shootings at K-12 schools and their victims in the U.S. (2000-2022)



SOURCE: STATISTICA.COM

Todo Es Muy Real

Para estudiantes, e igualmente para oficiales de recursos escolares y sheriffs, prevenir la violencia de armas sigue siendo lo más importante. Pero tienen diferentes ideas de cómo hacerlo.

POR TOBAIS RANGEL, ISAIAH HEINZ Y
DONNA DIAZ

Nota del Editor: En el día que se envió esta revista para imprimir, las noticias surgieron de que dos estudiantes de Hillside High School fueron baleados cerca de la escuela en Durham. Uno de ellos murió poco después del incidente, y el otro sufrió lesiones que no ponen en peligro a su vida.

Cuando los disparos llenaron el aire del viernes por la noche, los estudiantes, atletas y personal de Riverside se dispersaron.”

Alrededor de las 9:30 pm del viernes en la noche, después de la victoria de Riverside 20-0 contra Northern High School, un automóvil condujo imprudentemente hacia el estacionamiento principal del estadio Durham County Memorial y comenzó a disparar.

Un estudiante de Riverside de 17 años fue disparado en la pierna

La policía llegó en cuestión de minutos. El estudiante fue llevado al hospital por lesiones que no pusieron en peligro su vida y luego fue dado de alta y se recuperó en su casa.

LO QUE DICEN LOS DATOS

La violencia con armas de fuego se define como cualquier tipo de violencia, homicidio, suicidio y cualquier otra cosa, según Amnesty International.

En todo el mundo, ocurren actos de violencia armada cada minuto, pero Estados Unidos

tiene una cantidad mayor que muchos países.

Según gunviolencearchive.org, en 2022, han habido 36,000 muertes relacionadas con la violencia armada. Han habido 557 tiroteos masivos y 27 asesinatos masivos desde octubre. Estos números son inferiores a los de 2018, cuando hubo 54,000 muertes relacionadas con la violencia armada en los Estados Unidos.

Mientras estos números están disminuyendo, siguen siendo muy altas en comparación con otros países. En Canadá, en 2020 hubo solo 8,300 muertes relacionadas con la violencia armada. Si bien la pandemia de COVID-19 podría causar los números bajos (porque sus medidas de bloqueo fueron más estrictas y prolongadas), el Centro Canadiense de Estadísticas de Justicia y Seguridad Comunitaria informa reportes que fue similar a la de años anteriores.

“En 2020, el primer año de la pandemia, no hubo cambios en la tasa de delitos relacionados con armas de fuego a nivel nacional en comparación con 2019”, escribió Mary Allen en un reporte publicado por Statistics Canada. “Las tarifas subieron en unas áreas y disminuyeron en otras”. A nivel mundial, los Estados Unidos sobresale con más muertes relacionadas con la violencia armada que la mayoría de otros países en el mundo.

Según healthdata.com, los Estados Unidos se encuentra entre los diez primeros países de altos ingresos en mortalidad de 4.12. De todos los países, los Estados Unidos ocupa el segundo lugar en muertes totales por violencia armada y el vigésimo segundo en muertes relacionadas con armas de fuego por cada 100 mil habitantes.

Según las estadísticas de violencia armada de CDC, Texas tuvo la tasa de mortalidad más

alta (número de muerte por cada 100,000 persona en los Estados Unidos con 12.7 en 2019, seguida por California (7.2) Florida (12.7) Georgia (15.8) y Ohio (13.3)

Carolina del Norte está en séptimo lugar en la lista, con una tasa de mortalidad de 1.400 muertes.

En Carolina del Norte, diferentes condados tienen tasas muy diferentes. Los condados con las tasas de mortalidad más altas son Vance (29.58), Robeson (28.56), Graham (24.85).

Según everystat.org, la tasa de mortalidad en Durham es 12.74, y es la quincuagésima tercera más alta en Carolina del Norte. El condado de Orange es 6.31, Wakes 6.44, y Chatham 8.9.

La tasa de mortalidad de Durham es mucho más grande que la de los condados circundantes. Eso es porque la población de Durham también es muy grande.

UN MÍNIMO DE SROs EN NUESTRAS ESCUELAS SECUNDARIAS

El Sheriff Clarence Birkhead nunca tuvo la vista puesta en convertirse en sheriff del condado de Durham.

“Yo nunca soñé en ser sheriff cuando comencé como ayudante hace muchos, muchos, muchos años”, dijo Birkhead.

Una cosa que quería cambiar era el programa de oficiales de recursos escolares

“[Quería] renovar nuestro programa SRO, donde los SROs son realmente oficiales de recursos escolares, y no de mano pesada”, dijo.

Birkhead se ha encontrado con situaciones

de disparos activos en su carrera como diputado, y con ese conocimiento, no teme por la vida de sus hijos cuando los envía a la escuela.

“Mis dos hijos menores fueron educados en las escuelas pupilas de Durham y me sentí muy seguro cuando estaban en nuestro sistema escolar”, dijo Birkhead. “Realmente nunca he tenido esa preocupación por su seguridad”.

Aunque se siente seguro, todavía le gustaría tener un poco más de protección en nuestras escuelas. Actualmente, tenemos un SRO de tiempo completo y algunos otros SRO que no son de tiempo completo.

“Tenemos algunas SRO excelentes” dijo Birkhead. “Me encantaría tener un mínimo de dos SRO en nuestras escuelas secundarias”.

El quiere asegurarse de que nuestras escuelas sean lo más seguras posible, incluso si eso incluye agregar elementos como detectores de metales para encontrar armas o otras formas de mantener las armas fuera de la escuela.

“Creo que debemos hacer lo que sea necesario para mantener segura nuestra escuela”, dijo.

Sin embargo, reconoce que los SRO y los detectores de metales a veces pueden ser mal recibidos.

“No queremos crear un estado político donde los estudiantes profesores y personal no se sientan cómodos,” dijo Birkhead.

CÓMO SE SIENTEN ALGUNOS ESTUDIANTES

Riverside tiene actualmente un SRO de tiempo completo el diputado Quintin Barren.

Incluso con todas las medidas de protección en la escuela, algunos estudiantes no se sienten tan seguros como deberían.

“Siento que cualquier día alguien simplemente entraría con un arma y disparara”, dijo un estudiante que pidió permanecer en el anonimato. “En realidad, no por ninguna razón de la gente de la escuela, solo en general”.

Otros estudiantes se sienten diferentes

“Me siento a salvo en la escuela de los conflictos que se pueden abordar, los conflictos que no se pueden abordar, como los tiroteos masivos o la supremacía blanca, obviamente, no hay nada que podamos hacer al respecto”, informa la estudiante de último año Nya Batson. “Me siento lo suficientemente seguro”.

Aunque Birkhead piensa que necesitamos más oficiales de Recursos Escolares, los estudiantes no están de acuerdo.

“Me siento como policía en la escuela, solo debí al clima entorno a la vigilancia, pinta una imagen para los estudiantes de que la escuela en sí no es segura”, dijo Batson “Siento que

la cantidad de políticas que tenemos ahora es suficiente”.

Otros creen firmemente que no deberíamos tener más SRO en nuestra escuela.

“No creo que debería haber más políticas en nuestra escuela”, dijo la estudiante de último año Olivia Henry. “Siento que la forma en que los policías lidian con la violencia escolar es violencia en sí misma”.

En lugar de agregar más oficiales y personas como esta, Henry cree que abordar el problema antes de que comience es una mejor manera de lidiar con la violencia en las escuelas.

“Yo siento que la manera de lidiar con la violencia escolar es en lugar de enfrentarla con violencia, combatir el fuego con agua”, dijo Henry. “Tengo ganas de tratar de ver de dónde vienen y por qué están haciendo lo que están haciendo y aconsejarlos en lugar de probarlos”.

Batson está de acuerdo con el enfoque más tranquilo para resolver este problema.

“No creo que las escuelas necesitan más políticas, pero necesitan más medidas preventivas para la violencia que ven dentro de las escuelas”, dijo. “Tal vez asesores grupales o algo para ayudar con las situaciones antes de que surjan.”



En octubre 1, 2021 en un partido de fútbol americano en el Estadio del Condado de Durham la ventana de un estudiante de Riverside fue destruida por el golpe de una bala. Nadie se encontraba adentro del vehículo cuando esto sucedió.

WHEN NORTHGATE'S FATE WENT SOUTH



As a historic mall sits empty,
developers and residents debate its future

BY ELENA PACES-WILES
ARTWORK BY DUNYA OMAR

Children grip ice cream cones piled high with chocolate, vanilla, and sprinkles. A sparkly pink display shines in a Claires' window. Christmas carols play all through December as giddy children whisper their holiday wishes into Santa Claus' ear.

This time of year always makes English teacher Mira Prater feel nostalgic for childhood weekends spent at Northgate mall.

"We went every weekend," Prater said. "We would always get pizza and shop for CDs at FYE. I remember saving my allowance to buy Timberland boots. They were really popular."

To Prater, the mall served as an important pillar in the Durham community. Her mom was a teacher

and would always feel a sense of community when she saw her students there.

"It was a really important community space," Prater said. "It felt homey."

Providing 53,000 square feet of retail space, Northgate was a significant place for the whole Durham community.

Every weekend, her parents would sit among the bustling crowds and chattering families, listening in to the conversations around them. When her dad first immigrated from Algeria, he couldn't speak any English. He learned the language surrounded by a sea of people and fast food in Northgate's crowded food court.

"The mall becomes a part of you," Prater said.

Before Southpoint was built in 2002, Northgate was Durham's primary mall. Many residents of South Durham chose to commute to Northgate, as South Square existed only as a strip mall. Once open, Southpoint's popularity far surpassed Northgate, causing the older mall to lose business.

"Northgate was really the only mall in Durham for a long time," 2008 Riverside graduate and lifelong Durham resident Justin Laidlaw said. "But as Southpoint got built, more folks made their way out there because it had the movie theater and more modern retail."

The rise of Amazon and other online retail expedited Northgate's decline.

While the movie theater remained open, the mall's owners were forced to sell the property when it neared bankruptcy in 2018.

"It wasn't able to sustain itself, so the family sold it," Laidlaw said.

Instead of foreclosing, Northwood Investors, an international private equity firm, decided to buy and redevelop the mall.

However, the developers do not own the entire plot. Some sections of the property, including the Sears and Macy's, are separately owned. The tenants must collaborate to figure out the best use of the property.

"The Macys that used to be there is owned by Duke, and they have already got a medical facility there," said Mary Helen Moore, a local reporter for the News and Observer who covers Durham and has written about the mall's future.

As Northgate has been a pillar in the Durham community for decades, many residents have their own ideas of the best use for the space.

One such group, the Walltown Community Association, has been in communication with the developers, campaigning for a community-centered space. The Walltown neighborhood borders Northgate mall on the West side.

"This group formed to come up with their vision of what should be there," said Moore. "They want affordable housing. They want jobs that are accessible for people who live in the area. They want park connectivity, walkable, bikeable and a nice community centered space."

Residents are concerned about how the new development will affect their cost of living through property tax increases. They also worry about decreased traffic safety.

In addition, Walltown residents are concerned about the equity of the redevelopment.

"There are a lot of families, particularly Black families, who have lived in the neighborhood a long time and are concerned about how their livelihood will be affected with this new development," said Laidlaw, who now works as a multimedia producer and covers Durham's City Council meetings in his weekly newsletter.

Northgate property developers have not yet reached an agreement with the surrounding residents.

"The residents came up with this vision and the people who owned the property acknowledged

it," said Moore. "A couple months ago they came back with their idea and it was totally different than what they talked about previously."

The developers plan to build an office park with a few restaurants and shops, as well as medical labs.

"It sounds like it's going to be workplaces with maybe a few places to go eat and a few places to shop," said Moore.

"A couple months ago they came back with their idea and it was totally different than what they talked about previously."

The original proposal included approximately 300 residential units, but these have since been removed from the plan.

The cost of construction is one potential reason for this change.

"There are certain costs that are built into building residential versus building commercial, particularly right now during the pandemic," said Laidlaw. "A lot of materials needed to build became a lot more expensive so the resources needed to build changed the calculus for what developers would be willing to do on a particular site."

The developers must seek approval from Durham City Council for zoning ordinances.

"I imagine they will have a really hard time proceeding with the vision because they have to get City Council approval and that will be kind of tough with how much opposition there is," said Moore.

If the developers are uncooperative, residents can petition council members directly to vote against zoning requests.

"That is where the neighborhoods have some amount of leverage in this deal with the developers," Laidlaw said. "I would like to see our City Council and the developers as well to really consider who is going to be affected by this and take care of the folks who are most vulnerable in our community."

ZONING REQUIREMENTS

While there are many ideas on how the space should be used, zoning requirements further complicate the issue.

The planning commission is a branch of local government that advises the City Council and the board of county commissioners on zoning decisions.

"That includes when somebody requests a rezoning, an update to our comprehensive plan or to the unified development ordinance," according to Austin Amandolia, the chair of the planning commission.

The Northgate property is currently zoned in the commercial center district. This designation allows for retail applications, but residential uses are generally not encouraged.

"As it is currently zoned [the developers] are limited to what is allowed within the commercial center district," Amandolia said. "They can request a rezoning for essentially anything they want."

According to Amandolia, they must adhere to the future land use map, which provides direction for what land uses are allowed in the future. However, these are subject to change.

"It is currently planned as a future commercial site under our current comprehensive plan," Amandolia said. "That could change. We are working on a draft for a new comprehensive plan right now."

The new comprehensive plan categorizes the site as a transit opportunity area. This designation allows for a mixed use space with a mix of commercial and residential services.

Despite its expertise, the commission serves exclusively as an advisory board.

"Our vote doesn't necessarily count. If we vote no on something, it doesn't stop it from happening," Amandolia said. "We tell the Council or county commission we think you should vote no on this and they can do what they decide."

Amandolia said the developers have already submitted a rezoning application, so a vote on the property will eventually come to council.

In rare instances, the City Council or the planning commission could initiate a rezoning request as well.

"Northgate mall is a matter we come across all

Cuando el Destino de Northgate se Descarrio

Mientras un centro comercial Historico se encuentra vacio, desarrolladores y residentes discuten su futuro.

Escanee para leer el articulo en espanol en nuestro sitio web thepirateshook.com





Many Durham residents think affordable housing should replace the mall. Property taxes in the nearby Walltown neighborhood have spiked.

the time,” council member and former Riverside parent Leonardo Williams said.

Northgate mall benefited the community by providing a concentrated area for retail, creating a lot of sales tax.

“I wish the city and the family who owned it had communicated and worked out something. Maybe the city could have purchased it,” Williams said.

Northwood Investors purchased the property at a very low value.

“It’s up to them. The best thing we can do is garner relationships,” Williams said. “If they consider something else then they will have to come before the City Council and we will have to make a decision based on if we feel this is the best fit for this part of the city. And that’s where the City Council has leverage.”

The City Council’s role is not as significant as people often make it out to be.

“We can try to broker relationships between the community members that live around them and the owners of the property. But they don’t have to do that,” Williams said. “Anyone who says the City Council can make them do something outside of what it’s zoned for, that’s untrue. That’s just simply false.”

The Northgate property is already zoned as commercial. The developers do not need to come before the Council if they want to keep this designation.

“It has not come across my desk yet. It has not come to the City Council. They have not applied for anything,” Williams said.

“City Council sees it at the end of the process,

certainly not the beginning,” council member and Riverside parent, Javiera Caballero said.

THE HISTORY OF WALLTOWN

Understanding Walltown’s past is critical to understanding its current needs.

Walltown is a historically Black neighborhood where a lot of blue collar Duke employees lived. The neighborhood has a rich history of determination and self-reliance.

“There is a rich history of fighting for what you want and need, making sure that your residents and families and people who live in your community have what they need to thrive,” Brandon Williams said. “It is imperative that the city does not allow that legacy to be wiped out by development and gentrification.”

Brandon Williams (no relation to Leonardo Williams) has been on the Northgate mall committee since it developed in 2018. He used to direct Urban Hope, a youth organization in the Walltown neighborhood. This drove his passion.

“Being a long time resident and working with young people and their families and community I knew how gentrification and some of the financial pressures on property taxes and rent affected people’s ability to live here,” he said.

In December of 2018, Walltown residents shared their concerns with Durham City Council and met to discuss their goals for the mall.

“The affordability of renting or buying a home in the neighborhood is out of reach for many of our young folks,” Brandon Williams said. “We saw the mall redevelopment as the nail in the coffin on Walltown being able to preserve its

identity and history and people being able to maintain their livelihoods and the wealth that they have built up.”

With people meeting in the food court and seniors walking the mall, Northgate functioned as a public square. Brandon Williams hopes that the space can continue to benefit the community.

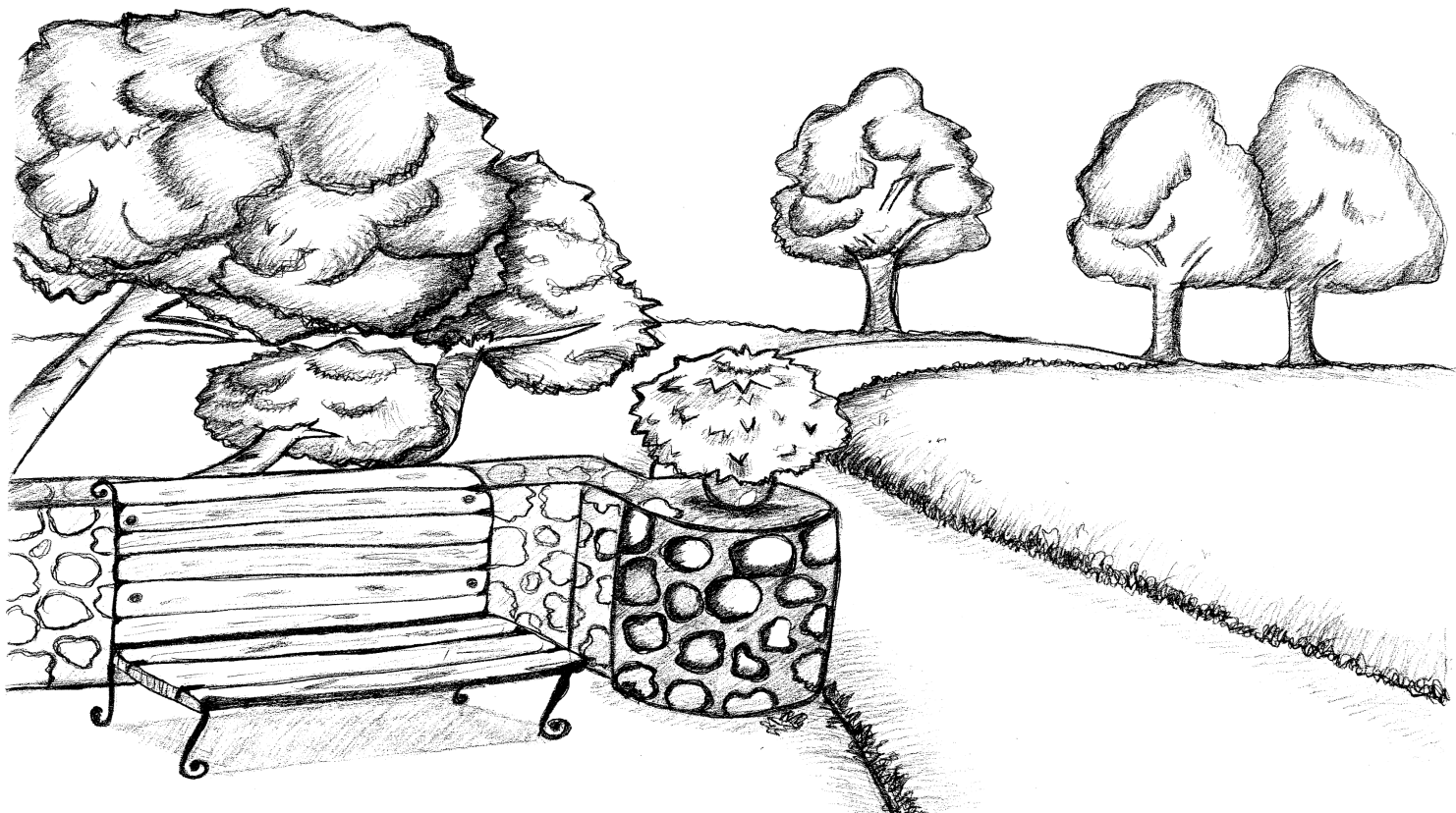
“We really hope that the mall can be an extension of the community,” he said. “I’ve lived in Walltown as a resident for 9 years but I’ve

“There is a rich history of fighting for what you want and need, making sure that your residents and families and people who live in your community have what they need to thrive.”

been connected to the neighborhood through work and other friendships and relationships since about 2009.”

Walltown is named after George Wall, a Black man who was born into slavery in Randolph County. After emancipation, he found a job at Trinity college. When the college moved to Durham, Wall moved with it. He, and other working class African Americans, settled in the Walltown area.

“Due to segregation, Walltown was a thriving and self-sustained community,” Brandon



Some residents want the mall repurposed into a community-centered outdoor space. The investment group that now owns it has other ideas.

Williams said.

His passion is driven by gentrification. As neighborhood costs are increasing, Brandon Williams believes affordable housing is critical.

“We know that people are being pushed out of the neighborhood,” he said.

Historically, the Walltown neighborhood was underinvested. Low property taxes combined with new development led to a drastic increase in property taxes. Retirees living in Walltown are unable to adjust to the increased costs.

They hope affordable housing on the Northgate property will serve to replace some of the housing they are losing in the process.

A purely commercial vision for Northgate will bring higher paying jobs to the area. This may increase the cost of living in the neighboring communities even more.

“[Redeveloping the mall] could really wash out a lot of diversity in that part of Durham,” Laidlaw said.

GENTRIFICATION & THE FUTURE

The Northgate property is increasingly important as Durham develops and expands.

“[The mall] is an interesting microcosm of what is happening in Durham in general,” Laidlaw said. “In the last decade, a lot has been developed in this area and it is really changing the physical landscape of Durham and the way people think about life here.”

Due to gentrification, it is becoming increasingly difficult for young people to remain in Durham. Northgate could serve as a place for people to live and work affordably.

“As [young people] are moving into [their] careers, if you want to stick around Durham, this could be a place where you could work or this could be a place where,” Moore said. “If the Walltown Community Association got their way, it could be a place where you could live, and hopefully affordably.”

Northgate mall used to be a staple in the Durham community but it's time to determine its place in the city's future.

“I certainly remember taking my kids there pretty often and playing on the carousel,” Javiera Caballero said. “The food court there was always pretty active, so I can say it was a pretty important community gathering space.”

Laidlaw recalls spending a lot of time at Northgate as a kid.

“There is some sentimental value to a lot of older folks who have been in Durham and remember Northgate as a thriving commercial district.”

Some of Riverside's Walltown residents remember the mall fondly.

“I would go a lot because it was easy to get there,” Junior Aaron Self said. “It was easy access.”

“Since it's not a community space anymore that makes me upset,” Junior Derrick Leake agreed. “I live right there and it was a good place to meet up.”

“I always walked to Northgate,” Junior Willie Hayes said. “I would go there and watch movies. I don't think they should shut it down.”

People have different ideas of how space should be used. As the cost of living in Durham

skyrockets, many residents name gentrification as a major issue.

“I think they should put houses that people can afford because Durham is getting more expensive,” Hayes said.

Adults in the community have similar ideas. “100 percent of the space should be used for affordable housing,” Prater agreed. “It should all be turned into townhouses or apartments.”

Others believe the space should be used for community gathering.

“I want it to be a community engagement commercial center where you can go and shop and it generates those sales taxes,” Leonardo Williams said. “But you can also live there. I think it should be a space where you can live where you shop, work, and play.”

“Overall I think having a better mix of uses so that there's like a grocery store lot on sight, and maybe some housing, would be really helpful for the community,” Amandolia said.

Some students believe that the best solution is the simplest one. Many think that a mall can still benefit the community.

“It should stay a mall or big outlet,” Self said. “It can offer job opportunities for people who live there.”

Despite the different ideas, Durham residents agree that the Northgate property has the potential for significant impact.

“The stuff that is being built today is presumably going to affect generations to come. This is the Durham that young folks will inherit,” Laidlaw said.

SEPARATE AND NOT ALWAYS EQUAL

HBCUS ARE SYSTEMATICALLY SHORTED OF CRITICAL RESOURCES



The North Carolina Central University football and cheerleading team pose after beating Norfolk State University, securing their spot in the 2022 Cricket Celebration Bowl. PHOTO BY KINETIC STILLS/NCCU.

BY SADIE ALLEN

Riverside varsity cheer coach and math teacher Kayla Thompson takes pride in attending North Carolina Central University (NCCU).

Thompson graduated from NCCU in 2013 and was a varsity cheerleader. She became Riverside's head cheerleading coach in 2019 and began working at Riverside as a math teacher a year later. Her time at NCCU was both affirming and enlightening.

"My favorite thing about being at my school was being surrounded by and getting a true feel for my people," Thompson said. "I grew up in a small country town where I was taught we all have equal opportunities, and based on how things were presented to me I truly believed that. Had I not attended an HBCU I would not have been privy to the systems of life."

Thompson recently attended the 2022 Celebration Bowl, a college football game in which the champions of the most prominent HBCU conferences face off. This year, NCCU took on Jackson State University (JSU).

NCCU's remarkable win over JSU sparked conversation over the recognition of HBCUs and the roles they play in society

"[The game was] in one word, phenomenal," Thompson said. "I can't put the feeling into words. If I had to select a verse from a

song it would hands down be, 'Started from the bottom, now we're here!' I love, love, love the unity and camaraderie of Black people coming together for a common cause. It brings me joy I can't explain."

WHAT ARE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES?

Historically Black Colleges and Universities, more commonly known as HBCUs, were created to educate African American students before they were allowed to attend predominantly white institutions (PWIs).

"Congress officially defined an HBCU as a school of higher learning that was accredited and established before 1964, and whose principal mission was the education of African Americans," according to the Thurgood Marshall College Fund. "HBCUs offer culture, a rich history and rigorous academic programs."

Cheyney University of Pennsylvania was the first HBCU. Created in 1873, Cheyney was established through a \$10,000 provision from a Quaker philanthropist named Richard Humphreys. The university was first named The African Institute and later The Institute for Colored Youth.

Some other popular HBCUs include Spelman College, Morehouse College, Howard University, and Hampton University.

HBCUs in North Carolina include Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, Johnson C. Smith University, Livingstone College, Saint Augustine University, Shaw University, NC Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T), Winston Salem State University (WSSU), and North Carolina Central University (NCCU). NC A&T became the largest HBCU in the U.S in 2014, surpassing Howard University.

HBCUs are known for their rich culture in music, dance, and sports. Popular events and activities like the HBCU Battle of the Bands, Black College Football National Championship, and Stomp and Shake Cheerleading create



a space for African American people to celebrate freedom and cultural excellence.

"My favorite thing about being at my school specifically was being surrounded by my people, and being a cheerleader," Thompson said.

HOW DO THEY COMPARE TO PWIs?

Riverside RPC coordinator and assistant football coach Corey Hairston graduated from NC A&T in 2012. Hairston played varsity football.

“My favorite thing about NC A&T was the atmosphere,” Hairston said. “The campus life is great.”

Though Hairston enjoyed his experience at an HBCU, he cannot help but compare his experience to that of a student attending a PWI.

“I do wish I went to a PWI sometimes,” Hairston said. “HBCUs are smaller, while PWIs are very big.”

He also encourages Riverside’s football players to consider the differences during the recruiting process.

“I advise athletes to go to PWIs because of the luxuries you get,” Harison said. “I want the kid to be able to ride a plane to their game, as opposed to riding a bus for twelve hours. That’s a luxury.”

Because of their origins in racial discrimination and segregation, HBCUs have not always been given the same treatment as PWIs.

“HBCUs have been at the center of the Black struggle for equality and dignity,” writes Walter Allen in a 2007 article titled “Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Honoring the Past, Engaging the Present, Touching the Future.” “We have always been judged for the color of our skin, denied equal educational opportunity,

and told the educational gap between Blacks and Whites was the reason for our subjected status in society.”

When asked about the key differences between HBCUs and PWIs, Thompson said she believes it is resources.

“I’ve met good people from all walks of life and we had a ball walking the sloping hills and verdant greens of NCCU who wanted better for themselves and their families,” said Thompson.

“But the lack of resources presented so many roadblocks for them. Roadblocks that I had no clue existed and wouldn’t have known existed had I not attended NCCU.”

According to the American Council on Education, As of 2019 HBCUs received at least 70% less endowments than PWIs.

“Non-HBCUs have strikingly larger endowments than their HBCU peers,” writes Denise Smith in an article titled “Exposing the Gap: Addressing Funding Disparities for HBCUs” published on the American Council for Education’s blog. “Recent data highlights that average endowments of public HBCUs are \$7,265 per student and \$24,989 per student at private HBCUs compared to the average endowment of \$25,390 per student at public colleges and \$184,409 at private institutions.”

According to an article published by the Brookings Institute, HBCUs are “chronically underfunded” due to state underinvestment, lower alumni contributions, lower Black incomes/wealth, and lower endowments.

“HBCUs are systematically shorted of critical

resources,” writes Kristen Broady, Andre Perry and Carl Romer in a 2021 Brookings Institute blog post. “All together, the 10 largest HBCU endowments in 2020 totaled \$2 billion, compared to \$200 billion across the top 10 PWI endowments. The combined endowment for every HBCU in the country through 2019 was just over \$3.9 billion. For context, New York University alone had an endowment of \$4.3 billion that year.”

In Maryland in 2019, HBCUs Morgan State University, Coppin State University, Bowie State University, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore were involved in a 13-year-long legal battle with the General Assembly. These Maryland HBCUs accused the state of promoting segregation by disproportionately “over-funding” PWIs.

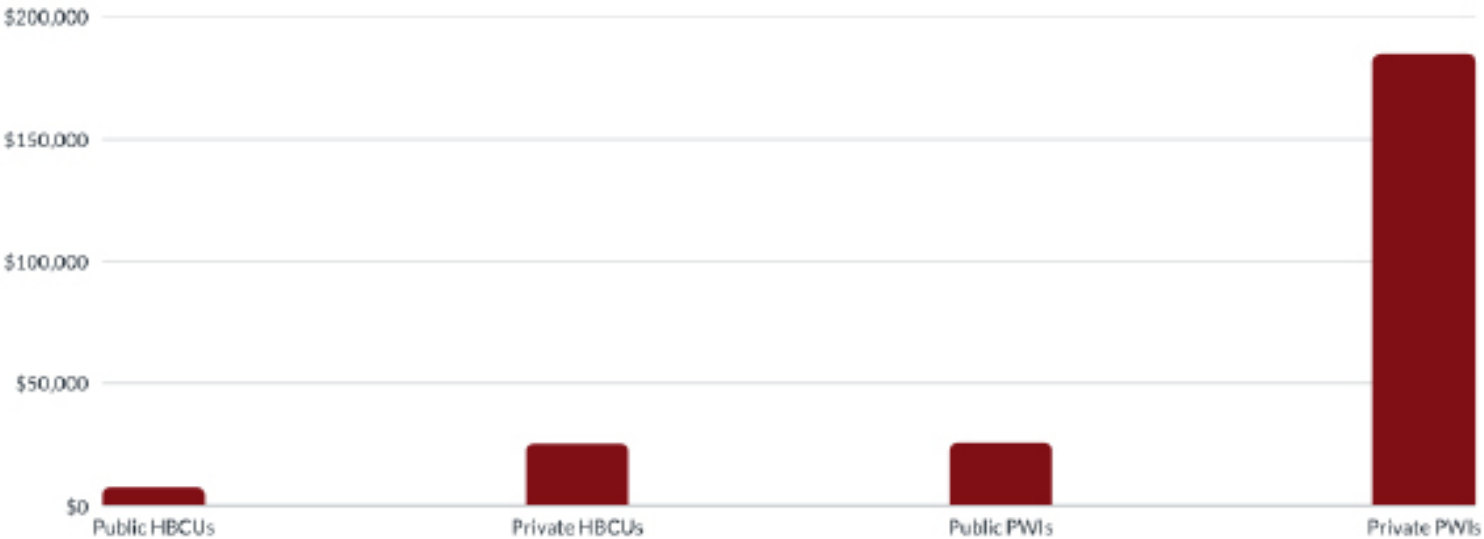
The legal team of the Maryland HBCUs proposed the state pay \$577 million. Governor Larry Hogan offered only \$200 million in a “take it or leave it” deal. Hogan did eventually agree to give the proposed amount over a ten year period starting in 2023, but the delay in proper funding stunted the possible growth of the HBCUs.

“The main differences are resources and the lack of acknowledging the wisdom and education that comes with attending an HBCU,” Thompson said.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the percentage of Black college students enrolled at HBCUs decreased from 18 percent in 1976, to eight percent in 2014.

AVERAGE UNIVERSITY ENDOWMENTS

PER STUDENT



SOURCE: THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION. CHART BY SADIE ALLEN

RAISING THE PROFILE

Deion Sanders, also known as “Coach Prime” or “Neon Deion,” is the former head coach of the Jackson State University (JSU) Football team, a public HBCU in Jackson, Mississippi. A football legend that played for teams like the San Francisco 49ers, Dallas Cowboys, and Washington Redskins during the 1990s. Sanders was named NFL Defensive Player of the Year and won Super Bowls with the 49ers and Cowboys. He was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame in 2011. After retiring from the NFL, Sanders went on to be a TV analyst with the NFL network.

Sanders later left his TV job to coach at JSU and raise the profile of HBCUs. He recruited top high school players to come play for the team as opposed to PWIs. In 2021, Sanders managed to recruit receiver Travis Hunter, the nation’s number one, five star recruit.

Sanders admits that it is more difficult to recruit for HBCUs than PWIs because of the uneven playing field between the two.

“The fight is not going to be easy. Getting the players to commit to a historically Black college is not easy because you’ve got to level the playing field,” Sanders said in a 2021 interview with The Associated Press. “You’re competing against a Power Five that has 100 times more resources than we do, and the exposure.”

Sanders recently left JSU for the University of Colorado, a PWI, to become the head coach

of the Colorado Buffalo football team. This shocking development came with both praise and criticism.

Many are pointing out how he encouraged more black athletes to commit to PWIs but now is saying he will bring those same black athletes to the University of Colorado. Others are calling him a “sellout” and blaming the struggle of HBCUs on coaches like him.

“Deion was preaching elevating HBCU programs & looks like he was just using JSU as a launching pad for his coaching career, which is fine, but don’t go around acting like it was for altruistic reasons,” a fan of JSU, Ashton Morris, said on twitter.

“The debate about Sanders’ leaving Jackson State has centered on whether he should be considered a “sellout” for having left an HBCU football program that he made successful for a struggling program at a better-funded, predominantly white institute,” writes NBC’s

“I appreciate Coach Prime for the recognition he brought to HBCUs and all he did for Jackson State University.” Thompson said. “In the same breath, we [HBCUs] were thriving prior to Prime Time and we will continue to do so. I hate that we live in a world where he has to make the decision to go to a PWI to pursue his goals.”

Char Adams.

According to Adams, the answer to whether or not this was a good decision from Sanders is unclear. On one hand, Sanders has a 27-5 coaching record at Jackson and has forever reformed the program, but he is leaving a school that he claimed needed attention from more Black coaches like him.

Additionally, Sanders announced his departure from the team at a crucial time: right before the 2022 Celebration Bowl. The game was held at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, Georgia against NCCU, which won the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC). Many Riverside faculty and staff went to the game in support of the Eagles and had things to say about Sanders’ decision.

The News and Observer called Central’s win “A win for HBCU football, too.” And while Sanders has moved on, other Black athletes and coaches are working to raise the profile of HBCUs, too.

In 2020, Five Star basketball recruit Makur Maker became the first of his status to commit to an HBCU since 2007. He chose Howard University over PWIs like the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and University of Kentucky.

Maker says this decision was part of a greater “HBCU movement,” to encourage more Black athletes to commit to HBCUs to raise their status.

NCCU basketball coach LeVelle Moton has



Kayla Thompson (right) posing with mom, Kathy Lockhart. Both graduated from NCCU. Photo courtesy of Thompson



Coach Corey Lea (left) and Assistant Principal Jasmine McCoy (middle). McCoy is an NCCU graduate. Photo courtesy of McCoy

been raising the profile of NCCU's men's basketball team for thirty years. After graduating as one of the best players in school history in 1996, Moton returned to coach at his alma mater and has since racked up over 200 wins and four NCAA tournament appearances.

In a 2021 ESPN documentary titled "Why Not Us," Moton worked with NBA star Chris Paul and members of the NCCU basketball team to explore the history and cultural significance of HBCUs. The documentary explores the lives of NCCU basketball players and what HBCUs mean to them.

The film questions the differences between HBCUs and PWIs and asks the important question "why not us?" in reference to funding and exposure inequalities.

"HBCUs face challenges to compete at the same level as PWIs due to lack of funding, resources and awareness," Paul said in an interview with Disney Digital Media prior to the first episode's release. "Despite the obstacles they face, Why Not Us shines a light on these amazing Black student athletes who attend HBCUs, and how these historically significant schools continue to enrich not only the Black community but our nation as a whole."

WHAT CAN FUTURE STUDENTS LOOK FORWARD TO?

Though HBCUs are still suffering financially, there are several new investments into HBCUs

that we can look forward to.

In 2021 the Biden-Harris Administration announced they would be contributing \$5.8 billion to HBCUs across the nation to relieve debt for undergraduate students, support faculty and staff, and provide new grants for students.

With this the administration enacted the Build Back Better Act that provides \$10 billion to HBCUs, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). The money will help fund infrastructure upgrades, research, and STEM programs. They also successfully convinced the Department of Education to increase the budget for HBCUs by \$72 million in 2022.

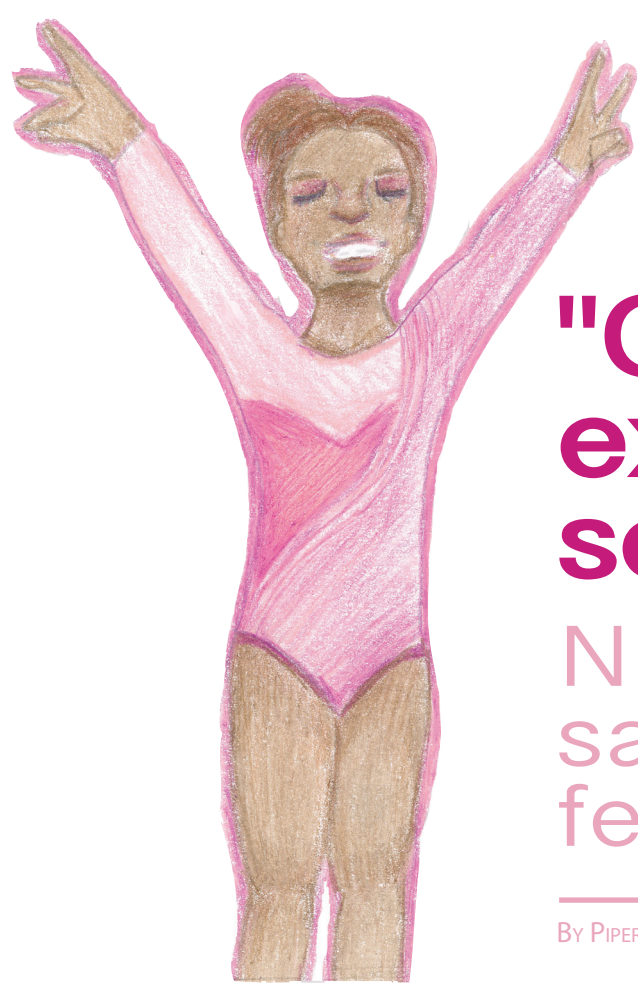
Not only is funding slowly increasing, but enrollment is too. According to the National Student Clearinghouse, in 2022 HBCU undergraduate enrollment increased 2.5 percent, overriding the 1.7 percent decrease HBCUs faced in 2021.

"If I say I'm a Duke graduate, that turns heads. Central is down the street and it doesn't get the same recognition or respect. Why?" Thompson said. "They're both located in Durham 'Bull City' North Carolina. What's the difference in regards to the knowledge you gain? An education is an education."

"It is great to have the special things and accomplishments of schools, and specifically for HBCUs," assistant principal Jasmine McCoy who also went to NCCU said. "We really treasure the culture and the excitement we can bring to our universities"



Riverside graduate and current NCCU football player Devin Smith. Photo courtesy of RHS Football



"Of course I've experienced sexualization"

New era brings same challenges for female athletes

BY PIPER WINTON, ISABELLE ABADIE AND CHARLOTTE HOLLOWAY

Haley Jones doesn't post bikini pictures.

The Stanford basketball star is one of the best players in the country and has endorsement deals with brands such as Nike and SoFi which earn her six figures.

Her social media presence helped land those deals, and she's not afraid to show her body, but she's chosen to present herself as a student athlete, not a sex symbol.

"That's not the top topic type of content that I want to post, and my audience isn't looking for that for me," Jones told *The New York Times* last fall.

It hasn't stopped her from receiving comments, and she considers the objectification unavoidable.

"You can go outside wearing sweatpants and a puffer jacket you'll be sexualized," she said.

"I could be on a podcast, and it could just be my voice, and I'll face the same thing. So, I think it will be there,

no matter what you do or how you present yourself."

What is Sexualization?

According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, to sexualize something is "to endow with a sexual characteristic or cast."

Sexualization is frequently linked to the objectification of women, and less commonly, men. According to the American Psychology Association, sexualization ties a person's value to solely their sexual appearance or behavior, disregarding their other characteristics.

Often when a person is sexualized and objectified they are viewed as a tool or object for entertainment rather than a person. The fact that they have emotions and opinions is overlooked.

Also according to the

are viewed, portrayed, and treated as objects are often led to self-objectify which causes the development of many mental health issues.

Studies have also shown that the sexualization of young girls is becoming increasingly more common. This can have devastating effects on many aspects of their lives. It can cause major body dissatisfaction and lead to eating disorders, also many mental health problems such as depression and anxiety spur from sexualization and objectification.

The sexual objectification of young girls and women not only contributes to these mental health issues but also towards rape culture and violence against women.

Sexualization in women's athletics

A major portion of sexualization of women comes from athletics.

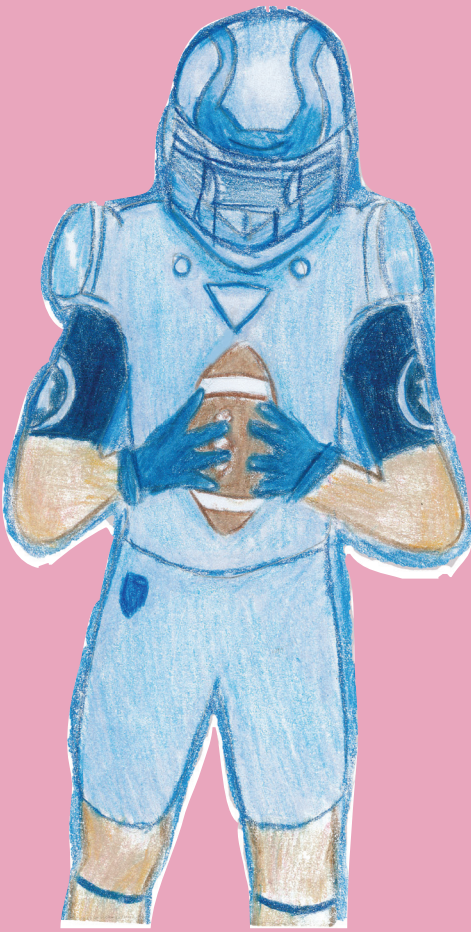
According to a study published by the Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 34% of female athletes have been sexually abused by a coach, medical personnel or trainer.

Women athletes are frequently scrutinized in regards to their appearance, rather than skill. Whether it's coaches, teammates, or fans, their bodies are constantly studied and judged.

Many women's sports teams are required to



PHOTO CREDIT: @HALEY.JONESSSS



“You can go outside wearing sweatpants and a puffer jacket, and you’ll be sexualized.”

wear very little amounts of clothing, which adds to pre existing issues of objectification

A major example of this comes from women’s gymnastics. For decades, the standard for women’s gymnastics uniforms has been tight, bikini-cut leotards, but in an effort to push back against the sexualization of these uniforms, one team took a stance.

In April of 2021, the German women’s gymnastics team wore leotards that covered their legs at the European Artistic Gymnastics Championships. They wore these uniforms to protest against Gymnastics uniforms and the culture of the sport has allowed for abuse and sexualization of young girls and women.

Even despite these uniforms women are sexualized and objectified constantly.

“Every time you don’t feel safe it’s distracting you from what you want to perform. I think that feeling safe and not thinking about what other people can or cannot see is quite relieving when you can compete like that” said 23 year old German Olympic gymnast Sarah Voss.

Not all women let the comments get to them, though. Some have even taken this bad aspect of being a female athlete and turned it into something they can use to leverage their career. According to New York Times article many collegiate level athletes are putting emphasis on themselves and are gathering a large social media following in order to increase their presence and monetary value. This is all possible due to new rules that allow college athletes to sign their name, image, and likeness deals.

There are different ways female athletes can choose to build up their presence. Some athletes, like Jones, choose not to highlight their sex appeal and focus their content solely on their sport. But others, like Louisiana State University Gymnast Olivia Dunne, choose to highlight their bodies and femininity.

Dunne earns more than many professional athletes thanks to her Instagram and Tiktok content, where she models clothes, dances, and lip syncs. By showing off her body and playing into her femininity, she is making a much larger profit than she would otherwise.

Dunne told The New York Times that she

earns seven figures from NIL deals. “That is something I am proud of,” she said. “Especially since I’m a woman in college sports.”

Sexualization in women’s sports isn’t restricted to just professional athletes though. For many high school female athletes hearing comments about their body is routine.

Sexualization in high school women's sports

“Of course I’ve experienced sexualization [as a woman in sports], I think we all have,” said swimmer Megan Pepper.

Sophomore soccer and football player Zoe Cordell agrees.

“I feel like I saw and experienced sexualization before I even knew what it was,” she said.

“It’s very disheartening,” said senior volleyball player Janika Bunch.

Despite an underlying common ground, every scenario in which student-athletes experience sexualization looks different.

Pepper sees it in the rules written for swim competitions.

“In swim specifically, there is a rule allowing a female swimmer to be disqualified for having her bathing suit ride up too far,” said Pepper. “It’s unfair in itself because when you’re swimming, you’re focused on the sport. The suit is going to ride up a little bit. People are so focused on your body and not so much on what you’re actually doing.”

Junior dancer Leila Perjes notices it in student evaluations.

“Some of my club dance teammates, I’ve seen them told that they weren’t enough because maybe they weren’t skinny enough,” said Perjes. “They didn’t have the body most dancers have or stereotyped to have.”

Cordell hears comments from the crowd during games.

“I hear it happening more often as a bystander, in the stands,” said Cordell. “Are you supposed to speak up? Because it’s not you but it doesn’t feel right to hear.”

Bunch has experienced it on the court during volleyball games from fans.

“Some people are very “old generation” about it and make rude comments,” said Bunch.



Olivia Dunne, an LSU gymnast's instagram post. Dunne makes more than \$1 million a year for NIL.

“[They] don’t think of it as body shaming because some girls are bigger than others.”

No matter how small the event seems, the toll it can take is real.

“It leads to a low morale or self esteem as they grow up,” said Perjes.

Pejes believes that many female athletes will become discouraged and feel that they aren’t worthy because of comments. It can have a big negative impact on mental health, and even spark athletes to hate the sport they used to love.

“Unfortunately, it can influence you to not participate in certain sports or change the way you express yourself,” said Pepper. “All because you’re afraid of how people will look at you.”

Cordell believes it’s enough to drive athletes away from a sport.

“It can take their mind out of the game, if they feel like they are being watched for other reasons besides their performance,” said Cordell. “It can even steer them away from their sport, if they are like ‘oh people only watch me because of how I look.’”

Even without experiencing it, and just hearing about it second hand, many females with lots of athletic potential refrain from playing sports in high school to protect themselves.

“People are making women feel like they aren’t good enough just because they don’t look a specific way or aren’t a specific size that is preferred, and that’s why most athletes don’t play now. There are a lot of good athletes in the school, but they hear about how players are treated and don’t want to go through that” said Bunch.

A Systemic Issue

For 28 years, Larry Nassar worked for the USA Gymnastics first as an athletic trainer and later as the team doctor. He used his position to exploit and sexually abuse over 250 young girls and women. Since the 90’s many gymnasts had made complaints about his inappropriate behavior but it wasn’t until 2015 that USA Gymnastics took action against him.

Previous Olympic gymnasts Jeanette Antolin, Jessica Howard, and Jamie Datzcher who were all sexually abused by Nassar have said that the conditions in USA Gymnastics training camps and facilities were emotionally abusive and gave people like Nassar the opportunity to abuse young girls and made them afraid to speak up against the abuse.

A similar situation occurred in Durham at Bull City Gymnastics.

On February 16, 2021 owner Stephen Maness was arrested for three charges of indecent liberties with a minor and sexual battery. The

“People are making women feel like they aren't good enough just because they don't look a specific way,”

first alleged abuse dated back to August of 2012 and lasted until March of 2020, the other two from January of 2015 to November of 2019.

“I did gymnastics for nine years at Bull City Gymnastics,” said Pepper. “We had a lot of different coaches, but it was recently disclosed that the head coach and owner had been molesting girls on the team for years.”

“There were a lot of awkward encounters with him,” said Pepper. “We was a little too touchy and his behavior with us was so weird. Then when you find out that he’d been molesting girls for so long, you look back and rethink every interaction you’ve ever had with him. Was that him being weird?”

In March of 2022 Maness was offered a plea deal that would reduce 6 felonies to 7 misdemeanors, which included assault on a child, assaulting a female and misdemeanor child abuse. But as of December 22, 2022 that plea deal was redacted due to more potential abuse victims coming forward.

Raising Awareness

Scenarios like this aren’t uncommon, but often aren’t reported because it is so normalized.

“I didn’t think about it much until 2020 when COVID started and things like that became more prominent on social media,” said Perjes.

Cordell and Bunch both had a similar experience.

“Actually, this year I was introduced to what sexualization was because I just grew up thinking it was normal,” said Bunch. “I feel like I didn’t understand what that term meant until like a year or so ago but obviously it was still happening,” said Cordell.

More and more female athletes are taking the steps to help make a better future for young athletes by speaking out against inappropriate behavior and changing uniforms so that they are comfortable and not distracted by their appearance and how they are being perceived by viewers.

“I feel like as a young society we need to do better in helping future generations not be so low on body types,” says Perjes.

Bunch agrees.

“You’d think people would be positive because we are all just trying to play a sport but no.”

While there is no real solution to sexualization and objectification there are steps that can be taken towards making a better future for female athletes.

Whether it’s through raising awareness, acknowledgment, or education, there is so much more that can be done to help female athletes feel safe and seen.

Olympic volleyball player and Riverside alum talks medals and objectification

Professional volleyball player and Riverside alum Megan Easy is no stranger to sexualization.

Easy grew up in Durham, where she attended Riverside High School from 2002 to 2006. She was named the national high school player of the year as a senior and went on to attend Penn State, where she won three national championships.

After college, Easy played professionally overseas and on the US women's volleyball team. She won a silver medal in the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, England.

As most girls do, Easy started hearing comments about her body at a young age.

"You get used to it unfortunately," she said.

Easy was unaware though of the true detriment these comments and actions could have, as they were commonly normalized.

"When I was in high school it wasn't really a big deal yet," said Easy. "I think people now are just more aware of things that have gone on."

Coaches didn't talk about the possibility of sexual comments being made, and when things were said to players they never discussed it. Despite this lack of communication and acknowledgement, sexualization was still very prevalent.

Easy would hear people talking about her appearance during games and practices.

"There were comments from fans or whoever was in the gym but never from the coaching staff," she said.

"The volleyball uniform doesn't leave a whole lot to the imagination."

Even before hearing comments about weight or appearance, many athletes are already hyper aware of what they look like and a single comment could add to that fixation and cause many more unhealthy problems.

"You already have to be kind of aware of your body and how you enter a room or the space you take up physically," said Easy. "A lot of athletes, male or female, are aware of what they look like in their uniform and how they present themselves, and it would be hard to play if you were thinking about that all the time."

While sexualization and objectification existed when Easy was in high school, it increased as she got older.

"College is a whole different ball game," Easy said. It opens up so many new opportunities for inappropriate comments."

Scholarship money, and national title hopes and coaching jobs on the line raised the expectations for players.

"Sports were like a job. Your performance was very related to everything so not being out of shape or overweight was addressed more," Easy said. "In high school, if you gained five pounds there's not really anything anyone can do because you're not in high school to just play your sport, whereas in college you're on a full-ride to play that sport and go to school. If you cannot play your sport, that can affect so many things."

Coaches and even teammates were able to comment on athletes' body shape with it seeming normal, so determining the difference between helping manage a healthy lifestyle and just objectifying becomes very difficult.

"People had more room in the first place to address if you need to lose weight or

adjust your nutrition" said Easy. "They tried to be delicate, but it's hard to address girls' bodies without it coming off bad."

Sexualization became much more prevalent in college, not only in terms of how often it happened but how often it was talked about. Easy noticed that male coaches were more sensitive. They didn't want anything to come off as unprofessional or seem as if they were making unnecessary comments.

"Male staff tried to keep their opinions to themselves," she said. "It was starting to become more mainstream as far as attention being put on it and no one wants to get in trouble."

Coaches weren't the only people with more space to comment on women's bodies. With bigger campuses and more travel for games the amount of people the women's sports team were exposed to greatly increased.

She constantly heard comments about women's bodies, both at games and around campus.

"There were away games where people would make comments about intimate body parts in the crowd," said Easy, who could hear them all the way on the court.

"The things that were said were not really appropriate for a high school newspaper. As soon as the game was over it would be like 'Oh my god, can you believe what that fan said?'"

Many athletes ignored these comments. But not all could.

"Some of us tuned it out but some girls, especially during their first year or two, were just like what did they say?" she said. "You get used to it unfortunately."

The fact that the Penn State Volleyball team was excelling, with a 32-3 record in 2006, 34-2 in 2007, 38-0 in 2008, and 38-0 in 2009, did add to their exposure.

"Our team was in the spotlight a lot, so regardless if the comments were inappropriate or not because of how well we were doing we were getting a lot of attention which just kind of opened us up to more comments," said Easy

Looking back, she realizes how unaware she was of things that had happened and how much damage they could truly have.

"[Sexualization] can be very detrimental for young people in high school and college," said Easy. "I think it can put a weight on people, maybe not even knowingly."

Easy believes adolescence is already a hard time for many people emotionally. It's a time where people are trying to figure out who they are and experiencing any sort of sexualization or objectification can immensely affect their self perception in a negative way, she says.

"Luckily now there is so much awareness," said Easy. "People are more aware of the detriment it can have and are more inclined to look out for it and acknowledge it."

"When I was in High school a lot of things didn't get addressed because it was like 'I don't know if I want to make this a big deal or if anyone is going to listen.'" she said. "I don't think that's as big of an issue now. People will listen."



Megan Easy trophy case at Riverside High School. Easy was the Gatorade player of the year in 2006 and won three national championships at Penn State. Photo by Piper Winton

ARE YOU MORE CREATIVE or LOGICAL?

creative

logical

KANYE or TAYLOR SWIFT?

SWEET or SALTY?

Kanye

Taylor

sweet

salty

MOVIES or PLAYS?

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT SPORTS?

meh

WHICH LOGO R YOU?
•GRAPHIC BY TATE GASCH

movies

plays

love them

RAINY or SUNNY WEATHER?

DO YOU THINK YOU DRINK ENOUGH WATER?

rainy

yes!

no...

sunny

ARE YOU AN INTROVERT or AN EXTROVERT

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING IN CHARGE?

extrovert

need to be!

I'm good either way

introvert

