

The Pirates' Hook

INVESTIGATIVE EDITION

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EDITORIAL

Upon further investigation

Publishing a newspaper is always a team effort, but the stories in this issue of The Hook came together with the help of more people and resources than usual.

The Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting (IBWS) has partnered with The Pirates' Hook for the 2021-22 school year to pilot a new program designed for high school students.

The IBWS, co-founded by Ron Nixon, Topher Sanders and Nikole Hannah-Jones, is a national organization named after the groundbreaking Black investigative journalist and early leader in the civil rights movement dedicated to recruiting and retaining journalists of color, and educating news outlets importance of diverse voices in raising the merit of journalism spaces.

The Pirates' Hook staff has enjoyed monthly workshops that have developed students' skills with making stories people-driven, seizing public records and including data, and journalism law. Hook students have also received weekly mentorship from Laura Brache, of the News & Observer, and Thomasi McDonald, for the Indy Week. These journalists bring expertise from the professional journalism industry to the classroom, and provide Hook students with real-world advice.

Through these resources, high school journalists have been able to hone their skills, to better serve their community. The Pirates' Hook is by students, for students, and uniquely positioned to report on a world that they are fully immersed in.

Many of the stories in this issue are the culmination of this partnership, and uncover issues that affect Riverside students each and everyday. For example, Elena Paces Wile and Sadie Allen bring to light the lack of diversity in Riverside's advanced classes. Victoria Alcindor explores the line between fashion and appropriation. Tyler McLean delves into anime's rise in popularity at Riverside and worldwide. And Eden Richman explores education equity across North Carolina.

Thanks for reading, and stay tuned for another round of investigative reporting later this spring!

Tras mas investigacion

Publicar un periódico es siempre un esfuerzo en equipo, pero las historias de esta edición de The Hook se realizaron con la ayuda de más personas y recursos de lo habitual.

La Sociedad Ida B. Wells para Periodismo de Investigación (IBWS) se asoció con The Pirates' Hook para el año escolar 2021-22 para poner a la prueba un nuevo programa diseñado para estudiantes de secundaria.

La IBWS, cofundado por Ron Nixon, Topher Sanders y Nikole Hannah-Jones, es una organización nacional nombrada en honor a la innovadora periodista de investigación afroamericana y líder del movimiento por los derechos civiles, Ida B. Wells. La sociedad se dedica a reclutar y retener periodistas de color y educar a los medios de comunicación sobre la importancia de las voces diversas en la valorización del mundo periodístico.

El personal del Pirates' Hook ha disfrutado de talleres mensuales que desarrollaron las habilidades de los estudiantes para crear historias centradas en personas reales, incautar registros públicos, e incluir estadísticas y leyes periodísticas. Los estudiantes del Hook también han recibido tutoría semanal de Laura Brache del periódico News & Observer, y Thomasi McDonald del periódico IndyWeek. Ambos traen su experiencia profesional en la industria del periodismo al aula y brindan a los estudiantes del Hook consejos del mundo real.

A través de estos recursos, los periodistas de nuestra escuela secundaria han podido refinar sus habilidades para servir mejor a su comunidad. The Pirates' Hook es llevado a cabo por estudiantes, para los estudiantes, quienes se encuentran en una posición única para reportar sobre un mundo en el que están completamente inmersos.

Muchas de las historias de esta edición representan la culminación de la asociación con IBWS y exponen problemas que afectan a los estudiantes de Riverside día tras día. Por ejemplo, Elena Paces Wile y Sadie Allen sacan a la luz la falta de diversidad en las clases avanzadas de Riverside. Victoria Alcindor explora la línea bien marcada entre la moda y la apropiación cultural. Tyler McLean profundiza sobre el aumento de la popularidad del anime en Riverside y en todo el mundo. Y Eden Richman explora la equidad educativa en Carolina del Norte.

¡Gracias por leer y estén atentos para otra ronda de reportajes de investigación más adelante esta primavera!

Censorship in education
The importance of critical analysis in class

BY ISAAC JANIAC STEIN

The discourse surrounding American education has been dominated recently by many extreme cases of censorship, book bannings, and harmful legislation.

A particularly egregious example is a recent bill passed in Florida, making it illegal for anyone to make an individual at school "feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin."

Leaving aside the fact that this bill would be seemingly impossible to enforce, this legislation is a perfect example of an educational ideology that is, in of itself, anti-education. This ideology fundamentally believes that education should be used to ingrain a ludicrous, racist, and totally inaccurate view of America, its history, its people, and its issues.

The ban of "Critical Race Theory" in schools around the country is another such example of a censorship in education that has dominated the news cycle, and is equally reflective of this belief.

Many states have already banned the teaching of Critical Race Theory (CRT), and many more have legislation that is waiting to be passed, to the same effect.

The bans on teaching CRT in schools, and the barrage of news about its 'indoctrination of children' is quite ironic, considering it has almost no chance of entering any advanced high school curriculum, much less the classroom of an elementary or middle school student.

CRT is an advanced topic of study taught in college and graduate school that seeks to analyze the history of America and its intersection with race through the lens of critical theory. The term, however, is still broadly used to levy more general attacks on teaching about racism in schools.

Fundamentally, this condemnation of CRT, and antiracist teaching, serves to attack the teaching of critical thinking, especially on issues like American racism.

Examples like the law in Florida, or the banning of CRT, are not mistakes or random restrictions on education. They are not only targeted attacks on critical thinking, but they are clear extensions of the fundamental belief that education should be a tool to uphold the status quo.

The belief that education should promote gratitude instead of critical thought: a tool to reinforce an unnu-

anced, monolithic, and inaccurate view of America.

The law in Florida made it illegal to make anyone in school feel guilt, distress, or discomfort about their race or sex.

Being that the history of race and sex in America is quite distressing and uncomfortable, to support and implement this bill is to promote an education system that completely avoids teaching the history of America or any critical thinking about it.

That is the goal of such bills: to prevent students from learning America's actual history: to prevent students from thinking critically about America or its systems.

Education should neither promote comfort, nor produce students who leave their classrooms feeling only content and grateful for what America is. To be content with society is to stop altogether its forward progression.

Promoting progress in education begins by understanding that all these obvious restrictions on education and censorships are not isolated. They are instead backed by an ideology with a defective view of education.

The complacency promoted by this ideology is the antithesis of progress. Progress that can only be made through critical thinking, and a complete and nuanced understanding of the past. American education must be centered by a belief in teaching such history and analysis.

Once we view American education through this lens, we can begin to analyze our own local schools and curriculums.

It is easy to stand against the most extreme manifestations of anti-intellectualism and anti-education, like book bannings and censorship. It is a lot harder, however, to deeply reflect on our own schools and how they can improve on these issues.

Ongoing, nuanced discussions and deep reflections need to be had about our own local schooling practices and how they can improve. It is arguably more important to understand how we are subtly pushing monolithic, biased, or unnuanced ideas in the classroom, than to only criticize the worst cases of censorship or misinformation.

Riverside and Durham Public Schools need to remember that their lack of overt censorship is, by no means, a pass to skip these tough conversations that need to be had.

Bettering education is not an end goal, but an ongoing process of continually looking for areas of improvement and implementing new strategies and solutions.

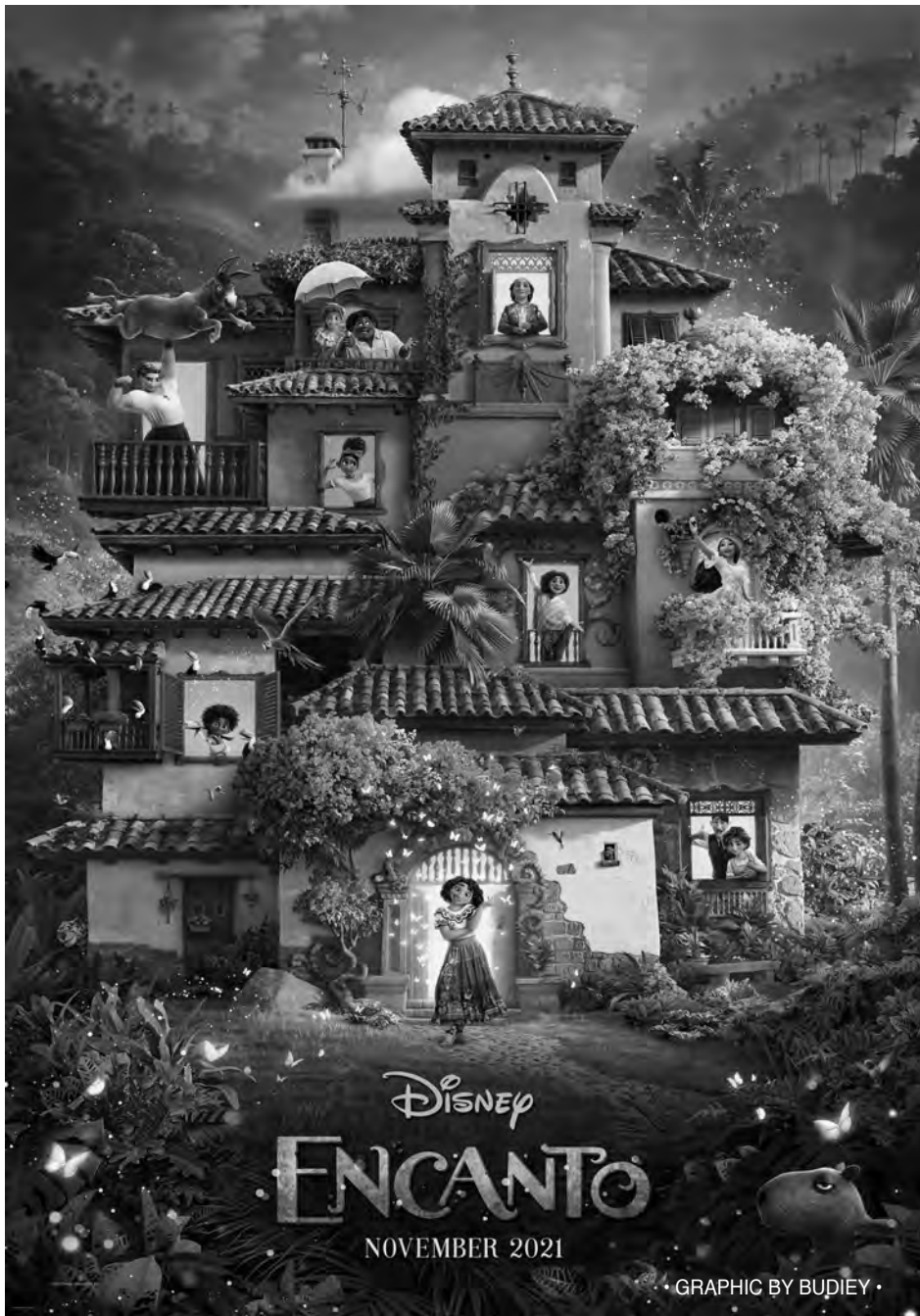
OPINION

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Disney finalmente profundiza: Encanto's escenario, lanza, y personajes ilustra una cultura latinx mas representativo

Si usted quiere leer esta historia y muchas mas en español, visite thepirateshook.com o use una camara en cual quier dispositivo electronico y ecanee.

Siguenos en @thepirateshook



Disney finally digs deeper
Encanto's setting, cast, and characters illustrate a more representative Latinx culture

BY ABBY MARTINEZ

Finally, Disney went a little deeper. *Encanto* is the story of a family with superpowers that help out the village. The main character, Maribel, is the youngest of her sisters and the only one without a "gift." And because she doesn't have a gift she tries to help with what she can and even goes on adventure to find her uncle and figure out why her family's house is losing its magic. The story's set in Colombia, which, for Disney, is a pretty big deal. Instead of using Mexicans, the film's writers based it on Colombians and even used some of the country's history, such as "los conquistadors," the Spanish colonizers who ravaged many indigenous communities during the 1500s. They also gave characters a variety of skin colors, acknowledging that Hispanics are not all the same shade of brown.

I'm not used to seeing this kind of attention to detail in a Disney movie. Their films usually don't stick with the setting's actual culture, and the characters speak too much English and not enough of their native languages. For example, the movie *Mulan* misrepresented Chinese history and culture in so many ways. Mushu the dragon, for example, wasn't the best way to represent Chinese culture). The dragon is a sign of respect, strength, and power, and using it as a silly sidekick did not play well with a traditional Chinese audience

Encanto still has some stereotypes. The characters love coffee, for example, and the over-caffeinated little kid has a cup in his hand. But it's also got a diverse cast of Latinx actors like John Leguizamo (who voiced Bruno), Stephanie Beatriz (Maribel), and Maluma (Mariano). Hamilton Star Lin Manuel Miranda, who is Puerto Rican, wrote the music, too.

As a Latinx student, the element I identified with most closely was the family structure, especially between siblings. Isabella's the oldest and has to be perfect. She's the role model, but sometimes being perfect makes you lose who you really are.

My older sister experienced this when growing up. She was always a straight-A student and followed my family's advice, until it came to committing to a college. She decided to go into writing at a liberal arts school - not what parents wanted - but with a lot of convincing and figuring herself out she knew it was the path to take.

Luisa's the middle child, the support for the whole family. She's there to listen, but there's only so much she can do for the family. She has her own problems as well, but it's hard for her to ask for help because she's known as the strong one. I can relate to Luisa. As the middle child, I feel the same exact pressure of being the one who isn't affected by anything around me. But in reality, it does.

I see my younger sister in Maribel, too. When she tries to help, she's often told to just let the adults handle it, even if she is right. Or sometimes they mistake her efforts as seeking attention.

Just like the Madrigals claimed they don't talk about Bruno, for years Disney didn't acknowledge the fact that Latin countries have more than just crowded, "poor" cities like the one in *Coco*. Just like America, there are mountains, beaches, small towns and countryside, too.

Disney finally did its research on cultural backgrounds. Instead of creating the story based off of stereotypes that already exist here in America, it illustrated sides of Colombia that narco films haven't.

A friend once reminded me, during a conversation about K-pop's popularity in America, that people shouldn't try to steal the spotlight from another ethnicity and make it your own.

We're all different and unique in our own way, and *Encanto* illustrates that. Anyone can enjoy this movie if they watch it with an open mind, pay attention to the detail that was put

"I can relate to Luisa. As the middle child, I feel the same exact pressure of being the one who isn't affected by anything around me. But in reality, it does."

into it, and remember that it's been made for you, but not about you.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS PAPER!



COVID, climate and carbon dioxide

Air quality in Riverside's classrooms may affect how students learn

BY ETHAN HAINE

Riverside students spend 35 hours or more a week on campus. Teachers spend forty-plus. Yet most don't think about how much the air they breathe affects the work they do.

Data gathered by an air quality monitor during the fall semester on Riverside's campus suggests that some classrooms have high carbon dioxide levels that could affect learning and overall health.

"I had no idea it was even a problem," said American History teacher Anna Allman.

CO2 levels in Allman's trailer are about 3500 when students are in class. That's too high for students to function at their highest level, according to the CDC.

Carbon dioxide is not a toxic gas. It is a natural part of the atmosphere, but too much of it displaces the oxygen in an area. CO2 levels increase as people in a room exhale, and the school's ventilation systems can't remove it fast enough. So in a room with too much carbon dioxide, less oxygen will go to the brain, causing a decrease in productivity, drowsiness, and even headaches.

Good quality air contains between 400 and 1000 parts per million (ppm) of CO2. Outdoors, the air is about 500ppm.

The CDC estimates around 14 million school days are missed each year due to poor air quality. CO2 levels between 1,000 and 2,000 ppm are associated with drowsiness, loss of concentration, and fatigue.

A Harvard study in 2016 found a 15 percent decrease in cognitive function at 950 ppm, and a 50 percent decrease at 1400 ppm. Levels between 2,000 and 5,000 are associated with headaches and nausea. Although more research may be needed to confirm these findings, it shows how high CO2 levels can impact student learning and general wellness.

Indoor CO2 levels depend on three main things: size of the

space, how many people there are, and the room's ventilation. This means places like the hallways or cafeteria have better air quality than places like the stairways or classrooms, and worst of all is the trailers. Levels of about 700 ppm were recorded in the front lobby, and about 800 ppm in the cafeteria. In smaller rooms, like stairways, it was around 1200 ppm.

At the beginning of a class period, the CO2 levels in classrooms are about 1000 ppm, but as the period goes on, it goes up to 1500 because of a lack of ventilation. Teachers who leave their doors and windows open in their classrooms recorded levels of about 1200 ppm. Levels also go up as the day goes on, causing students to feel even more tired during third and fourth period.

The trailers can have some of the worst levels in the school because of the smaller, more crowded space, and older ventilation systems. Riverside was originally designed to have three floors, but a lack of funding led to only two floors and trailers outside, so the trailers are on a separate air system from the rest of the school, according to Environmental Science teacher Shaun Thompson

"The trailers are awful," said Thompson.

There are, however, simple ways to decrease CO2 levels. In trailers with windows open, levels were recorded to lower to about 2500 ppm. And in trailers with doors open, the air in the trailer is about the same as outdoor air. When it's too cold to leave the doors open, letting students go outside for just a few minutes will give them fresh air. Indoor classrooms can have their doors open all the time.

Another solution is putting plants in classrooms, which can lower CO2 levels by about 10 percent. Plants also have other positive effects, such as reduced stress, increased creativity and improved concentration and memory, according to the organization A Plant in Every Classroom. A study by The Royal College of Agriculture in England also showed that a plant in the room can improve

attention by up to 70 percent.

High levels of CO2 can impact attendance, too. Every 100ppm increase in CO2 beyond 1000 has been associated with a half day of school missed.

"One out of three people will get sick at the workplace, and carbon dioxide could be one thing that could contribute to it, which is unfortunate," said Thompson.

According to a study in Scotland, if the CO2 levels in most classes are around 1400 ppm, this could cause students to miss about two days of school per year.

Students with asthma can experience worse symptoms from carbon dioxide. One in thirteen school-age children have asthma, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency, and asthma-related sickness is the leading cause of school absence due to illness in the United States.

High CO2 levels can also indicate an indoor environment conducive to the spread of airborne viruses like COVID. Individuals infected with the coronavirus breathe out the virus with their CO2, so if the CO2 levels are high and ventilation is not taking it out of the room COVID, along with any other airborne viruses present, could linger in the air.

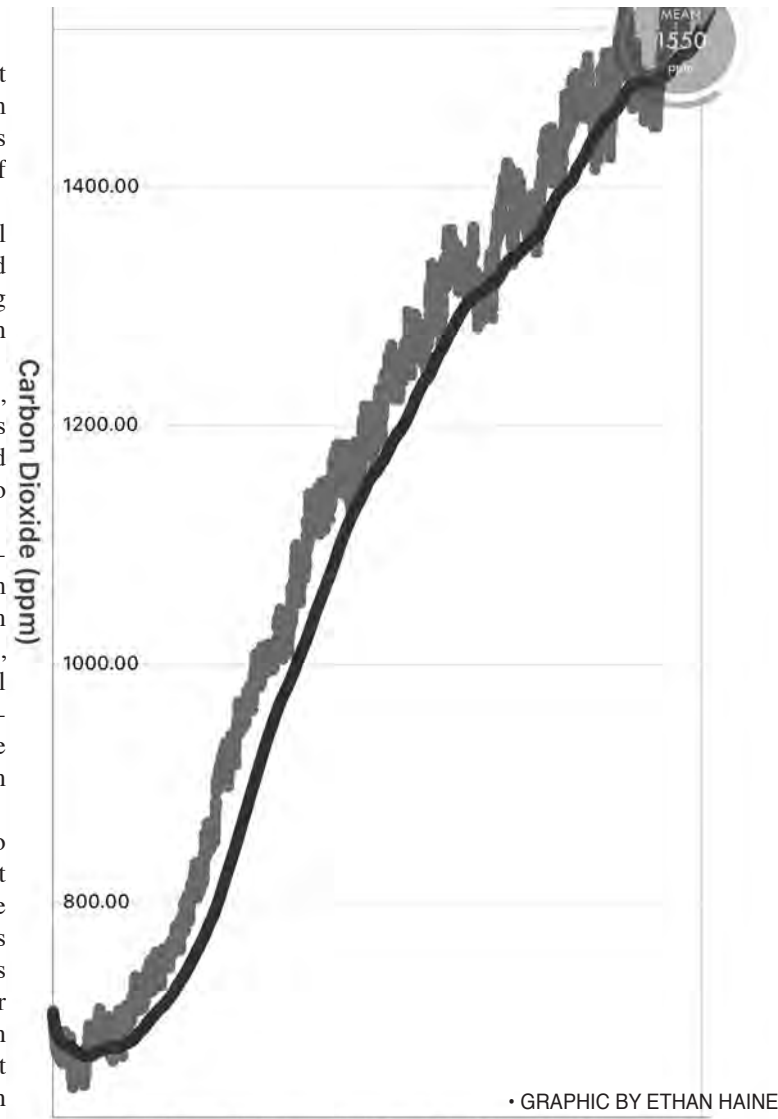
In addition to improving student and teachers' health, improving ventilation could also save the school money in the long-term.

Levels of CO2 in Earth's atmosphere reached 419 ppm in May, a 12-percent increase since 2000 and higher than it has been in over 4,000,000 years. Every year, humans add about 40 billion tons of CO2 to the atmosphere, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"Each year we put more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than natural processes can remove," says the NOAA in 2020.

Climate activists often link this data to global warming and stress the importance of reducing CO2 emissions as quickly as possible.

Schools consume about seven percent of the energy of all commercial buildings in the USA. Riverside can lower its carbon emissions by reducing energy usage. This can be done by turning off lights, or installing motion sensors so lights are only on when they need to be, and recycling as many materials as possible.



• GRAPHIC BY ETHAN HAINE

Graph showing levels of carbon dioxide over one class period in a classroom taken on October 14th using an air quality monitor.



• PHOTO BY ETHAN HAINE

Plants in Biology teacher Mika Twietmeyers room. Studies show plants can reduce the carbon dioxide in a room by ten percent.

"I had no idea it was even a problem."

History teacher Anna Allman

What is "hygiene theater," and what does it do for RHS?

BY AVERY PRINCE

"All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts..."

— William Shakespeare, As You Like It

Every day at 10:30, when computer science class ends in the Riverside High School engineering hall, Russell Strand-Poole begins his cleaning ritual.

He takes a large bucket of wipes and leaves one wipe on each desk in his classroom. Students are then instructed to each wipe down their keyboard, mouse, desk, and anything else that they use.

Eighty-five minutes later, the ritual resumes as Strand-Poole places a new wipe on each table and tells a new set of students to wipe the same set of items before they leave the classroom.

Done four times a day, the ritual takes 20 minutes of valuable learning time from Strand-Poole's classes.

"Most of the cleaning that we do is brand new," he said. "[Before the pandemic] I would maybe wipe down the desks once a week. Now I'm wiping them down in between every period."

Beginnings of Hygiene Theater

Cleaning surfaces in this way is known as hygiene theater, and it has had a huge impact on teachers and students. First coined by Atlantic writer Derek Thompson, hygiene theater is a common practice that involves cleaning and sanitizing surfaces to give the appearance of safety, but it does not always minimize the spread of airborne viruses like COVID-19.

Riverside US history teacher Allison Swaim is familiar with the term and has seen it in action around Riverside, especially when students returned to school last spring.

"Hygiene theater is used as a way of alleviating people's concern and saying 'oh, we're being safe...' because they want everyone to go back to work. So I think we see this in the schools," Swaim said.

At the beginning of the pandemic, it was unclear what the best way to combat COVID was, and the logical response was to clean and disinfect anything that could potentially pass the virus. But as scientists learned more about how COVID spreads, it became clear that it is passed through air and that transmission through

touch was incredibly unlikely. Even so, concern about touch still lingered, and for many, overcleaning was the answer to that concern.

At the same time, Riverside teachers were given little to no instruction about how to clean their classrooms, or if it was even necessary. Each teacher was able to decide for themselves the level of cleaning they wanted to practice, which led to many teachers unnecessarily overcleaning.

"I started cleaning just sort of voluntarily with the cloths because I know everyone uses the keyboards," Strand-Poole said. "We've been cleaning since."

During the spring semester of the 2020-21 academic year, cleaning helped Riverside administrators and teachers feel more comfortable returning to school, and many of those habits still exist today. As a result, it's taking up precious class time but isn't reducing transmission.

"The cleaning is a bit of added stress to the day because I have to remember," said Strand-Poole, who has also added a homemade air filter in his classroom. "I just want to make

sure that a lot of people don't get sick because of this class."

According to the CDC, cleaning high-touch surfaces such as door handles can be helpful, but cleaning lower-touch surfaces such as tables is excessive and unnecessary. Comforting as it may be, the time spent cleaning cuts into teaching and learning. But in reality, this feeling of safety is not protecting anyone.

"Hygiene theater is the practice of doing all these things that are visual displays to signify that cleaning is happening and that people are being safe," Swaim said. "It's theater because it's a performance and in reality, it might not actually be doing that much to change the risk of COVID being spread."

What Prevents the Spread of COVID?

According to the CDC, COVID-19 is an aerosol virus (spread through the air), and is less likely to spread through surfaces. This means that cleaning and sanitizing is not always the most effective way to protect yourself.

Although cleaning can be helpful, it should not give people a false sense of security about COVID-19. The CDC says that more important safety measures such as vaccines, masks, and ventilation should take priority. Because of this, being over-

ly concerned about touch is not necessary.

The CDC has also stated that the

best way to prevent getting COVID is through vaccination, making it the main priority for safety. Although it has small side effects, the COVID vaccine was heavily tested before it was given to the public and has been proven to be the most effective prevention tool. Ventilation, masking, indoor air filtration, and distance are also included in the CDC's priority preventative measures.

The CDC recommends cleaning once a day, or cleaning and disinfecting the place where someone with COVID was. It has value, but it is not a priority and should never be the only safety measure being practiced.

School Cleanliness

On the other hand, cleanliness is important for reasons beyond COVID, and teachers believe Riverside has had cleanliness issues since before the pandemic. The heightened awareness of germs on campus has magnified some long-standing issues, and cleaning to address them would be different than hygiene theater.

Even with a janitorial staff that works full time to clean the campus, many teachers want more help keeping their classrooms clean.

At the beginning of the year, teachers were given a singular small bag of cloth masks, hand sanitizer, and a large roll of paper towels. Teachers also have access to a form where they are able to request more supplies that administration will then bring to them. These supplies have not been sufficient for many teachers, who rely on donations or personal funds to supply their classrooms with needed cleaning supplies.

"I think it would be very helpful if [Riverside administration helped clean more]," Strand-Poole said, "For example, you can see my floors. This black stuff down here is actually mold growing on the floors and it's just not cleaned up."

Mold is a serious problem that has affected multiple classrooms as well as Riverside's media center in recent years, and it can have dangerous effects. Mold can cause serious allergic reactions, especially for people with asthma, and ignoring it only makes it worse. The focus on cleaning, teachers said, could be redirected to fix other issues.

"I know that there's a lot of issues with staffing. And so I believe everyone is doing the best they can," Strand-Poole said, "But we absolutely would need more."

"I just want to make sure a lot of people don't get sick because of this class."

Russell Strand-Poole, Engineering teacher



• PHOTO BY LUKE ARTHUR

Computer science student Noah Cho wipes down his computer. Keyboards are considered a high touch area by the CDC.

How did we create our school culture?

BY JANEL PERRY

School culture is a lot like fashion sense: it's hard to know a good outfit until you put it on.

It's visible in bathrooms, sporting events, the main office, and different classrooms. But describing what, exactly, Riverside's culture is, can be hard.

"It's weird because it's something you don't see all the time," said senior Javion Johnson.

"We [create the school's culture] as a community," said senior Jahcori Brown. "It's us as a unit."

"We embrace diversity," said English teacher Erin Roth. "It's a place for everyone here."

People have a lot to say when it comes to school culture, but it's much harder to quantify. One group that tries to do it is Riverside's School Improvement Team. The team consists of Riverside teachers, counselors, administrators, media coordinators and parents, who write a list of assessments, goals and action steps in a comprehensive School Improvement Plan.

For example, this year the team is working on the structures of the plan so that the school can work together to meet specific goals. For example, the School Improvement Plan calls for groups of teachers called Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) to meet at least two times a month.

"Data and best practices are not consistently shared among

teachers and PLTs," reads the current School Improvement Plan, which is available on Riverside's website. "At this time some PLTs are updating agendas and minutes and others

are not, indicating a need for increased accountability."

This will take time, as there is a learning curve for teachers at RHS, especially new faculty members.

"Emphasis on 'what to do with the data' once we have it and what type of data is best to inform instruction is needed," the plan reads.

The School improvement team also writes Riverside's mission and vision statements,

which provide a simpler look into a school's culture.

A mission statement is designed to close the gap between what an organization is currently doing and its vision for the future, while a vision statement indicates where an organization is headed in the future.

Thoughtful and strategic as the statements may be, some members of Riverside's community believe the school doesn't live up to the

language.

"It should be created by the administration to set the tone," Roth said. "Communication, debate, and consistency [need to improve]."

"Everybody doesn't get the same treatment," said Shaun Clarke.

"Stop kids from destroying bathrooms," said Brown.

"Riverside High School welcomes, engages, exposes, and empowers a diverse community of learners to foster critical thinking and prepare students for lifelong learning and engaged global citizenship."

RHS Mission statement

"Riverside High School graduates will possess the skills to be both self-reliant, global citizens, and positive, contributing members of their communities."

RHS Vision Statement



PHOTO BY WILL OKUN

Students in Jill Boliek's chorus class rehearse outside. Extracurricular activities are an essential component of school culture.

¿Cómo creamos la cultura de nuestra escuela?

POR JANEL PERRY

La cultura escolar es parecido al sentido de la moda: es difícil reconocer un buen atuendo hasta que te lo pones.

Es visible en los baños, eventos deportivos, la oficina del director y las diferentes aulas. Pero describir qué es exactamente la cultura de Riverside puede ser muy difícil.

"Es raro porque es algo que no ves todo el tiempo," dijo Javion Johnson, estudiante de 12° grado.

"Nosotros [creamos la cultura de la escuela] como comunidad," dijo Jahcori Brown, otro estudiante de último año. "Somos nosotros como unidad."

"Aceptamos la diversidad," dijo la maestra de inglés Erin Roth "Este es un lugar para todos."

La gente tiene mucho que decir

cuando se trata de la cultura de la escuela, pero es más difícil de cuantificar. Un grupo que trata de hacerlo es el Equipo de Mejoramiento Escolar de Riverside. El grupo consiste de maestros, consejeros, administradores, coordinadores de medios, y padres de Riverside, quienes escriben una lista de evaluaciones, metas y pautas en un Plan de Integral de Mejoramiento.

Este año el grupo está trabajando en la estructura del plan para que la escuela pueda trabajar en conjunto para alcanzar metas específicas. Por ejemplo, el plan de mejoramiento escolar requiere que grupos de maestros llamados Equipos de Aprendizaje Profesional (PLT) se reúnan por lo menos dos veces al mes.

"Los datos y las mejores prácticas no se comparten constantemente entre los maestros y los (PLT)," lee

el plan actual, disponible en el sitio web de Riverside. "En este momento, algunos PLT están actualizando agenda y actas, y otros no, lo que indica la necesidad de mayor rendición de cuentas."

Esto tomará tiempo ya que existe una curva de aprendizaje para los maestros de RHS, especialmente si son nuevos miembros de la facultad.

"Enfatizar el "qué hacer con los datos" una vez los tengamos y "qué tipo de datos son mejores" para informar la instrucción es necesario," delinea el plan.

El Equipo de Mejoramiento Escolar también escribe las declaraciones de misión y visión de Riverside, el cual da un breve vistazo a la cultura de la escuela.

Una declaración de misión está diseñada para cerrar la brecha entre lo que una organización está haciendo actualmente y su visión para el futuro, mientras que una declaración de visión indica hacia dónde se dirige una organización en el futuro.

Por más estratégicas que sean las declaraciones, algunos miembros de la comunidad de Riverside creen que la escuela no está a la altura de lo que dice.

"Debería ser la administración quien lo crea," dijo Roth. "La comunicación, el debate y la consistencia [necesitan mejorar]."

"Todos no reciben el mismo trato," dijo Shaun Clarke.

"Impidan que los niños destruyan los baños," dijo Brown.

Traducido por Jackie Larios Dominguez



PHOTO BY ANNA JAMES

Los estudiantes de Riverside se animan para la reunión de motivación de otoño del año 2016. La cultura escolar ha evolucionado.

Is homework effective or a waste of time? We asked Riverside students and teachers.

BY GISSELE RIVERA-ROMAN

Students at Riverside were split almost down the middle when asked whether they believe homework is effective or not.

In a survey of 177 students conducted by The Pirates' Hook, 52.5 percent said homework was not effective, while 47.5 said it was.

Many of the students who believe homework is ineffective either say it's because it takes away their free time after school, affects their sleep schedule, or is generally useless because once they get stuck on their homework at home, there's no one to help them.

Sophomore Rachael Ades, Junior Jeremiah Bell, and Sophomore Samantha Sutton are three students who don't feel it enhances their learning.

"[Homework] is mostly busy-work, and is usually just work we can get done in class," Ades said. "School would be more enjoyable if we didn't need to spend our outside-of-school-lives doing school work."

"It's a waste of time," said Bell, "because if you get stuck there is no one to help and people have other lives out of school and [teachers] expect us to have all this homework done. Like why are y'all being like this? Let us have our freedom out of school."

Sutton also shared her opinion on homework's ineffectiveness.

"I can never get myself to do homework," she said. "It only really serves as a source of stress rather than something made to help me."

On the other hand, al-

most half of the students surveyed said homework was actually effective. Most of them supported this opinion by saying that homework was good practice, including Freshman Radia Khan.

"It is effective because it helps you more with the lesson you are being taught," she said. "It gives more practice to help with tests and for you (students) to be more engaged in class the next day because you know the material more. In fifth grade, I remember I barely had math homework and that's why I did so bad on the end-of-year tests. As much as it takes a lot of effort and time with all of our busy lives, it's still important."

Sophomore Ada Taylor said science supports the benefits of homework.

"A lot of times homework reiterates what you do in class," Taylor says. "It takes the human brain learning something seven times to effectively remember it, and as much as we (students) hate

homework, it genuinely helps us."

In a 2009 interview for EducationWeek, education scholar Cathy Vatterott, also the mother of a child with learning disabilities, shared her views on homework, and how parents' and students' personal lives play a role in making homework effective.

"I like the 10-minute rule, which is recommended by the Parent Teachers Association and the National Education Association," Vatterott told EducationWeek. "Kids should have no more than 10 minutes of homework per grade level, per night."

A lot of students surveyed at Riverside showed great passion about the topic in their answers, saying how much they dislike homework

because it does not help their learning, or how much they love homework because it's great practice.



GRAPHIC BY GISSELE RIVERA ROMAN

Overall, the results in this survey show that homework's efficacy is not straight-

forward. It can be based on the subject the students are taking, their preferred method of learning, extracurricular activities, and their personal life.

Understanding that each student has a different style of learning and life schedule is something that American History teacher Amanda Pulliam keeps in mind when assigning homework.

"Students are doing sports and they have jobs outside of school and they've got responsibilities at home," Pulliam said. "We owe it to our students to let them know what the homework is for the week at the beginning of the week or earlier so that they can plan their schedule and figure out when they're going to have time to do the homework."

Similarly, English teacher Mary Foster gives students a homework schedule so they can plan accordingly.

"If you have a game on Tuesday night, and you know you're not going to be able to read what you were supposed to do Tuesday night a week ago," Fosters said. "You can go ahead and, like, work ahead to make sure you don't get behind."

But Foster also thinks parents play a role in making sure their children are keeping a balance between school and their personal lives.

"There are always a few who struggle because either they're overextended," she said. "They're in 14 clubs, and play a sport or are a leader at their church, da-da-da-da-da."

"I think part of that is kids need to balance their lives a little bit, and parents need to let them," she said.

Both Foster and Pulliam agree that often the reason students are overwhelmed by homework is that they don't use their time efficiently during class.

"I give time in class where it can be finished in class," Pulliam said. "Anything that is not finished in class they need to finish on their own for homework."



English teacher Ms. Foster discusses an assignment with students. Some students believe homework is valuable, but others think it's unnecessary. PHOTO BY ELIZABETH WILLIAMS

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Left out

Only 19 percent of Riverside's Black students take AP and Honors courses. Here's why.

Lack of representation is a national trend. DPS believes diverse teachers and new selection criteria can fix it.

BY SADIE ALLEN

While Rebecca Stone taught Advanced Placement (AP) US History at Riverside for about five years, she liked helping students be successful in advanced classes.

This year she became Riverside's Advanced Academic Specialist. Part of her new role includes identifying students that have the ability to do well in AP classes but aren't plugged in yet.

"I've always been interested in what is the work that we do to support all students, and how we can help provide the best possible experience for all students," Stone says. "When this job option became available, I jumped at the chance to do it."

Stone often worked with other AP teachers to make classes more enjoyable and accessible for students. Things like guided notes and tutoring sessions helped some of Stone's students succeed.

According to data collected in 2017 by the Civil Rights Data Collection, white students make up 22.8 percent of Riverside's student body, and 43.2 percent of them participated in a dual credit/enrollment program.

Data from the National Center for Education Statistics suggests little has changed in the past ten years. Roughly 70 percent of North Carolina high school principals were white in 2017-18 and only 24 percent were black.

This lack of proper representation can be due to a lack of teacher support and encouragement.

"I think teachers can be doing things that make their classes more acces-

AP classes and dual credit/enrollment programs is due to a lack of proper academic representation, along with other systematic issues.

"I think it's hard for kids when they don't see themselves in a class," Stone said. "If our ninth and tenth grade students don't see themselves or people who look like them in our eleventh and twelfth grade classes, not many of them are going to be taking those classes, it is not something that inspires them."

Stone says students of color need to see teachers who look like them leading advanced classes. This lack of proper academic representation doesn't just occur in the classroom. The number of black public school principals are also low.

According to the U.S. Department of Education: The State of Racial Diversity in the Workforce, 10 percent of public school principals were black while 80 percent of school principals were white in 2011-12. 82 percent of public school educators were white and just 18 percent black.

Data from the National Center for Education Statistics suggests little has changed in the past ten years. Roughly 70 percent of North Carolina high school principals were white in 2017-18 and only 24 percent were black.

This lack of proper representation can be due to a lack of teacher support and encouragement.

"I think teachers can be doing things that make their classes more acces-

sible." Stone said.

A NATIONAL ISSUE

Black and/or African American students in the graduating class of 2013 were the most underrepresented group in Advanced Placement classrooms in the United States.

According to the tenth annual AP Report to the Nation State Supplement for North Carolina in 2014, 18,954 White graduates in the class of 2013 took an AP exam during high school compared to 3,601 Black/African American students in the same year.

North Carolina's percentage of Black students in AP classrooms (13.1 percent) is higher than the national average (9.2 percent). Still, the number of African-American students in AP classrooms in North Carolina are extremely disproportionate.



Advanced academic specialist Rebecca Stone works from her office. A former AP US History, she wants to make advanced classes more accessible for Riverside students. • PHOTO BY SUSANA BRIONES GARCIA

DPS SUCCESS

Durham Public Schools is higher still. As reported by the Civil Rights Data collection in 2017, nearly half of the district's Black students took an AP or college-level class during high school.

Laura Parrot previously served as DPS' coordinator of advanced academics and is now the district's director of advanced academics. She has been with DPS for seven years and accredits the success of diversity in advanced classes and programs to the many strategies DPS has implemented over the years.

"One of the big changes that we've done is implementing portfolios as part of the [Advanced Placement] identification process," Parrot said. "That has been really great at finding more

students, a greater diversity of our student population of identification at the middle and high school level."

By considering students' past successes, Advanced academics specialists at DPS high schools have an easier time identifying more students who are eligible for advanced classes.

Another strategy the district has implemented is getting rid of teacher recommendations for enrolling in an AP class. "It used to be that when students wanted to take an AP class, they had to get teacher recommendations to enroll," Parrot said. "We did away with that."

RIVERSIDE'S RESULTS LAG

If DPS has all of these policies and programs in place, why hasn't Riverside adjusted?

"Riverside has some work to do," Parrot said. "AP teachers may not be aware that students may walk down the hallway and look in a classroom and say, 'you know what, no one in there looks like me. I don't want to be a part of that class.'"

Riverside has only had an advanced academic specialist for two years. One of those years during the 2020-21 school year when school was completely virtual.

"We saw a drop in all of our schools for AP. Now you've got Mrs. Stone involved and we feel confident that things will start to change," Parrot said.

To make up for lost time, both teachers and administration at Riverside

have to make these classes and programs more accessible for students and family.

The district is working on similar initiatives at many different schools to make advanced classes a more viable option for students, families and educators.

"What we are doing is equipping teachers to have the instructional tools to be able to address the needs of all students," said DPS Advanced academics coordinator Jamel Anderson-Ruff. "Learning loss is real, especially with COVID. That's another way that we can bring in students and make students feel comfortable."

"There is an AIG specialist at almost every high school which is a big investment on the part of Durham public schools," Anderson-Ruff said. "We are also doing a lot to work with families and students. Family outreach ensures that our families and students know what the opportunities are."

Stone believes Riverside has been improving. Many AP teachers at Riverside are trying their best to make classes more accessible for students.

"How do we as a school kind of think about who's not taking our classes?" Stone said. "How do we let kids know that there are opportunities out there for you?"

"Let's say we do a curriculum fair, where we show students what it is like in these classes," she said. "We are trying to target young leaders to encourage others. Kids can kind of see more about what the classes are about and see people who look like them enjoying it."



Sophomore Izaiah Jackson takes notes in his AP US History class, one of five AP classes he is taking this school year. He's one of few students of color in his advanced classes.

Early opportunities create an unlevel playing field

BY ELENA PACES WILES

Sophomore Izaiah Jackson will have already completed eight AP classes by the end of the school year. He is one of a handful of sophomores taking AP English III — a class traditionally taken by juniors. His GPA is a 4.6.

Jackson takes notes in his AP US History class, one of five AP classes he is taking this school year.

Yet he wasn't placed in advanced classes until middle school. And he's always one of only a few Black students in Riverside's honors and AP classes.

Advanced high school programs do not reflect the diversity of the Durham Public Schools (DPS) district, data show. Early Academically and

Intellectually Gifted (AIG) identification may be to blame.

As of 2018, only 18 percent of DPS students were white. But white students made up 44 percent of AP classes, according to a report by ProPublica. 47 percent of the overall district was Black and 29 percent was Hispanic. Despite this, Hispanic students made up only 12 percent of those taking AP classes and Black students made up 33 percent.

"I consider everything that I have done so far to be one big accomplishment," said Jackson. "Being my skin color, I wasn't meant to be able to take the classes and have the support that I do now. I take pride in that."

Jackson's experience in advanced classes began at Sherwood Githens Middle School,

where he was identified as AIG. Despite doing exceptionally well on his fifth-grade EOGs, the school system initially placed him in standard classes.

He was finally able to participate in advanced classes in middle school after his parents advocated for him. However, not all students get this chance. When schools fail to identify advanced students, parents and teachers are left responsible for advocating for their children.

THE GATEKEEPERS

Like Jackson, many students of color face barriers to early AIG identification.

According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), "AIG students exhibit high-performance capability in intellectual areas, specific academic fields, or in

both the intellectual areas and specific academic fields."

Some DPS elementary school teachers believe the criteria unjustly favor white students.

"It has been staring us in the face for a while that we have so many white children who are identified and not a proportionate amount of Latino and or African American [students]," said George Watts Elementary School AIG teacher David Cook.

The ProPublica report from 2018 shows white students made up 40 percent of DPS students identified as Gifted and Talented in elementary and middle school. However, only 18 percent of DPS students overall were white. 16 percent of identified students were Hispanic and 34 percent were Black.

White students often enter elementary school with prior academic opportunities that other students haven't yet received, said Cook. This head start provides an advantage since students are given more time to practice skills necessary for AIG selection.

The academic focus on English and math limits identification of students who are gifted in other areas, according to Felishia deBlaquiere, the nurturing specialist at George Watts Elementary School.

In her role, deBlaquiere works with students in order to introduce them to new and challenging ways of thinking. They practice deductive, divergent, and convergent reasoning lessons in English, math and science.

She sees some first and second-graders in small groups depending on their academic achievement in addition to large-group sessions for all.

"Based on data, I will either take students who are above grade level, or I'll take ones who are right on grade level who look like they could be pushed

a little bit," deBlaquiere said.

Despite these efforts, the identification process is still based on test scores. Students need two of any of the following: a score in at least the ninetieth percentile on a nationally-normed achievement test, such as the IOWA Test of Basic Skills, a score in at least the ninetieth percentile on a nationally normed aptitude test, such as the CogAT, a score in the eighty-fifth percentile or above on the End of Grade Tests, and a portfolio of academic performance.

George Watts does not identify students as AIG until third grade. By waiting to conduct AIG identification, students without preexisting advantages are given time to catch up to those who had them.

"There's a lot of the human potential besides analyzing," Cook said. "I feel like sometimes we're not addressing creativity as a valid form of intellectual curiosity and ability."

The diversity of teachers is also an important factor.

"Students need to be seen as having talents to do well and I think that having a diverse teaching staff allows for those talents to be highlighted more often and for students to experience the curriculum in more diverse ways," said deBlaquiere.

BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS

Behavior also impacts AIG identification.

"Discipline problems can mask a student's academic talent," said DPS Director of Advanced Academics Laura Parrott. Parrott's department works to provide information on advanced coursework and implement related policies for all 54 schools in the DPS district.

deBlaquiere agreed, "[When I first started this work, I had to] continuously remind teachers that behavior is not a prerequi-

site for coming with me.

"The point of this is to develop talent...it's not a prize," she said.

These disciplinary barriers disproportionately affect students of color, districtwide. Overall, 75 percent of all school suspensions and 77 percent of expulsions in DPS are given to Black students, according to ProPublica.

One way the district is trying to address inequity in academics is by starting at the root of the problem: elementary schools.

Students who are identified as AIG are more likely to pursue advanced classes later on. However, AIG identification is not a direct pipeline to honors classes in middle school, Parrott said. NCDPI issued a statewide initiative in the fall of 2019, Call to Action: Critical Actions to Realize Equity and Excellence in Gifted Education, in order to increase diversity in K-12 advanced classes.

As part of the initiative, DPS implemented a year-long training program to inform teachers on how to identify talent in students from diverse backgrounds, Parrott said in an interview with DPS Family Academy this past October.

DPS also provides advanced services to all kindergarten through second-grade students through nurturing specialists such as deBlaquiere.

Whether these new elementary school initiatives will ultimately have an impact on the demographics of high school advanced classes remains to be seen. Jackson hopes schools will see that students of color belong in advanced classes.

"The district can definitely do more," he said. "Especially by helping students get on the path to being in those advanced classes, rather than letting them just be standard."

"Students will be as successful as you help them [to be]. You can't expect them to do all of the work."

All Arrows Point to Leandro

It is impossible to generalize the issues afflicting different schools in North Carolina, because resources, size, and community values vary so widely. However, one thing is apparent: North Carolina's public schools are in a crisis, and parents, educators, administrators and policymakers alike are calling for immediate action. The good news is the state already came up with a solution.

In 1994, students from school districts in Hoke, Halifax, Robeson, Vance, and Cumberland Counties sued the school board on the basis that they were denied their constitutional right to "a basic sound education," in a case widely known as "Leandro v. State of North Carolina." The Leandro case went to trial in 1997, and in 2002 the court found that the students' rights were violated. A nonpartisan committee of education experts were hired to write the WestEd report on what North Carolina needed to do to get to the bare minimum requirements.

Despite the court ruling 20 years ago, the state legislature is still refusing to invest in public education and fund Leandro.

BY EDEN MAE RICHMAN

Teachers in the 1,600 person **Allegheny County** don't feel restricted by a lack of resources, instead they face an obsession with testing that prevents them from teaching their curriculum. This stems from what an anonymous teacher characterizes as a school board that is "close minded and embittered towards public education." Ultimately, this forces teachers to teach directly to the EOC state tests, and prevents students from getting multiple perspectives. "Overall it's resulting in a shift to a lot of online education where teachers are just babysitters managing kids on screens rather than actually really teaching," they said.

This stripped-down education produces a cycle of social promotion, where principals' raises are based on graduation rates, "so everything is rigged to get every kid to walk across that stage and for no one to drop out," they said. And while graduation rates have increased, it hasn't correlated to success in college. Only 54 percent of graduates from Allegheny County pursue higher education, and just 51 percent of those students who enrolled earn a degree in 6 years, according to a study conducted by the UNC Population Center.

Macon County is intensely economically diverse. Some students at the high school come from mountain resort communities with one of the wealthiest zip codes in the county, while 48.5 percent of the student population qualifies for free or reduced lunch. This stark inequality is perpetuated by Western North Carolina's shift towards becoming home to retirees and second home owners, causing real estate prices to skyrocket, and motivating the county to cut taxes.

"[Retirees and second home owners] don't have kids in school, they couldn't give two s—ts if public schools are financed properly," social studies teacher John Deville said. Deville also said that teachers feel the impact of this crisis because their salaries have not kept up with the rising real estate prices.

Public school funding is largely per capita, which works really well in urban densely populated areas, but can prove to be a problem in counties with smaller populations. This generates vastly different sized pools of funds. As a result, the federal government as well as the state of North Carolina has attempted to shrink the gap by offering varying amounts of government funding to under resourced school districts.

However, the education expenses are not proportional per capita, because no matter the size of the student population, it costs roughly the same amount to run a school with overhead costs, or central expenses, like heat, water, and electricity.

This ultimately disadvantages schools with smaller student bodies. Jones Senior High School, in **Jones County**, has less than 500 students, yet because the number of students doesn't impact the cost of operating a school, overhead costs are roughly the same as Riverside's expenses. This disproportionate spending results in an astounding 13 percent of their funding to be devoted to central expenses, which is more than double the state average of 6 percent (Riverside's is 6.1 percent).

Additionally, Riverside's greatest asset, their engineering program, is also driven by the number of students enrolled and the size of the county. However, provisions for this program come from a separate funding source. The Perkins Act, which was passed by Congress in the 1960's, provides urban, rural, and suburban schools with a pot of money that is not dependent on local property taxes for Career and Technical Education. All engineering teachers' salaries and equipment come from provisions of the Perkins Act.

Orange County is one of the wealthiest counties in the state. It offers more opportunities and courses for students and boasts the highest teacher salaries in the state, because the district can afford to add supplements on top of the state salary, something that under-resourced districts can't afford to do.

This protects them from issues other counties endure, like teacher shortages and frequent staff turnover. "If I wanted to leave this district, I would be taking a pay cut," Neil Morgan, an East Chapel Hill English teacher, explained. "So we attract more teachers and there's more competition for jobs."

But with more opportunities, comes more inequity. At East Chapel Hill High School, only 43 percent of underserved students score at or above proficiency on North Carolina End-of-Course Tests, while an astounding 95% of all other students score proficient, according to data from the 2019 North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests data from North Carolina Department of Public Instruction compiled by GreatSchools.

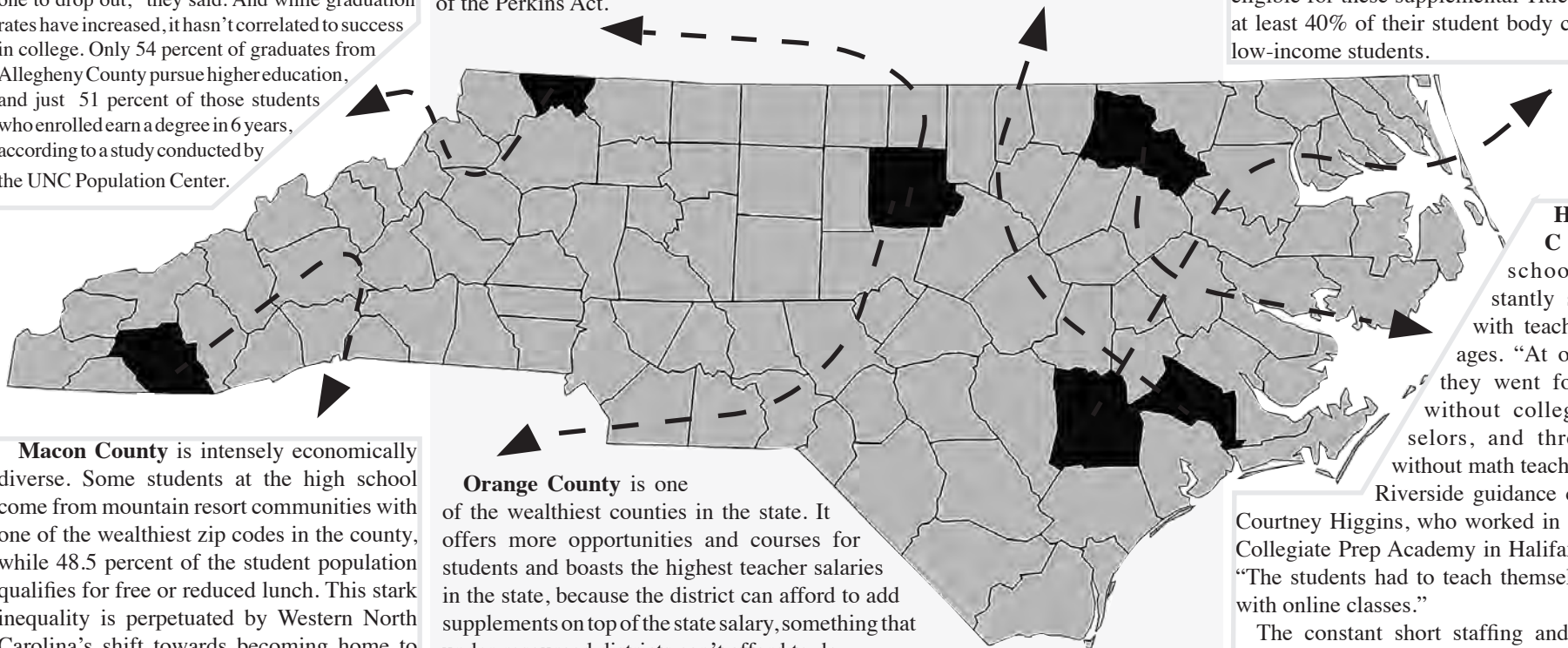
Duplin County lacks a lot of resources, both because of its rural locale and the high levels of poverty. Necessary resources, like dental services and mental health crisis units, could be reached, but they weren't fixtures of the community. As a result, the school assumed the responsibility of providing resources to the community. "The school became a staple resource," Hague said. "Our school social worker did a lot with collecting resources and housing them in the school for our families. We had a clothing pantry and a food pantry."

Additional resources, like mental health crisis units and mobile dental care, were funded through grants derived from the Title I program, which according to the U.S. Department of Education, aims to "ensure economically disadvantaged children receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, by helping to close academic achievement gaps." Schools are eligible for these supplemental Title I funds if at least 40% of their student body consists of low-income students.

Halifax County schools constantly struggled with teacher shortages. "At one point, they went four years without college counselors, and three years without math teachers," said Riverside guidance counselor Courtney Higgins, who worked in Southeast Collegiate Prep Academy in Halifax County. "The students had to teach themselves math with online classes."

The constant short staffing and frequent turnover hurts the students. "The first year I was there was the first time in seven years that all the staff stayed the whole year," she said. This caused a dramatic increase in the graduation rate, from 71 percent to 87 percent.

Additionally, suspensions and behavioral issues decreased. "The students there are so used to staff coming and going. I was gone one day, and when I came back the next day they were surprised to see me," she said. "They told me that teachers leave them and never come back."



Could abortions become illegal in North Carolina?

Hundreds of protesters gathered at marches and rallies Raleigh and Durham

BY GEORGIA FISHBACK

Riverside senior Leiko Takahashi never wanted to care about Texas and Mississippi.

But Takahashi, who is also in the Young Democrat's Club, can't help but follow the news about changes in state abortion laws that could eventually impact the entire country.

"I think it's nobody's business what women do with their bodies," Takahashi said. "You can be pro-life for yourself and still be pro-choice. I feel [new legislation] encapsulates both arguments but its really just important women have control over what they do."

On September 21, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed a senate bill which prohibits any person from having an abortion later than six weeks into the pregnancy — before most women know they are pregnant. This new law also goes for victims of rape and incest. The first legal regulations — which should make the law harder to stop — are ready to be tested in court.

On November 29, the Supreme Court also decided to uphold Mississippi's law that bans abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. The Supreme Court has never allowed states to ban abortion before roughly 24 weeks, when a fetus can survive outside the womb.

Abortion laws are nothing new. But this time Texas has added in a clause that anyone can be sued who helped someone have an abortion in Texas in the past six weeks, whether they live in the state or not, witness the incident happen, or even whether there is sufficient evidence to prove that it happened. Mississippi's law, however, would be enforced by the state instead of the citizen-enforcement approach.

Roe v. Wade, the 1973 landmark Supreme Court case, declared a nationwide right to abortion. However, it is now being challenged in a court that has a 6-3 conservative majority thanks to former President Donald Trump's three appointments — Neal Gorsuch, John Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett.

A ruling that overturned Roe and the case of Planned Parenthood v. Casey in 1992 would lead to outright bans or severe restrictions on abortion in 26 states, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

"I just don't want there to be a time when people can't get an abortion at all," Takahashi said. "and right now in Texas there is,



A male and female hold up signs during a protest in Raleigh North Carolina. They marched together in response the abortion ban in Texas

• PHOTO BY ELLA PERIN

so it's really scary."

Takahashi also believes other states should not follow Texas and Mississippi lead and restrict abortion rights.

"It's just not their business. People get abortions for their own personal reasons, [sometimes] just to save their own lives when the pregnancy could put their life in jeopardy" she said. "Some people are not prepared to be mothers. It's just really important that they have the right to choose."

Takahashi said that there are no exceptions to what she believes.

"Unless it's really late in the pregnancy and [the mother] changes her mind," she said. "I could see an argument, but it's still up to the mother."

In a Pirates' Hook survey, four responders listed themselves as pro-life, but none of them accepted an interview request.

Elsewhere, however, many Republicans have vocally supported the prospect of stricter abortion laws. In Pennsylvania, GOP gubernatorial candidates Charlie Gerow, Lou Barletta, Guy Ciarrocchi, and Joe Gale have all expressed hope that the Supreme Court justices rule in favor of upholding the Mississippi statute.

"I'm very, very grateful to my birth mother for doing the right thing," said Gerow, who was adopted. "I'm incredibly blessed she made that decision."

If he becomes governor, Gerow says he would sign a law to make abortion illegal after a baby's heartbeat can be heard.

"I'm a great believer in the blessings of life," he said.

"Abortion takes the life of a child, who if it were allowed to be born, would have all of the rights of any other human being," said Barletta, a former Pennsylvania congressman. "At that point, killing the baby would rightly be called murder."

"I am hopeful the Supreme Court will uphold the Mississippi law," said Ciarrocchi, "At a minimum, we should all agree that viability is now much, much earlier due to scientific advances. So, Roe is now not only bad law, it's based on very, very outdated science. It is time for Roe to be replaced."

"Allowing the most defenseless and voiceless among us to be murdered in the womb is unacceptable, unethical, and unforgivable," said Gale. "Under my leadership, Pennsylvania will be a sanctuary state for innocent unborn human life."

In North Carolina, Democratic governor Roy Cooper has offered a very different opinion. In a veto message he made on June 25, 2021, after rejecting a measure barring women from getting an abortion specifically due to a prenatal diagnosis of Down Syndrome in a fetus, he cited privacy concerns, arguing the bill would have made it difficult for patients to get medical information

and have honest conversations with their doctors.

"This bill gives the government control over what happens and what is said in the exam room between a woman and her doctor at a time she faces one of the most difficult decisions of her life," Cooper said. "This bill is unconstitutional and it damages the doctor-patient relationship with an unprecedented government intrusion."

Since Cooper took office in 2017, he has vetoed two bills that pro-choice advocates say will limit abortion opportunities. Republicans control both the senate and house of representatives but they do not have the absolute majority needed to overturn Cooper's veto.

Currently, a person in North Carolina can legally have an abortion. But Texas' recent law change has triggered more reproductive oppression. Although North Carolina doesn't prohibit abortion, medical restrictions have prevented many people from accessing this care. Although, unlike Texas, health plans in NC offer coverage for abortions only in cases of life endangerment, rape, or incest.

Even with a Democratic governor who supports reproductive freedom, Republican legislators intend to pass as many laws as possible. And as of January 1, 2021, many abortion restrictions were put into place in North Carolina, according to Planned Parenthood, including:

A patient must receive state-directed counseling that includes information designed to discourage the patient from having an abortion, and then wait 72 hours before the procedure is provided.

The use of telemedicine to administer medication abortion is prohibited.

The parent of a minor must consent before an abortion is provided.

A patient must undergo an ultrasound before obtaining an abortion.

The state prohibits abortions performed for the purpose of sex selection.

The Guttmacher Institute states that approximately 46,980 people between ages 15-19 get an abortion in the US. Access to reproductive rights is also an equity issue at the college level. Abortion patients are more likely to be people of color and come from low-income households. Three out of four abortion patients either fall below the poverty line or qualify as low income.

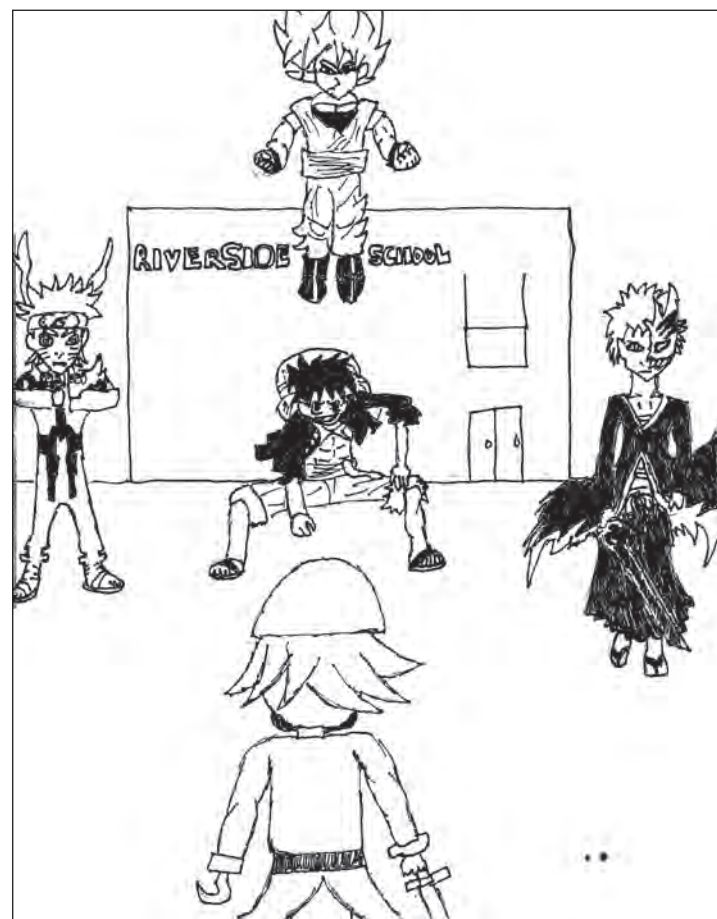
For many high school and college students, the right to reproductive autonomy depends on where they go to school. Out of all U.S. states, California and Texas have the most college students. California also has the most high school students. And the states take opposite approaches to reproductive rights. California's law specifically points to the harm caused by limited access to clinics.

"Students seeking early pregnancy termination... face prohibitively expensive travel, often without reliable means of transportation, to a clinic that may require hours of travel from their campus," Texas Senate Bill 8 states. "These financial and time burdens negatively impact academic performance and mental health."

As of 2019 28,450 abortions have been performed in North Carolina. That number includes abortions performed on out-of-state residents, but does not include abortions performed on North Carolina residents in other states.

Takahashi believes for this reason it's important high schoolers follow changes in policy.

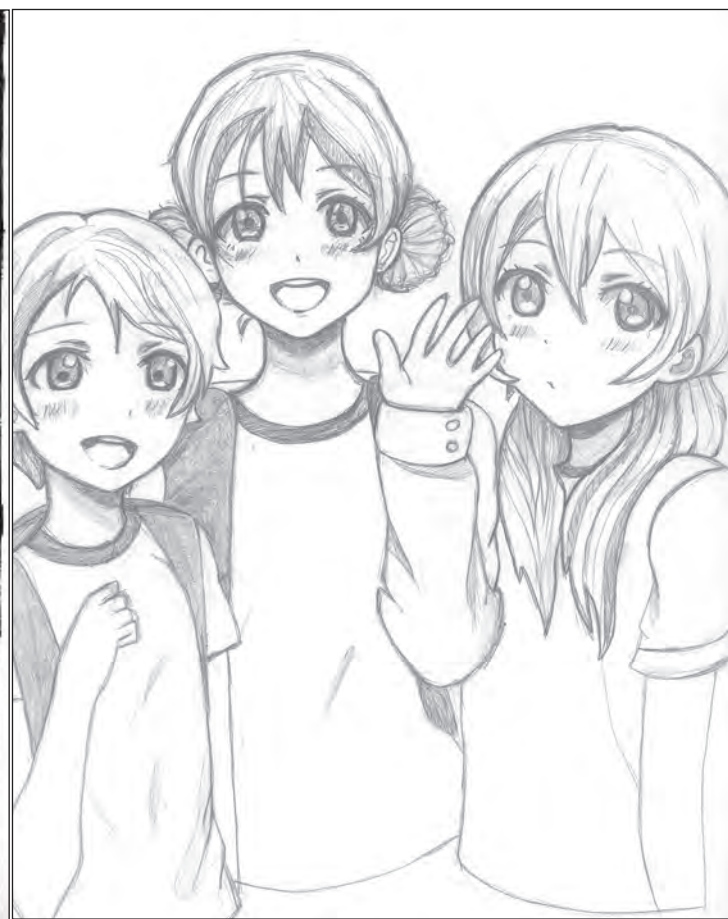
"I think everybody should be keeping up with at least the current events," she said. "These things are affecting us now because North Carolina is lucky enough to have several abortion clinics but if North Carolina follows suite...to become more like Texas there goes all of our abortions."



• GRAPHIC BY GIOVANNI VARELA BENITEZ



• GRAPHIC BY TYLER MCLEAN



• GRAPHIC BY DUNYA OMAR

Moshi Moshi!

Anime's popularity explodes at Riverside and across the globe

BY TYLER MCLEAN

Every Wednesday during lunch, the lights are off in room 221 in Riverside high school. Vibrant colors bounce off the wall. Every little detail pops.

Twenty kids whisper excitedly. They're eager to talk anime, but also don't want to distract others from the series projected on biology teacher Celynd Malone's whiteboard.

They're watching *Rising of the Shield Hero*. The show's main character, 20-year-old university student Naofumi Iwatani, gets transferred into a fantasy game world with monsters and magic after discovering a book about four heroes. As Naofumi struggles to survive in this new dangerous world, the stakes rise with every action sequence. Each expertly animated character adds depth to the plot. Students can't resist the urge to discuss their favorite scenes.

Anime and its source material, manga, have been on a steady increase in popularity. Here at Riverside High

School, fans of the genre have grown, too.

Now more than ever there's students and staff who watch anime, but why is that?

"I would hypothesize that COVID-19 and the whole quarantine thing left people with a lot of time, and feeling as though they needed something to do," said Senior Vivan Hazelrigg.

Hazelrigg is the President of the Riverside's Anime Club here at Riverside. A longtime fan of the genre, she is in charge of picking what anime series the club watches.

"Anime provides an escape for many people, and a space to think and introspect for others," she said.

The club was growing

steadily for years, but the pandemic definitely contributed.

"There has definitely been an increase in students since we first started," said Malone, the club's faculty adviser. Malone has advised anime club for three years, but isn't the biggest fan of the genre herself.

One reason could be the pandemic leaving people at home with nothing to do. For a while, anime and its fans were depicted as "weird," but as students sat at home during lockdowns and virtual school more kids gave it a chance.

"People likely accidentally found certain shows when they were looking through Netflix trying to pass the time, realized 'I just enjoyed

an anime,' and looked further into it," said Hazelrigg.

Another reason could be social media platforms, especially Tik-Tok. Anime content, trends, sounds, and hashtags all attract people to the genre. For example, content creators like *itskingchris*, a comedian/cosplayer who, with the use of visual effects, edits videos, comical facial expressions, and various popular and humorous anime sounds. *Itskingchris* has built an audience of 13.2 million followers.

"It has been memed on for years, what with the many...adult themes that certain shows may have and the stereotypes about anime fans," said Hazelrigg. "This has led to a lot of people being aware of it."

According to a 2020 Netflix report, over 100 million households around the world watched at least one anime title on Netflix between October 2019 and September 2020. That's a year-over-year increase of 50 percent. In 2020 alone anime titles appeared in the top 10 list in almost 100 countries. And

Netflix's exclusive anime *Seven Deadly Sins*, reached the top ten among all series and films in over 70 countries.

Streaming service Crunchyroll reached 3 million subscribers in July 2020, and in only six months that number increased to 4 million, according to *nScreenMedia*. Launched in 2006, it took ten years for the service to reach 1 million subscribers, but only two years to reach two million and doubled its audience again by 2021.

On April 23, 2021 the movie *Demon Slayer: Mugen Train* was released. Within its first week of screening it brought \$21.1 million in the box office. The film went on to break the United States box office record for the biggest foreign language debut. As of December 2021, it's grossed just under \$48 million dollars in the United States box office, the second highest in the country, and over \$500 million worldwide, making it the highest-grossing anime film of all time, according to the *Imagine Games Network*.

The increase in popularity is noticeable in Riverside's

media center, too.

"Every day, at least five kids come in a day to check out Manga, and that's the bare minimum," said Riverside media coordinator Jenna Wine.

Wine said that over the past three years the number of Anime books checked out by students has skyrocketed. In response, the media center has purchased additional titles and now has over 1100 books available.

As *SMARTLunch* ended in room 221, students were reluctant to leave their meeting. They said their goodbyes and looked forward to seeing each other and continuing watching the series next Wednesday.

As the pandemic altered so many communities, it also shifted the way many people view the anime community. What was once something to look down upon, is now something many look forward to sitting down and talking about each day.

"Anime has a great community in many ways, and right now and in the recent past, we have needed good, solid communities more than ever," said Hazelrigg.

Female Phenomenon

More women are tackling men's sports than ever before

BY JADEN BUTLER

Brooklyn Harker has broken down previously unthinkable barriers.

The Chapel Hill High School junior plays wide receiver, free safety and special teams positions. She is also the first female to play tackle football for Chapel Hill High School's varsity team in its 105-year history.

Harker played her first year of tackle football for the Cobras in West Virginia in the seventh grade. When her family moved to Chapel Hill she joined the team as a freshman without much issue.

"I remember the first day of practice was normal," Harker said. "No one really likes to say anything. Of course, [there were] looks and stuff, but they were all really sweet and supportive."

Harker started as a free safety and helped the team win its season opener against Carrboro, 55-6. It was a well-deserved opportunity for a hard-working player, said her coach Isaac Marsh.

Unsurprisingly, her role on the varsity team has attracted significant media attention.

A LONG HISTORY

Football is traditionally considered a male-only sport in the United States. Harker is the most recent young woman to challenge that perception, joining a long history of women who played on men's teams. Luverne "Toad" Wise was the first. Wise was a female kicker for the Atmore Alabama High School Blue Devils in 1939 and 1940. She made history when she became the first female to score a touchdown in an American football game (not on the boys team), according to [Alabamapioneers.com](#).

32 years later, Theresa Dion attended Immaculate High School in Key West, Florida. Also a placekicker, she was the first female to play on a boys varsity team in the United States, according to [luckyshow.org](#).

In the twentieth century, Holly Mangold, the younger sister of NFL offensive lineman Nick Mangold, followed his footsteps and also participated in high school football. Her main position was offensive line. Also a competitive weightlifter, she is more commonly known for winning a bronze medal as a member of the 2012 US Olympic Team. In 2017, kicker Becca Longo became the first woman to earn a college football

scholarship to an NCAA school at the Division-II level or higher when she signed a letter of intent with Adams State University.

THE NUMBERS TODAY

The number of female athletes participating in male tackle football is steadily increasing. From 2014 to 2019 over 700 females participated in male sports in middle and high school sports in the United States, according to a report by Statista.com.

Despite a long history of women playing football, the number of female athletes playing at or above the high school level remains small.

The sport remains male-dominated, with no women playing in the NFL and few on college teams. But high school girls playing on boys teams are gaining attention for their achievements. Kicker Sarah Fuller at Vanderbilt University made history when she became the first woman to play and score in a Power Five football contest.

A Pubmed report shows that from 1973 to 2018 the percentage of high school sports played by girls increased from 24 to 43 percent. Of the 14 sports included in the report, all had an increase in the percentage of female participation between 1973

and 2018. More than 80 percent of increases happened between 1973 and 1998 for most sports.

A recent study by Harvard doctor Miho J. Tanaka in the journal *The Physician and Sportsmedicine* suggests female participation in traditionally male sports isn't just happening in football.

"Girls' participation in high school sports continues to grow not only in numbers but in the types of sports played. Between 1998 and 2018," Tanaka writes. "The greatest increases were noted in ice hockey and wrestling, which had fewer than one percent female participation

before 1998."

BARRIERS REMAIN

At Riverside, Keilani Scanlon was the first female to play football in 2017. There have also been female students who competed on the wrestling team, says athletic director Robert Duncan.

"To my knowledge, we've had more than one female who has played [a male sport]," Duncan said, adding that he couldn't name them for privacy reasons.

Duncan's predecessor, Margratha Chambers, was at Riverside for more than 20 years. She said girls had as much an opportunity as boys to participate in sports.

"There shouldn't be any barriers against females who want the same opportunity to play," Chambers said. "I think soon it'll become more common in the future for females [to play male sports] once they find out that it's more impressive."

Harker believes gender fluidity also plays a role in the number of females playing on men's teams.

According to the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) all students, regardless of gender or gender identification, are allowed to participate in interscholastic athletics. The goal is for all students to be able to compete on a level playing field in a safe, competitive, and friendly environment that is free of discrimination.

Duncan went into detail that the current ruling is they must participate in the sport which they were assigned at birth," said Duncan, "but there's an appeal process that that person can go through to the High School Association, and that can be granted through them."

"None of this should stop a young woman who wants to play football from participating," said Harker.

Harker plans to keep playing for Chapel Hill High and thinks others should definitely try it.

"If more girls were willing to step out of their comfort zone, they would enjoy it," she said.

She would advise female athletes interested in playing on an all-male team to work hard and listen to their coaches.

"Always be coachable," she said. "And just always work 110 percent. Because of course, being a female, you have to work. You have to out-work everyone there. You know, just to be able to prove yourself."



• PHOTO COURTESY OF BROOKLYN HARKER

Chapel Hill High School junior Brooklyn Harker steps onto the field during a 2021 varsity football game. Harker is one example of many females who take part in male sports

Fight ends men's basketball season abruptly

By ETHAN HAINE

The Riverside men's basketball team's season ended abruptly when a fight broke out during the final game of the regular season.

The Pirates faced off against East Chapel Hill High School on Friday, February 4. With seven minutes left in the fourth quarter, senior Jared Merchant went for a layup, and sophomore Jaden Butler got the rebound and tried to score, but it was blocked by East's Marquez Cotton.

Riverside players believed the referees should have called a foul.

Players on both teams started arguing and talking trash. Butler then pushed East's Jabari Best, and then James Riley threw a punch at Riverside sophomore Xavier McQueen.

A fight broke out on the court, and players from both benches ran onto the court. Riverside's coaches - including head coach Bryan Strickland - tried to pull players away from the fight.

About a minute later, the referees broke up the fight and Riverside was sent to the lower gym..

Strickland was shocked to see the incident escalate.

"I felt like it was very uncharacteristic of our team and our

program," Strickland said. "You have to be able to walk away sometimes."

The game was postponed to the following Wednesday, but they never finished it. After reviewing video footage of the incident, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) issued a long list of penalties and suspensions.

All Riverside players were penalized with a 4 game suspension, for coming off the bench to join the fight.

East Chapel Hill's penalties were far less. Only Riley got suspended for throwing the punch. The other players were not penalized.

The video that the NCHSAA reviewed did not show the visiting team's bench, and East was able to finish its regular season.

The Pirates finished the season with an 8-16 record and in sixth place in the DAC Conference.

Strickland hopes his players learn from the incident and focus their efforts on improving next season.

"I knew that experience was going to be a big growing pain for us," he said. "I felt like we matured and improved, but I don't feel like we've reached our full potential."



Sophomores Ada Kaiser-Potter and Megan Rehder wait to compete during a 2021 swim meet. Riverside sports teams follow rules set by the district's athletic department. •PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HELM

Sports teams adapt to COVID protocols

By-EMILY DIAZ REYES

Sports this school year are very different from the past school year because of COVID. There have been many new rules athletes have to follow in order to practice in a school sport.

After canceling all school sports during the spring of 2020, Durham Public Schools (DPS) brought them back during the 2020-21 school year, but with protocols.

DPS athletic director David Hackney worked with coaches, school-based athletic directors and central office to develop the protocols.

Some of the guidelines that are being followed this school year are testing the athletes weekly and requiring masks inside school buildings. Athletes and coaches are also required to wear masks outdoors when

they're on the sidelines and on buses while traveling to and from games. DPS encourages student athletes to get vaccinated but does not require it.

There have been some situations where teams have had to be quarantined because, despite the measures, players have tested positive for COVID. Others were exposed to someone who tested positive, according to Hackney, who taught social studies and coached football and women's basketball at Riverside earlier in this career.

"We have had some situations where teams had to be quarantined because student athletes have acquired COVID," he said

Despite the positive cases, Hackney does not believe additional

measures are necessary right now.

"I think what we have established now is working," he said. "I think last year we implemented very strict guidelines and policies. Coaches, athletic directors and our players have done an excellent

job following the protocols."

Ada Kaiser-Potter and Megan Rehder describe event). Photo Courtesy of Erin Roth

Ryan Weaver is a senior on Riv-

erside's swim team. He has been on the team for all four years and won a state championship in 2020. He said the protocols changed the way teammates worked together.

"A lot of restrictions were put in place so it was kind of hard to interact with teammates," Weaver said. "[We had] very specific rules that had to be enforced 24/7. You had to wear masks no matter what even if you are vaccinated"

The Riverside men's soccer team meets after a 2021 game. Photo Courtesy of Steven Ramirez

Keyvin Cena has played for the men's varsity soccer team for two years. He didn't feel the protocols affected his sport as much as Weaver.

"Like any other year, I was focused more on the game than worrying about getting COVID," said Cena, who is vaccinated but still has to follow all the protocols. "It doesn't really feel different because we barely wore a mask in practice and played with no mask".

outdoor sports like soccer had some different guidelines they had to follow. Weaver and Cena agree, however, that the protocols the district implemented helped keep the teams safe.

"I felt safe because, for the most part, everybody had their masks on," Cena said.

"I believe we follow the protocols very well," Weaver said.

"I felt safe because, for the most part, everybody had their masks on."

Keyvin Cena,
Senior

Winter Sports Recap

Women's Basketball

The Women's Basketball team finished this year with an 8-16 record.

It was a season full of change, as the team experienced turnover within the coaching staff and a move to a new conference. But a strong senior class, led by captains Jenny Hernandez and Kamariyah George propelled the team to big wins against Enloe High School and Northern High School. Sadly, the team did not make the playoffs this year.

Hernandez and George led the team in scoring. Hernandez and senior

Mya Matthews led the team in assists. Matthews and sophomore Shameisha Holder were the team's top rebounders, and George led the Lady Pirates in steals.

"Honestly, it was rough at first trying to get used to the new conference (DAC VII) and the new coaching staff," said senior Taniyah Justice. "But overall it was a great season! The team had a lot of eye-opening moments, and many great experiences that made us stronger as the season progressed."

Swimming and Diving

It was an important and monumental season for the Riverside Swimming and Diving team. The Pirates were represented by 6 athletes at States this year.

Riverside took sophomores Elodie Mitchell and Otto Schonwalder, seniors Ryan Weaver and Ben Smith, freshman Vivian Brennan, and homeschooled sophomore Asa Gerend. This is the largest group of athletes the swim team has ever taken to states, which was held at the Triangle Aquatic Center in Cary, NC.

The men's medley relay finished fourteenth out of 24 teams. Mitchell, the only girl representing Riverside, finished eighteenth in the 200 freestyle and just barely missed finals. Smith swam the 500 freestyle and finished twenty-third, and Gerend finished twenty-third in the men's 50 freestyle.

"[this year's season] was different because of the mask mandates and the first few meets were just girls, but at Conference and Regionals and States [the boys and girls teams] were able to go together... It was still fun," Mitchell said. "Hopefully, next year I make finals."

The atmosphere at states was unlike other meets. There were a few surprises, like Mitchell's heat being held behind the blocks for 30 minutes before her race.

"I feel like that messed me up a little bit... so that was frustrating," she said.

Ryan Weaver, the defending state champion in the men's 50 freestyle, also had to drop out of his events at the last minute due to a knee injury.

"Everyone took it really hard, especially him...but inevitably it was the right thing to do," said sophomore Otto Schonwalder.

Weaver led the team to states and it was a heavy blow to the team when they realized he would not get to compete during his last meet as a senior. As the anchor leg to the 400 men's freestyle relay, Weaver was a vital member of the team.

The meet was especially bittersweet for co-captains Ariane Allard-Spink, Ryan Weaver, Jake Foley, and Ben Smith, who will all be graduating this year.

Jake Foley used many compliments to describe this year's team.

"It was really fun 'cause the other captains were some of my really good friends," he said. "We just had a good time at all the meets."

There is a great deal of promising underclassmen talent that will be in charge of ensuring this team shows linear growth in the coming years, but for now Riverside is in need of "more non-year-round swimmers to increase their numbers," Foley explained.

"We have a lot of really good Juniors and underclassmen that can take over for the team," Foley said. "I think we will be set."

Winter Track

It was yet another successful season for the young winter track team.

The Pirates had 13 runners qualify for states, including two relay teams, the men's 4x800 meter and the women's 4x800 meter.

The Men's relay was led off by senior Flynn Meadows, who was then followed by junior Bryan Hampson and freshman Philip Blum, and the men finished off their relay with junior Owen Transue as the anchor leg. The Women's relay was led off by junior Ellie Deskins, followed by sophomore Annika Raburn, freshman Lucy Morris and freshman anchor Elizabeth Healy.

The team also had 6 individual qualifiers: Winston Gasch (1000 meters), Henry Haase (1600 meter), Elizabeth Healy (1600 meters

and 1000 meters), Zeneta Hudson (55 meter hurdles), Jadrian Bumidang (55 meter hurdles), and Rafaela Drake (triple jump).

Gasch finished third overall in the 1000 meter and broke the school record with a time of 2:34.1. Hudson took sixth overall in the 55 meter hurdles and set the school record with 8.63 seconds.

The Girls 4x800 meter relay broke the school record with a time of 10:09 and placed eleventh overall.

"This was a fantastic season, the team was better than ever. I am very proud to have shown everyone what Riverside is truly made of. I'm looking forward to hopefully bringing in more hardware in the spring," Gasch said.

BY THOMAS ROMANO, TATE GASCH AND RYAN WEAVER



PHOTO BY ELIZABETH MORENO



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HELM



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HELM

(Top) Riverside's Swim Team poses for a team photo before the regional meet. (Middle) Junior Bryan Hampson competes in a winter track meet at East Chapel Hill High School. (Bottom) Senior James Rippe completes a pin on an opposing Chapel Hill wrestler.

Deeper than hair: Students talk style and appropriation

BY VICTORIA ALCINDOR

The phrase 'imitation is the sincerest form of flattery' has been around for centuries, but some find a problem when certain ethnic hairstyles are being worn or imitated by people who don't fit into that ethnic group.

And when it comes to Black people, it's deeper than hair.

Many ethnic hairstyles have deep-rooted history that have been preserved and still worn today.

According to Ebony Magazine writer Princess Gabbara, Bantu knots can be traced back to 1500 CE in Southern Africa, where people with thick, curly, coarse hair wore them as a protective style. In Ethiopia, cornrows were worn by warriors and kings.

Dreadlocks can be traced back to many cultures. The earliest examples were found in Ethiopia and Egypt, and the hairstyle was greatly adopted by the Jamaicans to represent rebellion in ex-slaves against the Eurocentrism that was once forced upon them. They were even referred to as "dreadful" by the Eurocentric Jamaican society. Many people today refer to the style as 'locs' to stray away from the negative connotation of 'dread.'

Hair amongst black people is used as a form of cultural expression. Throughout history it has been made clear that natural



Junior Qwalei Haskin's locs represent who he and where he comes from. "It's really just me, from the darkness of my skin to the history of my family"

• PHOTOS BY VICTORIA ALCINDOR



Freshman Javon McCoy has been growing his locs for four years. "My hair means power, strength, growth."

hair was unacceptable.

"In a society that associates hair that is straight or has loose curls as 'tidy,' we obviously don't fit," said Anibe Idajili, author of *She Leads Africa*.

There have been many examples of people who wore their hair in an ethnic style suffering because it was seen as unattractive, unkept, and unprofessional by mainstream society.

Chastity Jones lost a customer service job offer simply because she wouldn't cut her locs. She was told "they tend to get messy," by the hiring manager. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed a lawsuit on Jones's behalf in 2013 and lost.

In 2018 a high school wrestler in New Jersey

was forced to either cut his locs off or forfeit the match. A video of the wrestler getting his locs cut went viral. And there was widespread outcry over the humiliation the athlete was subjected to. The referee was later banned from refereeing any other wrestling matches in the county.

"In this culture, our hair isn't appreciated or loved, and we have been taught to think that our hair was problematic," Lori L. Tharps, a hair historian, and co writer of the book *Hair Story: Untangling the Roots of Black Hair in America*, told *Vogue Magazine* in 2020.

"When I was about nine years old, I asked my mom if I could straighten my thick natural hair with a perm... Unbeknownst to my young mind, I was making my first attempt to conform to white mainstream society," writes Gabrielle Kwarteng in her 2020 *Vogue* story, "Why I don't refer to my hair as 'Dreadlocks.'"

Celebrity Kim Kardashian West sparked controversy in 2018 when she wore her hair in cornrows with extensions. Kardashian, who is white and married to rapper Kanye West, and her Instagram photos raised questions about whether or not having a black husband and biracial kids gives her more leeway to adopt black culture.

Where, then, is the line between appreciation and appropriation?

"Appreciation is when someone seeks to understand and learn about another culture in an effort to broaden their perspective and

connect with others cross-culturally," writes Kelsey Holmes of Greenheart Club, a Chicago-based organization that promotes international education, environmental awareness and citizen diplomacy. "Appropriation on the other hand, is simply taking one aspect of a culture that is not your own and using it for your own personal interest.

Here at Riverside, student opinions vary.

"If [white girls] see a black girl with a certain hairstyle, think it's cute, and copy the style, I don't see a problem with it," said Sophomore Nehemiah Lassiter.

"It isn't right that the styles that were considered 'ghetto,' 'unprofessional,' and 'unkept,' by non-POC's are now being copied by those very same people, simply because it's a trend," said Junior Janika Bunch.

"My hair means power, strength, growth," said Freshman Javon McCoy. "It's a reminder of where I come from."

"It's really just me, from the darkness of my skin to the history from my family," said Junior Qwalei Haskin. "It's just how I like it and how I'm going to keep it."

"They think it's just a hairstyle, and to some people it is, but there's a lot of history behind these styles," said Freshman Temiloluwa Yemi-Mabo, who moved to Durham from Nigeria when she was nine years old. "It's like cultural appropriation."



Freshman Temiloluwa Yemi-Mabo's hair, which is now in faux locs, plays a big role in her confidence. "It makes me feel good about myself," she said.