

# THE HOOFPRIINT

student run news publication out of buffalo high school, buffalo, mn

March 2024 edition



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the stories we want to share

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### PHOTOS BY

Devin Amundson, Emmerson Breyer, Ella Kragerud, Ellie Lange, Paola Linares-Santiago, Theodor Nagel, Karalee Parsons

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## A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS :

For a long time, the student-run newspaper at Buffalo High School has only existed on our website (Hoofprint.net), and some of you may be unaware BHS even has a student newspaper. The Hoofprint's print edition had been a nationally-recognized publication, but took a huge hit from COVID and the end of the Journalism 2 class, and fell off the face of the earth. Since then, we've been picking up the pieces and building it back up. We want to thank our amazing staff of writers, editors, and photographers for putting in the hours and the effort to bring this publication back to life.

Coming into this year, one of our biggest goals was to return to print, and release a print edition to the community. We felt that a physical copy was integral to the function of a newspaper, and worked toward making that dream a reality. Now, after much trial and error, we've finally done it. We're back, baby!

Sincerely,

*Siviera Pysie* + *Yiqian Zheng*

# STAFF

the minds who put  
our paper together

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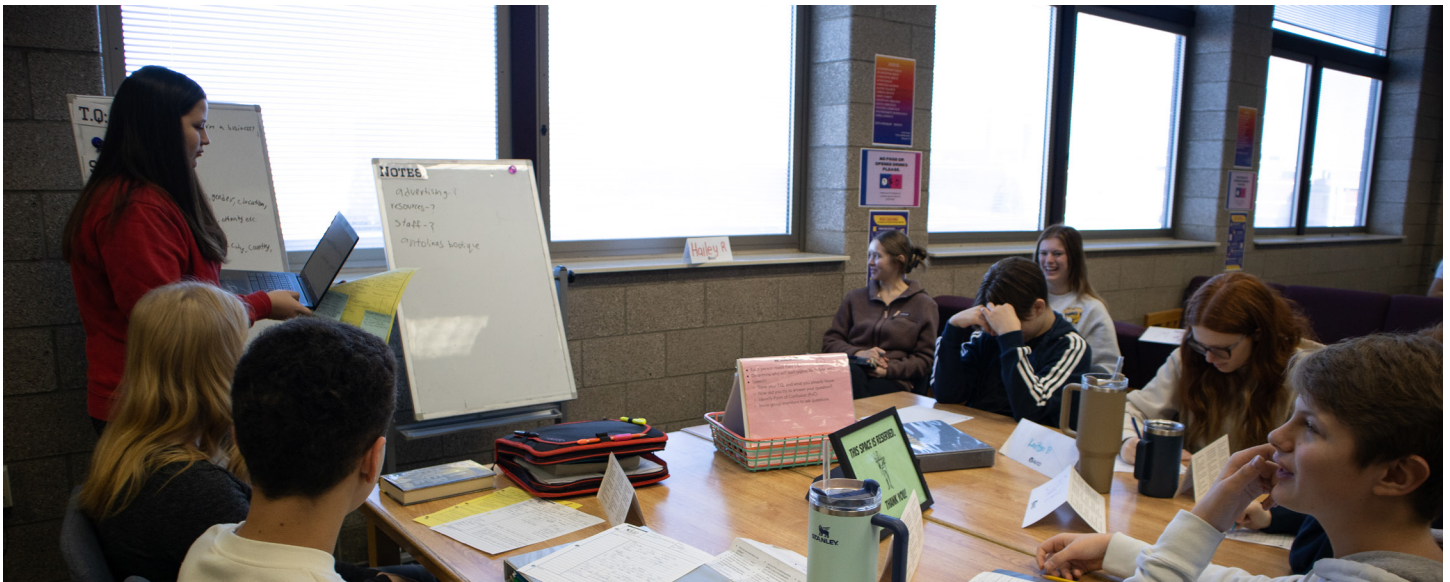
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# ACTIVITIES

celebrating devotion  
to our school and its  
extracurriculars

## NOT JUST A PROGRAM?

**A deeper look into the often asked question: "What even is AVID?"**



Ava Garcia '27 gives a presentation to other AVID 9 members about her business class. Photo by Oskar Carlson.

### STORY BY OSKAR CARLSON

AVID is a organization and program which stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination. That acronym is quite vague, leading many to wonder, "Just what is AVID?"

Put simply, AVID is a program that helps potential first-generation college students by providing them with important organizational tactics and understanding ways of financing college, including FAFSA, college grants, and scholarships. It is a program designed to foster success and help many students that may struggle with any of these skills. Someone who has big dreams but who could benefit from some help to achieve those dreams.

"[AVID] is a good way to open their eyes about what is out there" AVID 10 teacher Craig Lachowitz said. "For many, they may just know college as where a family member went, or for a team or club."

What exactly AVID is and what it isn't is not often made clear at our school. AVID exists as two separate visions, one being elective classes taken by students in both the middle and high school. These are the classes headed by AVID elective teachers, and often have students giving tutorials, which are presentations about topics they may be struggling with to others.

The second AVID program is a school-wide implementation of AVID's strategies across the high school. "What [schoolwide AVID] really means is better teaching," AVID 12 teacher and former coordinator Melissa Bertsch said. "It's more student-centered teaching instead of teacher centered teaching, it's more about students doing the hard work, wrestling with problems and figuring things out."



Dawson Vanlith '25 speaks with his AVID peers Gavin Collins '25 and Ryan Grise '25. Photo by Riley Beneke.

More than a quarter of our survey respondents didn't know what AVID was at all, so we asked the Nancy Eynck, the district-wide AVID coordinator, about her thoughts on the subject.

"It's either people don't know what it is, or it's misunderstood," Eynck said. "I don't even know if the teachers who don't teach the elective know exactly what it is."

With a new high school AVID coordinator this year in the form of Jess Nickelsen, Eynck hopes to work with teachers and students to find "missing students" who she feels could greatly benefit from the AVID elective class.



## SHOWING SUPPORT FOR NATALIE LABELLE

BHM community members show up in droves at a Culver's Fundraiser supporting Labelle's journey through a heart transplant.

[READ MORE ON HOOFPRIINT.NET](#)

## ACTIVITIES EDITOR: KARALEE PARSONS

# WHAT IS MUSIC LISTENING AND HOW DID THEY DO AT STATE?

### STORY BY KARALEE PARSONS

On January 19, 2023, the Music Listening teams competed in their regional competition, working virtually in Wayzata's Performing Art Center. The teams competed in several rounds performing different tasks that consisted of identifying the names of pieces, their composers, and their periods. After the competition finished, Music Listening Team 1 tied for 2nd with another team and Team 2 placed 3rd, and they both moved onto the state competition.

The Music Listening Competition is made up of a few students who spend time studying music from every era, from medieval to modern day. They study out of thick packets given to them at the beginning of the year, which includes 40-50 songs by various composers. The members are expected to memorize all of them, including details like what period and style they were written in. They're also given featured themes every year to focus on.

"[The featured theme] this year is choral music," Aver McCallum '24 said, "and there's a featured genre. This year it's video game music."

McCallum is a member of Team 1, and spent time working with his teammates Christopher Roehlke '24 and Oliver Holt '24 to do well at state. In preparation, the Music Listening teams had to spend extra time studying outside of their packets to be successful.

"We're now looking into music by the composers that aren't included in the packet because there's a mystery round," McCallum said.



Aver McCallum '24 and Oliver Holt '24 actively listen to their advisor, Mr. Rabehl, during a practice. Photo by Ellie Lange.

Music Listening Team 1 placed 5th and Music Listening Team 2 (Mitchell Nosbush '26, Maggie Bertsch '25, Vivian Grambart '25) placed 18th at the state competition out of 21 total teams.

"I don't think we could have performed better," McCallum said. "The teams that were ahead of us were pretty serious. We did a lot better than I thought we would. We beat Edina and Minnetonka who beat us last time."

# KNOWLEDGE BOWL TEAMS ADVANCE TO REGIONALS

### STORY BY KARALEE PARSONS

On February 29, 2024, the Varsity 1 and 2 Knowledge Bowl teams competed at the subregions competition to advance to regionals. While successful in their goal, they had to put up a good fight against Sartell's Varsity 1.

Buffalo's Varsity 1 team, made up of Lexi Zheng '24, Tony Leintz '24, Aver McCallum '24, Christopher Roehlke '24, and Maria Whalen '24, got 4th at subregions. The team stayed high on the standings for the first few rounds, but as the last rounds approached, they were nervous.

"Sartell was absolutely killing it in [our room]," Leintz said. "They were getting 20 or more points, holding everyone else down to 10 points. In the last round, we were up against the mercy of the rooms below us to score lower."

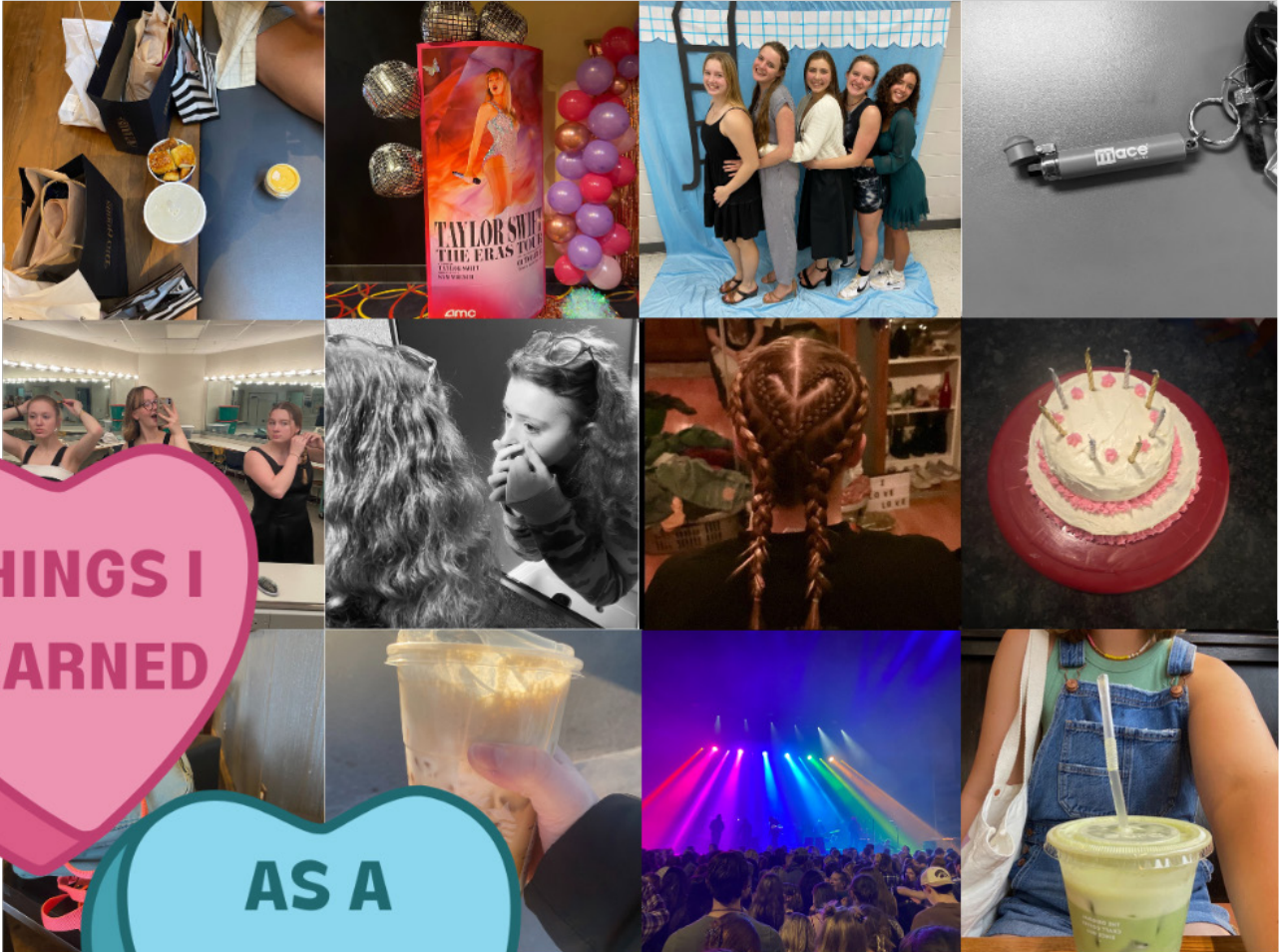
For Varsity 2 team (Daniel Jungwirth '25, Dexter Huss '25, Eric Bajema '25, Kumail Akram '25, and Lucas Lawrence '25), this experience was no different. While securing 2nd place, it wasn't easy. "We were out of our element for a little bit, Sartell was doing really well," Jungwirth said. "I'm not too worried about regionals, it's a different day with different questions." Both teams will be competing at the regional competition on March 12, 2024.



Huss, Bajema, Jungwirth, and Lawrence focus on answering the oral round questions accurately during practice. Photo by Karalee Parsons.

# FEATURES

highlighting people, topics, and events



Photos courtesy of Ella Kragerud and Ava Peterson

**THINGS I LEARNED**

**AS A TEENAGE GIRL**

**1 Even little girls can be catcalled.**

I was on a trip with my grandparents in Key West. It was late at night and we were walking down the road trying to find somewhere to eat. I was walking closest to the road. Suddenly four middle-aged men in a golf cart came racing past and one of the men yelled out "Looking good honey buns!" I was 12. I had to walk between my grandparents for the rest of the trip. After this, I realized that you will always be sexualized no matter how old you are or where you are.

**2 Jewelry is the final touch.** For any outfit, wearing rings, earrings, or necklaces will add extra sparkle to the clothing as well as your confidence. Jewelry looks fancy, and put together, so it is a must. Additionally, jewelry doubles as a subtle fidget for the anxious girls.

**Real stories and shared experiences of BHS girls**

**3 DON'T wear ripped jeans to meet a partner's family.**

My boyfriend and I had been dating for three years before I was able to go to his family's Thanksgiving. Unfortunately, instead of his family asking about my hobbies or interests, I was questioned and criticized for my choice of clothing. His uncle asked if I was "Too poor to afford real clothes" and even started a fund to raise money for me. I was humiliated as he went around asking for money for the "Poor girl who must be freezing" as I stood in my hand-me-down outfit. Things became even more awkward when my boyfriend's younger sister didn't understand that her family was mocking me, and tried to force the money on me because she became genuinely concerned for my health. When I tried to join in on the joke by adding "Well, my parents are both teachers," I was reprimanded for "complaining about their pay". All while being asked to take money. My boyfriend and I are still together, but his extended family does not know that.

*"Being a teenage girl means staying up until 2 AM trying on outfits, attempting to find the perfect one."*

597  
posts646  
followers**BHS hallway crushes**

Anonymous posts. 😊

not affiliated with bhs.

send in photos of your hallway crush. 📷

dm if you want any posts taken down.

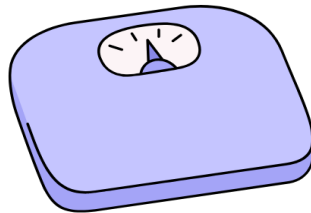
## BHS HALLWAY CRUSHES

Students and staff find the account, which now has amassed over 650 followers, "inappropriate and rude."

[READ MORE ON HOOFPRIINT.NET](#)

## FEATURES EDITOR: ELLA KRAGERUD

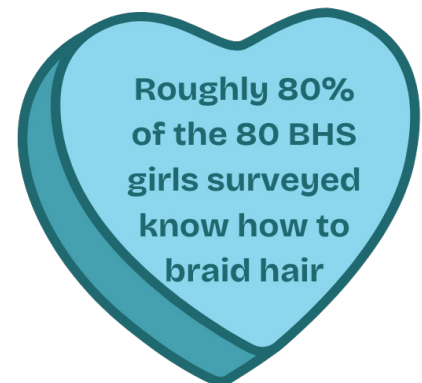
**4. The culture of hair braiding.** Every sports team or friend group has its designated hair braider. Braiding can be either a whole team bonding experience through a braid train or one-on-one time with a friend. It can be a quick fix before class or a long bus ride activity.



**5. You can always trust older women.** I was at a concert with my dad and uncle and before it started I had to go to the bathroom but I didn't want to go alone. My dad walked me over but it still felt like there were 1,000 people in the line and I was so scared I would get separated or taken. Two older women in line saw my apprehension and told me, "You can stay with us." They stood by me in line, waited for me to leave the bathroom, and even walked me out, making sure I was safe back with my dad. I've had several experiences like this, where older women have helped me or watched me when I was alone.

**7. Women can't be happy single.** No matter how old you are or where you are in life, one of the first questions you'll be asked by strangers or family members is "So, do you have a boyfriend?" When I was five years old, my family was on a trip to Disney World. While we were there, a stranger asked me this dreaded question. Since I had a large crush on my neighbor, I said a very confident "Yes!" Which, unfortunately, prompted more questions. "What's his name? Where does he live? Are you getting married?" Even as a five-year-old, these questions were all too familiar.

*"Being a teenage girl means listening to Taylor Swift on the treadmill while all the gym men who all somehow know each other fist bump each other on the squat rack."*



**8. Looks matter first.** When on apps like Snapchat, girls constantly get asked what they look like before other questions like "How old are you?" or "What are your aspirations?" If they like the photo, the boy responds with "nice." If a girl chooses not to send a photo of their appearance, they are often unadded. If they do send a picture and it is not up to the man's liking, unadded. Confidence is instantly crushed.

**10. Makeup matters.** If a girl wears a full face of makeup, and dresses in jeans and a top, she will get noticed. If she chooses to pull up in sweats and no makeup, she will get told she looks tired. It might even go to the extreme of everyone being concerned for her well-being on no-makeup days. Yet, boys claim that they prefer this natural look of a ponytail and no makeup. Little does he know the natural look he prefers is a full face of subtle makeup.

**6. What you eat is always a topic of conversation.** "You're going to eat all of that?" is a common phrase for girls to hear. Most can tell you an exact circumstance when they were told that, ruining their night, whereas men get told they need to eat second helpings and large meals to become big strong men. When women go back for more food, it's a big deal and the girl is seen as masculine and either applauded for being like "one of the boys" or shamed for not modestly eating.

**9. Outfits never look as good as imagined.** Before going to bed, many girls will mentally plan out what to wear the next day. Since a girl's appearance is usually judged whether positively or negatively it is important to have the perfect outfit. But as soon as she wakes up the next morning, feeling prepared because since there is one less decision to make, the outfit looks horrible. Once again, a planned outfit does not look how it was supposed to. The scramble to find a new outfit starts, and the pile of clothes on the floor forms.



**STORY BY ELLA KRAGERUD, AVA PETERSON, AND OLIVIA TELECKY**

## 31 BHM District Staff to Be Cut Superintendent Scott Thielman explains why



Student in a teacher-less classroom. BHM Schools needs to reduce 31 staff positions by 2025. Photo by Ellette Gustafson

### STORY BY LEXI ZHENG

BHM Schools is planning to reduce their staff by 31 people over the next two years.

Facing declining enrollment, the decision to cut staff employment was made in an effort to maintain the student-teacher ratio that the district has been working to maintain since 2004.

"[Compared to] 2019, we're serving 572 fewer students," Superintendent Scott Thielman said. "We have a ratio that we've been working with for probably the last two decades, and that's what we use to set up a staffing ratio and then we utilize that to determine allocations at elementary and secondary levels. Right now, our class sizes are lower than the ratio that we established."

Due to the need for core subject teachers at the middle and high school, it's likely that some of those positions will be filled by new hires, while positions at the elementary school will not be rehired for.

As the staff reductions are put into action, students and teachers alike should expect class sizes to rise as students are spread between fewer teachers in class.

"We're using federal pandemic relief funds

*"The community understood what we were asking for and helped us to ensure that we have a better place for our students."*

*- Superintendent Scott Thielman*

that were provided to us by the federal government, so we haven't reduced [our staff]," Thielman said.

Those federal funds have allowed the district to maintain a lower student-to-staff ratio than would be expected with the shrinking student population, but as those funds begin to run out, staff efficiency rates become more important.

"With a five period day, teachers teach four periods out of five, so the efficiency rate is at 80%. For 80% of the day, teachers are with students," Thielman said. "With a four period day, they teach three out of four periods and you can do the simple math. 75% of their time is with students. [In a five period day], your teachers are used 80% of the time instead of 75%, therefore you don't need as many staff members."

## Scott Thielman Simplifies Upcoming Construction Plans

### STORY BY AVA PETERSON

With the bond referendum being passed this November, the BHS district is planning construction projects to take place over the next couple of summers.

"This summer, what we're planning on [doing] is called electrified retraction. We're going to automate the locking of the exterior doors at all of our buildings," said Thielman.

While electrified retraction is the main goal to be accomplished for the summer of 2024, there are a couple more things that will be happening during the summer break.

"The elementary schools are going to have a unitary playground surface. We're going to take the wood chips out, have a new foundation, and a base put in. It'll have a surface over the top making it more accessible to folks that have wheelchairs, strollers, and small families," said Thielman.

These changes will be accompanied by more modifications happening in the summer of 2025. The steam boilers in several buildings are being converted into hot water boilers which are more efficient. We have steam boilers right now, and we're going to convert those to hot water boilers, which are much more efficient. At the high school, the auditorium, performing arts center, cafeteria, and gymnasiums will have a chilled water plant installed. The performing arts center will have new lights, curtains, shelves and risers, sound, and new seats installed.

The high school isn't the only school getting a summer glow up in 2025. At the middle school, there will be some roofing done, demountable partition walls will be replaced with permanent walls and some general remodeling.

"At Parkside, we're waiting one year for the Unitary Playground surfacing because Parkside and Discovery Elementaries share a playground and it's actually owned by the city, which is going to replace a bunch of playground equipment, said Thielman. We're also putting some investment in the auditorium at Discovery Elementary."

## NEWS EDITOR: AVA PETERSON



### AFTER THE CRASH

Students and staff alike find themselves rattled and stranded after traumatic car crashes. What should you do if you find yourself in a similar situation?

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# Inside Indie Earth : Record Store Day

## A closer look inside Buffalo's trendiest shop

**STORY BY OLIVIA TELECKY  
AND AVA PETERSON**

From music-listening nights to plant fertilizer, this one-stop shop seems to have something for everyone. First introduced to downtown Buffalo a year ago, the name Indie Earth is now familiar to many BHS students.

Plants, music, and crystals aren't the only thing that makes Indie Earth such a popular spot for young people. Indie Earth is also known for its understanding and accepting culture.

After living in Buffalo for five years, Indie Earth CEO Aleah Tucker noticed that Buffalo both needed and wanted a more inclusive space that gave younger people more things to do. She noted that "people in the community have been very nice about [this space] for the most part, and that's been really exciting."

Tucker explained that the wide variety of merchandise found in her store represents her various hobbies and professional interests.

"I am an audio engineer by trade," Tucker said, "so I wanted a place that, just, more aligned with what I wanted to do in my future. We didn't have a plant shop in Buffalo, we didn't have a record shop in Buffalo, I would like both. So, I just did it myself, and now here we are."

While plants are a visual focal point for the store, the cultural focal point comes from the music — specifically the music-listening nights.

"We do [music listening nights] all the time," Tucker said. "Sometimes there's snacks, there's always some pins and merch. We really just get together. . . We play the album really loudly and it's a really fun time."

These nights are perfect for anyone who wants to celebrate or discuss an artist that is important to them — sometimes in costume. "It's kind of like a book club, but music," Tucker said.

These nights show off Indie Earth's true purpose which is, according to Tucker, "To create a space where people can come in and talk about the music they love, and experience the music they love, in an environment that's not going to judge them for it."

This year, Record Store Day is on April 20th.



Three scenes from inside Indie Earth. Photos by Olivia Telecky

According to an article published by USA Today, "Record Store Day is an annual event inaugurated in 2007 to 'celebrate the culture of the independently owned record store'. Held on one Saturday (typically the third) every April and every Black Friday in November, the day brings together fans, artists, and thousands of independent record stores around the world. A number of records are pressed specifically for Record Store Day, with a list of releases for each country, and are only distributed to shops participating in the event."

On the Indie Earth website, Tucker is encouraging people who plan on attending to wait until after sunrise to start lining up to get in to the store. Each attendee will receive a wrist band to mark their spot in line. This wrist band can get the wearer a free mini caramel cinnamon roll from Forget Me Not Cafe with purchase of any food item or beverage and a discounted drink from the coffee bar at Buffalo Books and Coffee. Doors will open at 10 a.m., the collectible RSD tote with "all kinds of fun stuff inside" will be handed out at both checkouts while supplies last.

For updates on future listening nights or special merch launches, check out @indie\_earth\_ on Instagram.

## SPRING HIGHLIGHT DATES

### **BHS Choirs "Major Work Concert"**

BHS PAC - March 11, 7:30 p.m.

### **BCMS Chamber Concert "A Little Night Music"**

BHS PAC - March 14, 7:30pm

### **Winter Drumline Home Show**

BHS Main Gym - March 16, 5pm – 10pm

### **BHS Night Out For Music Concert Fundraiser**

BHS PAC - March 23, 7:30 p.m.

### **Record Store Day at Indie Earth**

Indie Earth - April 20th

### **Ladies Day Out**

Buffalo - April 20th, 10:00am - 4:00pm

### **Buffalo Triathlon**

Sturges Park - June 2, 8:00am - 12:00pm

# OPINIONS

Speaking from the heart, for the body



Over 500 students signed the petition for the consideration of weighted GPAs last spring, including the four students in this photo recreation.

## A HEAVY BURDEN :

### Weighted grades could elevate every student, so why don't we have them?

**STORY BY EMMERSON BREYER AND OLIVIA TELECKY**

In May of 2023, a petition asking the district to consider adding weighted GPAs to student transcripts was passed through the student body at BHS. Matthew Scherber, a 2023 graduate, led the push for weighted GPAs.

For Scherber, the idea of introducing weighted GPAs stemmed from a peer's speech, which led to his formation of a student advocacy group. So, what exactly is a weighted GPA, and what happened to the petition?

"Weighted GPAs are another way to quantify student performance. Our school already gives us unweighted GPAs, which is an average taken from the grades students receive and then they make them into numbers and average them," Scherber said. "Weighted GPAs do the same thing, but they quantify relative to the difficulty of the courses that students take, so a harder course has a higher value

for the starting value of an A as a way to recognize the performance of students who do well in harder level classes."

In just three days, the petition for weighted GPAs garnered over 500 signatures from students grades 9-12. The popularity of the document quickly caught the attention of Pam Miller, Director of Teaching and Learning for the BHM district. To discuss the petition, a meeting took place to talk about the school's response and approach. Miller was present in this meeting, along with BHS principal Mark Mischke, and a group of students. The student group consisted of three juniors and three seniors, one of the seniors being Scherber.

During this meeting, students voiced their concerns regarding not having weighted GPAs. One concern that comes with the current unweighted system is that students are deterred from taking more academically rigorous courses. If a student takes no CIS or AP classes, they are likely to graduate

with a higher GPA than a student who takes many of those more challenging courses. This often causes students who make an effort to challenge themselves with these CIS and AP classes to have a lower class ranking than those who don't take advantage of these opportunities.

While it may seem trivial, these class rankings are an important factor for colleges when deciding to accept students. A lower GPA can also hurt a student's chances of getting certain scholarships. In the meeting, one student voiced that while they had a perfect 4.0 GPA, they were still getting beat out for scholarships because their competition was able to get up to a 5.0 due to their school having a weighted system. These problems contribute to a much larger issue of equity across the board. It would also allow students whose GPA suffered to "repair" their GPA by taking harder classes later.

It can be argued that if a student doesn't want their GPA to suffer, they just shouldn't take more

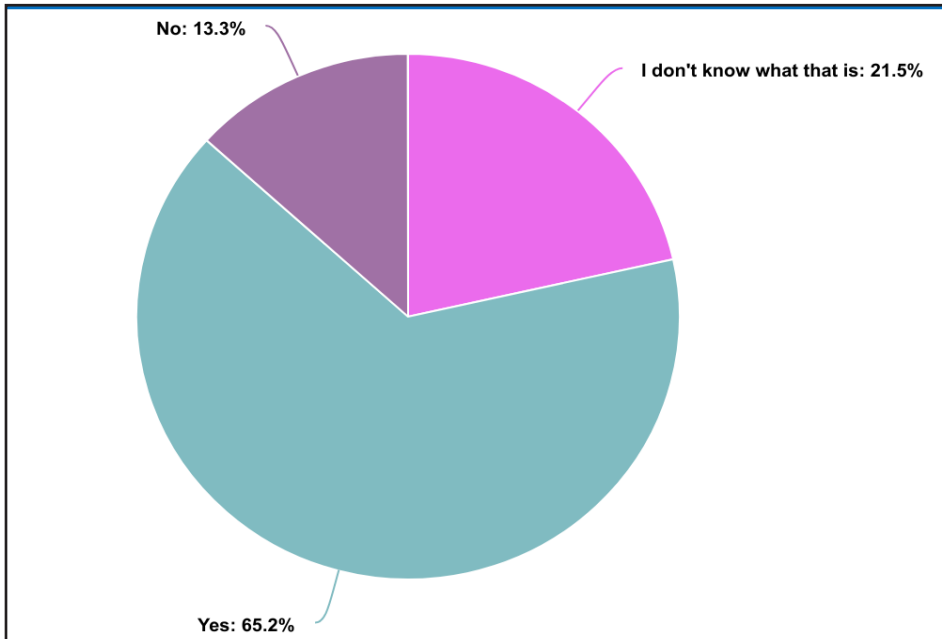
# OPINIONS EDITOR: ANTHONY LEINTZ



## WHAT HAPPENS DURING ADVISORY? 11

Students' satisfaction levels with Advisory largely depends on their teacher. What is going on in successful advisories?

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In a survey of 139 BHS students, 65% of respondents said that they were in favor of weighted GPAs, and more students did not know what they were than were opposed to them.

challenging classes; after all, these classes are optional. These classes are integral for some students to be able to afford college. With the student loan crisis becoming more and more relevant, many students simply cannot afford four years of college. CIS and AP classes allow students to enter college with credits in their pocket, allowing them to save thousands of dollars and potentially graduate early. Forcing students to choose between entering the gamble of scholarships with a higher GPA or graduating with credits in their pocket is a decision that is neither necessary nor sensible.

After the meeting, Pam Miller met with district Superintendent Dr. Scott Thielman to discuss these concerns. Following this interaction, Miller held another meeting with Mischke. After these conversations, it was decided that weighted grades would be seriously discussed and considered at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year with students serving on the task force.

A task force was to be formed to "thoroughly explore both the benefits and drawbacks of the use of weighted grades, to gather stakeholder input, to formulate recommendations, and to report the findings to the school board," Pam Miller explained in an email to the student advocacy group. "[The] task force membership will include a variety of stakeholders who have the interest in

thinking critically and objectively about the topic of weighted grades... We anticipate the task force to complete their work within the school year."

Following that email, there was a lack of communication between administration and the student advocacy group. On December 18, 2023, Scherber sent a follow-up email to Miller, asking for an update on the weighted grades discussion. In response to Scherber's inquiry, Miller sent the student advocacy group an email stating that "since communicating with you back in June as a follow-up to our spring conversation, a different decision was made regarding the weighted grades topic and we did not move forward in formulating a task force."

Miller followed this statement by explaining that Mischke, Thielman, and herself met with different counselors and teachers, and they determined that "the weighted grades would not be in alignment with the core values we hold as a district." The email then went into the district's new 'Portrait of a Graduate,' and defined the values of it.

In the email, Miller went on to explain that a large portion of these conflicting values comes from the new district initiative, 'Portrait of a Graduate.' "The district's Portrait of a Graduate recently adopted includes three areas of focus describing what we want for each and every one of our graduates. Those areas are Student

Agency, Opportunity Knowledge, and Rigorous Academic Preparedness. As a part of developing student agency, the essential skills developed include building relationships, persisting through obstacles, and activating knowledge and skills. The significant number of dual enrollment courses offered at Buffalo High School serve the purpose of allowing students to persist through obstacles during a time when they have the safety nets of staff and caregiver support prior to postsecondary independent navigation. At BHS, we wish to encourage students to engage in challenging coursework in any area of interest they might have."

**"[District] Administration lied to our faces until the school year ended, and then threw it all out the window!"**

- Student advocacy group member

However, when Mischke was asked about the connection between 'Portrait of a Graduate' to the weighted GPA ordeal, he stated that there was none.

"I think it was more of a coincidence than anything. I think this will be a way for us to better find what we're trying to accomplish with all of our students from the day they start to the day they end," Mischke said.

Other reasons for rejecting weighted GPAs included the fear that weighted GPAs would add external motivation to students, while the district wishes for students to focus on the learning associated with the coursework. Critiques of this response claim that there is no difference in the external motivation in weighted or unweighted GPAs. Another issue with weighted GPAs includes deciding how to weigh different classes. After all, what criteria would make one class worth more than another class? Finally, Miller stated that "there is no universal system in the postsecondary world in the treatment of weighted grades for acceptance and/or scholarship considerations. Each university makes their own decisions on how to utilize the weighted grades or non-weighted grades calculations. The change, if there were to be one, might better be directed to the postsecondary institutions rather than the K-12 system."

Though this response led to several questions from student task force members, their emails did not receive an answer as of the time of publishing.

## Kaia Castle Begins D1 Volleyball Career at Ohio State University

**Castle's start to her collegiate career at OSU**

### STORY BY EMMERSON BREYER

While her former peers are attending high school sporting events and shopping for prom, Kaia Castle is starting her D1 career at Ohio State University. Castle had planned on pursuing volleyball post-high school for a number of years, and after balancing taking extra classes over summer break alongside playing club volleyball, Castle was able to graduate at the end of Trimester 1 to jumpstart her volleyball career.

Since third grade, volleyball has been an important part of life for Castle. Her volleyball journey started with Junior Bison, where she played until sixth grade. As she progressed, she attended camps, trained with her peers, and worked her way up to be one of the top players in the country. This path is what led Castle to an early high school graduation and a rapid start to her collegiate career.

Castle's journey to early graduation and college wasn't something to be taken lightly. Before moving to Ohio State University (OSU), Castle needed to complete all of her high school courses, both in person and online. The night before leaving for OSU, Castle was still working on completing her online courses.

"[The afternoon before leaving], I got an email from my teacher saying that I wasn't finished [with an online class]. I didn't get enough credits to pass the class, so... I did a couple of assignments on the way [to OSU]," Castle said. "But we're good. I'm here now, but it was a very stressful couple of



*Kaia Castle celebrates her commitment to Ohio State University with treats and a small party. Photo by Emmerson Breyer.*

hours trying to get that in."

Although the transition to OSU was rocky, Castle has settled in to OSU and is finding her place at the school she has chosen to spend the next four years at. Reflecting on her decision to attend OSU, Castle notes how grateful she is for the welcoming environment the team creates.

"The team has been so welcoming," Castle said. "I feel like I knew this going into it, but it just solidified my reasoning for coming here. Everyone's been super nice. It hasn't been segmented at all or cliquy which is something that I didn't want to go into, so that's why I chose Ohio State."

In addition to a welcoming environment, the intensity of the sport is something Castle is enjoying. Looking back at high school, Castle reflects on the differences between the sports in different settings.



*Castle's team at OSU gathers for a selfie. Photo courtesy of Kaia Castle.*

"I feel like I'm learning a lot more because that's kind of what spring season is about, it's breaking down mechanics and stuff," Castle said. "And it's just a higher level of volleyball too. I feel like expectations are higher, and I feel like there's a really good environment where you're allowed

to fail because we know that failing leads to progress."

Come August, the college volleyball season will begin and Castle will start her first season as a Buckeye.

For more updates on Castle and her volleyball journey, follow her on instagram @kaiacastle

## SPORTS EDITOR: ADLER NEU



### WRONG TIME AT WRIGHT TECH

The trimester switch has created an unbalanced schedule for BHS students at the Wright Technical Center who get less time there than other area schools.

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# Is Being in the Lake Conference Worth it?

## Buffalo teams persevere through frequent losses in the Lake Conference

**STORY BY KATE MIRIOVSKY AND  
ADLER NEU**

Recently the girls' basketball team played 3 conference games in a row against the top teams in the state. One game resulted in a loss by more than 50 points. This is what being in the Lake Conference looks like for some of the sports teams at Buffalo High School.

"We're in the hardest conference in the state," said Gabby Hegg '25, captain of the Buffalo Dance Team.

While the losses weigh heavy on athletes and coaches alike, from the bottom, the only place a team can go is up. This upward momentum is seen in winning games or growing a stronger mentality.

"It's allowed us to raise our level of competition, and it's allowed us to raise our level of preparation. I think a lot of times, it's natural for us as humans to get comfortable. It's definitely pushed a lot of our student athletes and coaches out of their comfort zone," said head coach of the boy's basketball team, Josh Ortman.

Switching from the Mississippi 8 to the Lake Conference was a huge jump in competition level. It was a shock many athletes and coaches weren't prepared for, but many athletes have used the challenge to make them stronger.

"I feel like it's a good challenge for us at the same time because then it like makes us strive to do better," said Kaylee Dehmer '24, captain of the gymnastics team.

The endless challenges of being in the Lake Conference have forced Buffalo teams to grow mentally, but at what point do the challenges cause more harm than good?

"It kind of changes our mindset to work harder and like gets us to put more effort into practice, but I also think it can kind of get in our heads a little bit if we're constantly losing. In a way it takes away from like the mental part of it. I ultimately think it does help us get better because we're getting challenged more and more every game," said Anya Pery '25, a member of the girl's basketball team.



*Gabby Hegg '25 strikes a pose with the dance team. Mitchell Friesz '25 defends the ball from an opposing player. Photos by Ella Kragerud.*



*A row of banners displaying the names of the Lake Conference schools and teams. Photo by Kate Miriovsky.*

Some sports teams have been able to find success in the Lake Conference, while for others, it has been a continuous struggle. Being in the Lake Conference is a challenge for all, no matter the level of success. There has been some push to switch conferences now that we are eligible and many people are questioning if the challenge of being in the Lake Conference is worth it.

"I think every one of our student athletes

deserves an opportunity to see success. When it gets continuous, and you continuously lose, and lose and lose in different areas, it can be hard. It's hard for the players, and it's hard for the coaches because it's not like anyone's going out there trying to lose," said Ortman. "Mentally, to be in a state of mind after losing a lot can be extremely difficult. That's where you got to lean on the people that you trust in buying the little victories within the games itself."

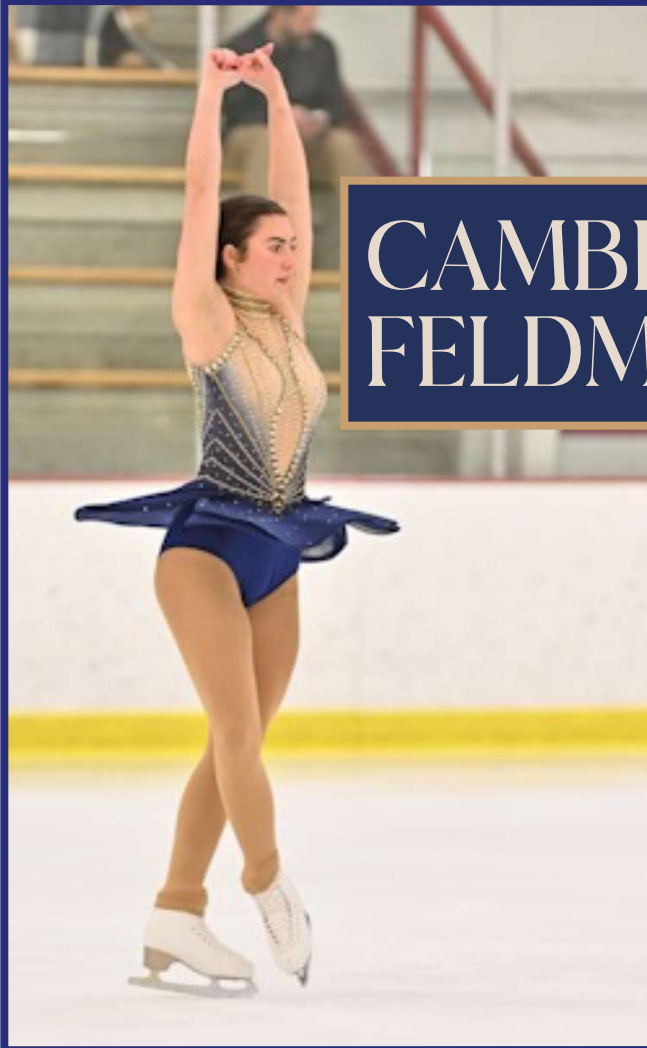
## SPOTLIGHT EDITOR THEODOR NAGEL



### INJURED PLAYERS MAKE AN IMPACT INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF SPORTS

Injuries force athletes to the sidelines, but not out of leadership roles.

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## CAMBELLE FELDMAN

**Figure skating, Track and Field, Student Council, and a rising small business, it's no doubt that Feldman is a student who involves herself fully and passionately in what she does.**

Cambelle Feldman '25, a lifelong figure skater, decided to sign up for track and field in her eighth-grade year.

"I only really wanted to do it for the 100 meters," she said. "I hated running, so I was

like, 'I don't know if I can keep doing this,'" Feldman said. As skeptical as she was, one of her friends introduced and challenged her to "shot put" (throwing a heavy metal ball as far as possible) and from there Feldman fell in love with a lesser known side of track and field.

"I signed up again freshman year for discus [throwing a heavy disc for distance] and it has been super good for me," Feldman said. "Right now I am really close to the school record." As a junior, Feldman has become a track captain and throws an impressive 115ft for discus — the school record being 125ft.

While she progresses in track and field, Feldman continues with her figure skating, performing difficult choreography and competing in different events.

"During my biggest show last year I was Michael Jackson. I got to moonwalk. Oh, it was so fun," she reminisces. "You get judged on how well you portray the character, or you have your skills event to see if you can do certain stunts. There's also an artistic part, like how graceful you can be on the ice."

With so much physical skill required for competitive skating, mentality plays a significant role, and a support network is integral. Feldman explained further, "sometimes it can be really mentally difficult, but you always have these friends around you that you've grown together with. I had a competition last weekend. It was kind of rough, because I forgot my program. When you're on the ice and you forget you're just freaking out and you're like, 'what can I do to fill this?' and a lot of it's mental. You can do the elements, but

if you're in your mind, and you think, 'oh, I can't do it', you're not going to do it."

Performing can be nerve wracking especially when things go wrong; working with others and managing teams can help bring out confidence and that's precisely what another one of Feldman's involvements, Student Council, has done for her.

"It's definitely made me more comfortable around people, and [has also] helped me focus on the people I'm comfortable with. So I can calm down just a little bit more, and just speak my emotions," Feldman said.

Free time is nice to have especially since Feldman has started her own small business painting nails, making a profit off of her love of art. "I love it [painting nails], I love taking time using tiny brushes to make small details, it's just so fun to do." Her love for art has been present for quite some time, but her business is recent development.

"I started [my business] a year ago," she explains. "I started by doing acrylic on myself, which didn't go well and it stunk. So I switched to doing dip powder, which is what I use on my clients."

Since then she's been honing her skill and reaching to be the best she can be and after a year she's confident in her ability, "I don't want to brag but I would say I go off of your reference photo better than some professional nail techs." You can find her work at @cambellez.nailz on Instagram.

**STORY BY THEODOR NAGEL**



# SPOTLIGHT

Shining a spotlight on the Bison's best



## A “Band Kid” of Note From Classical to Jazz, Senior Oliver Holt doesn’t miss a beat

**STORY BY DANIEL JUNGWIRTH**

The BHS concert band has its fair share of students determined to get the most out of their music education during their time in high school, but you’d be pressed to find somebody as involved as Oliver Holt ‘24. Holt is a drum major in marching band — returning for his second year — a member of all three jazz ensembles along with symphonic orchestra, and someone who practices regularly outside of school.

Having been in the band for this long, Holt is acutely aware of the different types of kids that enter the band program. “It’s kind of a 50/50 split because there’s the people that do all the extra clubs and activities. You’ll find the same people that do jazz in marching band and all that extra stuff,” Holt said. “Then there’s like the other group of people who aren’t really all invested in that, but they’re in band anyway.

“It’d be really cool if everyone [was in the invested group], but at the same time, it’s not that realistic. It’s kind of just an idealization of the band,” he added.

Holt attended the state send-off for Music Listening Contest, an activity in which students compete to identify classical arrangements and key facts surrounding them, on Thursday, February 8. To Holt, music is more than just any one activity he may be involved in: it’s his future.

“My final goal is to go into music education,” he explained. “The reason I’m doing it is because it’s my love for music combined with creating a community for another generation. I feel like that’d be really cool to do.”

As a teacher, Holt aims to achieve what he has already witnessed through teachers like Mr. Rabehl and Mr. Knutson (in his words: “they were definitely role models”). To him, there is a clear winner when it comes to the possible careers of musician vs. music educator:

“I think if I were to go in the direction of

being a musician, rather than a music educator, there would be a little bit more fame and fortune, but I’m not really after that. I’m after being a positive influence in other’s lives, on a smaller scale,” he said. “Knutson and Rabehl, they created this close knit community, and I want to do the same thing.”

This community aspect of the music education program is not something that Holt takes lightly. It’s part of what made him fall in love with band as a class in the first place.

“My freshman year was really weird because of COVID. I wasn’t all that invested in [band], because we never got to see each other or anything, so there wasn’t the community aspect,” he said. “When we got going full steam in my sophomore year, that’s when I really got into it.”

One major responsibility Holt took on was being the drum major for marching band his junior year. The drum major stands at the front of the band, facing them, and keeps the tempo for the band. Not only this, but the drum major serves as a role model for rookie and veteran marchers alike. It’s a necessary part of any marching band, and though he welcomed it, it came with a fair share of pressure and a steep learning curve.

“Being a drum major was like being a rookie in marching band again. It was a big learning process to learn how to be a leader. I’m not a very outgoing person by nature,” he admitted.

“I feel like being outgoing is a pretty good trait,” he added, chuckling. “[Learning to be outgoing] was more something I needed to do rather than something I wanted to do, but I’m definitely glad I did it because I felt so much more comfortable with myself.”

As far as the band program goes, “there’s a difference between band kids and kids who are in band”, as Holt says, and Holt is definitely a band kid. His ongoing commitment and determination is something that others aspire to achieve, and his accomplishments will no doubt leave a lasting legacy at BHS.

*“There’s a difference between ‘Band Kids’ and ‘Kids who are in band.’”*  
-Oliver Holt

