



The West Laurens Times



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Government Shutdown Finally Comes to a Close After 35 Long Days of Suspense

By: Bryson Ortega



At midnight on December 22nd 2018, the U.S. government (and all non-essential functions) shut down. Over 800,000 federal employees (meaning they work directly for the government), were denied pay and given the option not to come to work.. This brought functions such as the Coast Guard, TSA, prisons, the FBI, and the police force practically to their knees. But before we get into the details, there's something we have to get out of the way first. What exactly is a government shutdown? This particular government shutdown was caused when the government couldn't decide on spending plans. President Trump wanted to spend about \$5.7 billion dollars on the border wall, a proposal that was met with some resistance. Policies that were passed conflicted each other, and some government functions went unpaid during this period, sparking the shutdown. A whole 35 days later, the government, being pressured with having to compensate unpaid workers and finally come to a decision on things, was injected with three weeks worth of funding. The government may very well have a shutdown again sometime in February, but nothing is set in stone.

The Aftermath

By shutting down the government, President Trump had sought to gain funding for the border wall among other things. However, the shutdown only scored the U.S. a net loss, with \$11 billion dollars being lost. Although the money is predicted to be compensated for in the near future, the CBO (Congressional Budget Office, a federal agency) predicts around \$3 Billion dollars of GDP profit will never return to the economy. The houses are still divided on funding, and another shutdown may happen as soon as mid-February. But for now, the government is working behind closed doors.



School- Related Articles:

The School Lunch Dilemma

By: Bryson Ortega

School lunch can easily be described as an incredibly important part of any person's day. You are naturally more attentive and are in a better mood when your stomach is full, after all. However, it seems like most of the school is divided on whether or not the lunches at our school are even worth eating. It's clear that the people behind the counter are doing their best to feed us, but some of the things they are given to work with just aren't sufficient. At least, in the eyes of most the students, they are. Why is this?

We took a survey in order to determine which school lunches were the worst and the best in the eyes of their target demographic: the students. We took a total of 555 opinions from 7th grade students. Of those opinions, 14% (over 80!) said that the chicken wings were one of the best school lunches. Another 10% said that the chicken fingers were the best. Some other honorable mentions for best school lunch items include the soups, french fries, nachos, popcorn chicken, and frozen fruits. (more specifically strawberries and peaches).

There were also plenty of votes for the worst school lunch, which gives light as to why some lunches are still in such abundance at the serving line even when lunch is over. The food with the most votes was pizza. However, this isn't just the fact that its pizza. The amount of Domino's pizza bought with stamps each day shows that, it's the quality of the frozen pizza the lunch staff are given. In the opinion of the vast majority, the crust is too dry, the sauce tastes weird, and the cheese feels overly processed. The vegetable juice boxes aren't too popular either. Plenty of other people also thought that the Salisbury steak could use some work. The texture seems off, the flavor is lacking, and the pure amount of gravy masks any flavor the steak might have. One final thing that racked up plenty of votes was the sloppy joe. You can ask anybody in the hallways, they'll either say that they had it once and would never eat it again or say they have never eaten it because everyone says it's pretty gross.

Once again, this isn't at all the fault of the men and women behind the counter. I was able to get an interview with Ms. Wanda Wood the manager of the lunch staff, where she told me what working behind the counter was like. They are simply given food to prepare, instruction on how to do so, and work practically the whole school day. Every time one lunch period is over, they prepare food for the next. The people who work their hardest to feed us definitely deserve more for the hard work they put in. It's not their fault, the quality of the food is really at the mercy of the school's budget, but that doesn't mean things can't get better. However, this won't change as quickly as some of you hope. For now, at least, we'll just have to accept what we have and be thankful we're not served slop with a side of mystery meat every lunch period.

January's Teacher of the Month

By: Janiya Johnson

Mrs. Manning was excited and honored to become Teacher of the Month for January. She was selected for various reasons, including having perfect attendance, having her grades in on time, getting the pine straw for the front entrance of the school, and working on the WLN schedule for the 6th graders. She has been teaching for a grand total of 23 years. Mrs. Manning has said that her least favorite thing about teaching is the paperwork, while her favorite thing about teaching is the excitement in the kids' eyes when they have learned something new. Congratulations, Mrs. Manning!



Mrs.Manning

Schedule Change

By: Owen Bounds

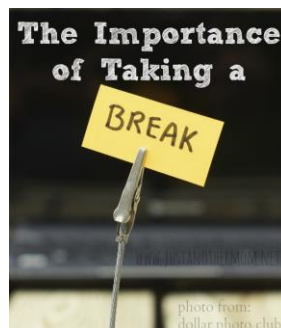
Many of us have been affected by the recent schedule change after Christmas Break. Some for the better, some for the worse; but one thing is clear. This is certainly a controversial topic. Our break has been moved to 1:20 PM instead of the 10:22 AM we had before Christmas Break. But break is not the only thing that is affected by the schedule change.

All academic classes have been cut off by about ten minutes due to WIN block. I would imagine why teachers would be unhappy about this. A solution to this could be cut a little time off students 2 connections, and possibly give it back to the academic teachers or extend WIN classes, something we feel plenty of students would be fond of. They could also change 7th grade break back to the middle of the day. The schedule change is a topic that can spark much discussion, so we asked students what their opinion was on the schedule change.

We interviewed student Jackson Jones about his opinion on the schedule change. "I felt like the original break was a bit of a breather in between the second and third classes so you could talk to your friends." We also interviewed student Kellen Culpepper about his opinion. "The original break was much better because you got more time to socialize with other people and get your things together for the next class. The new break is just before connections and only ten minutes, so you really don't get a lot of time to talk with friends or get things together for the next class."

The two students we interviewed seemed unhappy about the schedule change. But mostly because of the break change. Good, or Bad? Some believe the schedule change may be above our school, but even if we can't change it, we can always try.

The American Academy of Pediatrics states that recess or break should be a part of a student's everyday schedule, letting them wind down temporarily in order to help concentrate and be more attentive during their next class. I hope this article will influence the administration to change the break back to the middle of the day.



WLMS Lady Raiders

By: Leah Hession

The West Laurens Lady Raiders basketball team is working hard and having a successful season so far. Here are the recaps for some recent games for the Lady Raiders.

The Lady Raiders beat the Lady Irish on Thursday, January 3, 32 to 18. McKenzie Maddox led all scorers with 12 points. Sanaa Jones added six points and Kabria Coleman chipped in with 5. Other scorers were Gabby Carswell, Ty'Shiuna Hill and Caitlin Nesbitt. Kabria led the team with 4 rebounds while Tariah Tobler led the team with 7 steals, 2 assists, and 2 blocked shots.

The Lady Raiders lost a heartbreaker to the Lady Falcons in the closing minutes of the game 31 - 28 on Monday, January 7. McKenzie Maddox led all scorers with 12 points. Kabria Coleman added 5 points, and Ty'Shiuna Hill chipped in with 4. Other scorers were Toriah Tobler, Sanaa Jones, and Zion Covin. Kabria led the team with 7 rebounds, while Ty'Shiuna Hill led the team with 7 steals and 3 assists.

The Lady Raiders came from behind to beat Bleckley County 21 to 17 on Thursday, January 10. Tariah Tobler led the team with 8 points, 7 rebounds, 6 steals and 2 blocked shots. McKenzie Maddox added 6 points and 3 assists. Ty'Shiuna Hill chipped in with 4 points while Kabria Coleman scored 3 in the game.

The Lady Raiders beat Vidalia on Monday, January 14, 34 - 19. Ty'Shiuna Hill led the scoring attack with 10 points, Caitlyn Nesbitt scored 8, and McKenzie Maddox chipped in with 7. Other scorers were Toriah Tobler and Jarissa Robinson.

Come out and support the Lady Raiders, as well as the Raiders boys basketball team, as they finish out the season.



Kenzie Maddox, 23, making the first score of the game

Late Bus Issues

By: Kellen Culpepper

Recently, there have been some issues with late buses in the mornings. Northwest buses have been coming to school right before the late bell rings. I feel this gives students no time at all to have a locker break, and some do not have enough time to eat their breakfast.

Every morning I step off the bus, walk into school and then the bell rings, so I have to rush to get a breakfast and the things I need for the day. I think school buses should be early or on time.

Jackson, a student in Mrs. Karmazinas' homeroom, says he feels the same way. He says he doesn't have a lot of time to eat breakfast. An article <https://articles.extension.org> says that breakfast is the most important meal of the day and has sound science behind it. Their studies show that not eating breakfast can affect your academic scores. People who didn't eat breakfast were more likely to have "lower math scores, attention problems, and behavioral, emotional, and academic problems. Furthermore, studies show that children who are consistently or often hungry are more likely to repeat a grade." This article also states that "children themselves have reported a belief that eating breakfast increases their energy and ability to pay attention in class."

I asked Mr. Waldrep if there was a reason for the late buses. He said, "Mr. Pauldo, the director of buses, is currently checking into the reasons the NWLE express buses are running a little later. He and I have been talking about this situation."

My solution is for buses to get here 10 to 20 minutes earlier than they do now; if that were happening right now no student would have a problem. This would allow for the buses to get to NWLE earlier, and it would ensure that middle school students get to school on time and have time to get things together or to socialize.

I know the early schedule would anger some people, but it will only take some getting used to. In addition, when we take the time to fix this problem, our students will be much more focused in class. Then they can pay attention and get better grades.



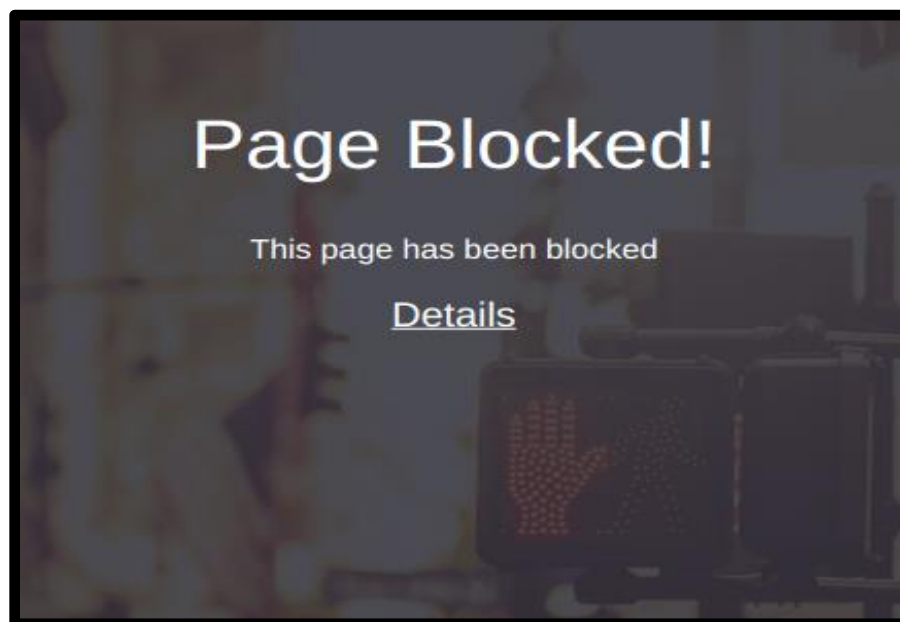
Changes To Securly

By: Jackson Jones

Have you ever been searching for a website for a paper in one of your classes, trying to find research on a topic for social studies, or even just looking for a game to play because you have free time or your teacher is letting you? In doing so, you may have only been met by the Securly page that reads, “Page Blocked! This page has been blocked.” We believe that we all have encountered the problem before and it has felt so frustrating that you just want to pull your hair out! Therefore, we feel like it may be time for a little bit of change.

Securly has been a problem for us students as a whole for over a year now, and it’s safe to say most of us think it needs a few tweaks or changes. For example, there are plenty of news websites that would be vital to our research during certain assignments, but having them blocked is forcing us to compromise. There are certainly solutions to this issue, however. For starters, a “request unblock” or some form of button like that would be a huge help to combat Securly’s over blockage. One other potential solution to such a problem would be that Securely could have an instant “Teacher Override” where the teacher can enter a school set password and override the block without the wait.

In the opinion of the vast majority, the school needs to make a few changes to their internet safety system and add some way to get through the block. We students need access to use some of the websites our teachers are suggesting. With just a few changes, Securly would benefit us instead of banning us from things we could use.



The image displayed when Securely blocks a page.

“Dress for Success”

By: Abby Amram

Dress code. Something you most likely think is unnecessary and isn't really important. As you all know, the school has recently decided to pay more attention to what their students are wearing. So here's the dress code problem for West Laurens Middle School.

The main issue is students wearing holes in jeans that are too big and too high up their leg. The student handbook says that holes in jeans must be below the required shorts length, which is top of the knee when standing, and acceptable in size. I, along with many others, want the rule to be that holes in jeans should come below your wrist or fingertips. Any holes above your wrist should be patched.

Another issue is that students want to wear leggings with shirts that don't meet the requirements. The rule is that your shirt must come down midway between your fingertips and the top of the knee. I personally think that the rule should be that shirts must come to at least your wrist. Student Cadence Ryals agreed and commented, “If we wear leggings we should not be forced to wear a shirt that goes to our knees, our legs are not a distraction. I think as long as it covers our bottom, then the administration shouldn't have to worry over it.”

A lot of girl students and I think that the “shoulder rule” is too strict. The school believes that your shirt sleeves must be at least three fingers wide or measuring about 2 inches. Here's some comments about the school's rule. “Nobody is going to look at our shoulders and be like, ‘Oh wow look at her shoulders!’” I believe that guys don't see girl's shoulders as a distraction. We think the rule should be that the sleeves should be two fingers wide or $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

“It shouldn't matter about dress code. They put more attention to dress code than other things.” Laliah Coneway told me. She thinks that the school should not care so much about what we're wearing and focus on more important things. Students and I think some parts of the dress code are unnecessary, but I know that West Laurens Middle just wants to keep our learning environment a positive one.



