

The



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As COVID Rates Decline, Hybrid Learning Begins on March 9

By Jenny Aguilar

Fenton has just announced that beginning on Tuesday, March 9 hybrid learning will commence for students who chose to participate in a survey released last semester. This decision did not come lightly, with months of discussion and planning between teachers, administrators, and community members.

At the start of remote learning in March 2020, a group of teachers came together to discuss and revise elements of both remote and hybrid learning. Ms. Jennifer Selucky, one of those teachers explains that process, saying, "We began [hybrid learning] conversations rather early on too, hoping that we could come back to teach students in person as soon as it was safe to do so. I think those conversations about hybrid learning began over the summer."

With the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, Fenton began the school year virtually in August, with the hopes of beginning hybrid learning on September 14. However, that target date continued being pushed back, leaving students and staff in remote learning for the entirety of the first semester.

An all-remote school schedule has taken a toll on many students. Sophomore Adarsh Patel describes the mental effects of remote learning: "My grades are good, but [my] mental health has been getting worse, due to limited socializing."

Aware of these challenges, many teachers have incorporated daily check-ins and individual student conferences to get a better gauge of students' academic and emotional thoughts. On December 7, Fenton began allowing a limited number of students to go to the building for supervised remote learning and after-school tutoring. The second semester began with classes beginning at 8:30 am to 12:30 pm with two 30 minute classes in the afternoon. This change was mainly due to the possibility of starting hybrid learning later in the semester.

That possibility has turned into a reality. Principal Jovan Lazarevic gives an insight into how this decision came into fruition: "FHS has been extremely careful since last March to ensure the safety of all stakeholders. As we saw the metrics in DuPage county trend downward for several weeks and with Mr. Ongtengco securing the vaccine for FHS and surrounding communities we worked with the different staff groups to find an appropriate date for everyone to come back. March 9th was the date we agreed upon."

All students will attend their Monday classes remotely. On March 9, students with IEPs, English Language Learners, and freshmen who chose to will begin hybrid learning, followed by sophomores, juniors, and seniors on March 16. Students with last names beginning with A-L will attend in-person classes for two days of the week, then students with last names beginning M-Z will attend the remaining two days. About 180 students are expected to be in the building each day along with teachers and staff.

Despite choosing to remain in remote learning, Junior Evelyn Perez recognizes the benefits for students attending in-person classes, saying, "Under the right circumstances,

I believe that hybrid learning is great! Some people work better in a classroom setting, and I completely understand this."

One of the primary concerns among the community is how participants will be kept safe.

Lazarevic addresses these worries, stating, "FHS has had a safety committee since the fall reviewing guidance from Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Department of Health, DuPage County Department of Health, and the Center for Disease Control. Some of the precautions are students will remain six feet apart, we will have directional sides of the hallway--like driving--, no lunches, no congregating before or after school, no lockers, no changing for P.E., a limited number of students per classroom, screening stations as student enter the building, maintaining the current schedule with morning sessions in the building and all afternoon sessions remote."

Along with health concerns, many teachers are focused on making sure students are able to receive adequate instruction, now considering the need to teach both in-person and remote students during the same class period.

The President of the Fenton Education Association, Mr. Patrick

Escobedo, illustrates the constant need for teachers to adapt to each new circumstance: "We want to deliver the best education we can to our students. We have spent the last year learning to adapt to remote learning, and now comes the new challenge of teaching remotely in a class with live students in the mix. There are concerns about everything from how to teach over a Google Meet with a mask on effectively, to how to replicate the technological setups people have developed in their homes back in the classroom, to concerns about how to continue trying to find solutions for kids who have truly struggled over the past year."

Selucky reveals that "teachers have been instructed to continue to provide all instruction through the computer still so that all students receive the same instruction and can be a part of the community with their classmates no matter where they choose to learn."

She also alludes to possible changes made to afternoon classes, saying, "I imagine my afternoon sessions and office hours might end up being tailored to accommodate more individual needs, but I don't think we will have to change a lot to accommodate both groups since the delivery will remain as it is now."

Among students, staff, and administrators is an anxious, yet excited feeling surrounding the start of hybrid learning. Senior Lauren Kissane will be participating in hybrid learning, saying, "Remote learning has been rough for me, especially since it's my senior year. It has been harder for me to focus on my work, especially with so many distractions at home. I feel excited for hybrid learning to start. I would love to go back to class so I can experience the little time I have left in high school in the building."

Coming up on a full year since beginning remote learning last school year, many are hopeful that this is the first step towards returning to life before the pandemic.

IN-PERSON HYBRID SCHEDULE					
	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	Live Connection All Remote Day	Orange: On Campus for Morning Session Blue: Live Connection All Day All-Remote: Live Connection All Day	Orange: On Campus for Morning Session Blue: Live Connection All Day All-Remote: Live Connection All Day	Blue: On Campus for Morning Session Orange: Live Connection All Day All-Remote: Live Connection All Day	Blue: On Campus for Morning Session Orange: Live Connection All Day All-Remote: Live Connection All Day
MORNING SESSION	0 Hour: 8:10-8:30 Period 1: 8:30-8:50 Period 2: 8:50-9:10 Period 3: 9:10-9:30 Period 4: 9:30-9:50 Period 5: 9:50-10:10 Period 6: 10:10-10:30 Period 7: 10:30-10:50 Period 8: 10:50-11:10 Bison Time: 11:20-12:00	0 Hour: 7:30-8:25 Period 4: 8:30-9:25 Period 3: 9:30-10:25 Period 2: 10:30-11:25 Period 8: 11:30-12:25	Period 5: 8:30-9:25 Period 1: 9:30-10:25 Period 7: 10:30-11:25 Period 6: 11:30-12:25	0 Hour: 7:30-8:25 Period 4: 8:30-9:25 Period 3: 9:30-10:25 Period 2: 10:30-11:25 Period 8: 11:30-12:25	Period 5: 8:30-9:25 Period 1: 9:30-10:25 Period 7: 10:30-11:25 Period 6: 11:30-12:25
	LUNCH	LUNCH/ Student Dismissal	LUNCH/ Student Dismissal	LUNCH/ Student Dismissal	LUNCH/ Student Dismissal
AFTERNOON SESSION	Support: 12:45-1:45 (if assigned) Asynchronous Work Time: 1:45-3:15	ALL REMOTE Period 5: 1:30-2:00 Period 1: 2:00-2:30 Office Hours/ Asynchronous Work Time: 2:30-3:15	ALL REMOTE Period 4: 1:30-2:00 Period 3: 2:00-2:30 Office Hours/ Asynchronous Work Time: 2:30-3:15	ALL REMOTE Period 6: 1:30-2:00 Period 7: 2:00-2:30 Office Hours/ Asynchronous Work Time: 2:30-3:15	ALL REMOTE Period 8: 1:30-2:00 Period 2: 2:00-2:30 Period 0: 2:30 - 3:00 Office Hours/ Asynchronous Work Time: 2:30-3:15

Story Behind Black History Month, Unknown Achievements

By Jenny Aguilar

February marks the start of Black History Month with this year's theme being "The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity." The tragic deaths of individuals such as George Floyd and Breonna Taylor ignited a fire in the hearts of many American citizens, prompting nationwide Black Lives Matter Protests and a rise in more people wanting to inform themselves about one of the most important races in our history. This desire to teach and learn can be traced to the origin of Black History Month.

In 1915, Carter G. Woodson, a University of Chicago alumni, joined thousands of other African Americans to view a Chicago exhibition featuring Black history, in honor of the 50th anniversary of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. This event prompted Woodson to create the Association for the Study of Negro Life, now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). With this organization, Woodson was successful in creating Negro History and Literature Week, later renamed Negro Achievement Week, in 1924, and finally culminating in Negro History Week in February 1926.

Prior to this week-long festivity, February was already filled with celebrations in commemoration to Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglas, two of the most influential people in Black history, as their birthdays fall on February 12 and 20 respectively. However, Woodson wanted this new tradition to be about more than just two people, but rather extend towards a whole race's accomplishments and innovations in society.

The 1920s was filled with major moments in African American history. The Great Migration, which began in 1910 and continued throughout the 1920s, saw the movement of millions of African Americans from the rural South to the more industrialized North. This movement helped initiate a period of time

known as the "Harlem Renaissance" which brought about the fame of Black artists, musicians, writers, and actors. People such as writer Langston Hughes and musician Duke Ellington showed people of all races the accomplishments of African Americans. Jamaican Marcus Garvey introduced the idea of Black pride and self-respect, an idea that would resonate with generations to come.

Many African Americans looked for resources to learn more about the new Black culture, causing Woodson and the organization to provide more materials for teachers to teach their students. Woodson pushed for people to continue learning outside of the designated week, hoping for continual learning of Black history throughout the whole year.

However, the 1940s showed a slowdown in individuals studying Black history. In some schools, Black history became a separate class from U.S. history, and some teachers in the South were forced to hide textbooks from Woodson for fear of administration consequences. Nonetheless, teachers continued to educate students on Black history, using those lessons as a way to promote social change.

The transition from Black History Week to Black History Month can be dated back to 1940s West Virginia, but it didn't reach national prominence until the 1960s with activist Fredrick H. Hammaurabi. Hammaurabi used his cultural center to highlight the association of African consciousness with the black past. Soon, many Black college students became aware of this connection, beginning the evolution to Black History Month. Soon, the ASALH officially changed to a month-long celebration. In 1976, President Gerald Ford was the first president to officially recognize Black History Month, a tradition done by every succeeding president.

To continue Woodson's original idea, this issue of *The Signal* features six African Americans who are overlooked by history but have accomplished incredible achievements in our society.

Bayard Rustin: Civil Rights Leader

By Jenny Aguilar

Bayard Rustin was a key man in the Civil Rights movement, helping to organize the famous March on Washington. Born on March 17, 1912, Rustin was primarily raised by his grandparents who taught him Quaker values. As a teenager, Rustin came out to his family as gay, being accepted by his family but not society.

Throughout the forties, Rustin's continued to protest segregation, even ending up in jail for 26 months while angering authorities.

In 1948, Rustin visited India and was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's teachings. Rustin introduced these ideas to Dr. King during the 1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott. However, fears of false rumors of a romantic relationship between King and Rustin caused a divide.

Rustin continued to be involved in the Civil Rights movement, being recruited to help organize the 1963 March on Washington. However, the NAACP refused to publicly recognize his contributions.

While Rustin's crucial involvement went unnoticed, he continued to fight for rights, expanding to international causes. In the 1980s, after officially opening up about his sexuality, Rustin brought the NAACP's attention to the AIDS epidemic. 26 years after his death on August 24, 1987, President Barack Obama awarded Rustin the Presidential Medal of Freedom.



Photo from Flickr.com

Claudette Colvin: Equality Pioneer

By Michelle Agyemang

Most people know of Rosa Parks: the woman who challenged the law by refusing to give up her seat on a bus. However, very few people know about Claudette Colvin, who did the same law-defying act months before Parks.

On March 2, 1955, fifteen-year-old Colvin took the bus home from her school in Montgomery, Alabama. The bus driver ordered Colvin and three other black students to move to the back of the bus to make room for a white passenger. After learning about the Constitution and Jim Crow laws in school, Colvin refused, saying she paid her fare and it was her constitutional right to remain in her seat. She was charged with violating segregation laws, misconduct, and resisting arrest, which left her feeling that she would never achieve her career goals.

Civil rights leaders fought her arrest and tried to find a way to end bus segregation. In 1956, the black community reached their goal when Colvin stood as one of the four black women who were harassed on the bus and became plaintiffs in the case *Browder v. Gayle*, which declared bus



Photo from Wikimedia Commons

segregation a violation of the fourteen amendment. This act, consequently, overturned bus segregation in Alabama.

Colvin decided to stay out of the limelight, believing that the older and connected civil rights activist Rosa Parks would make a better face. Nonetheless, Colvin's act created a change in the civil rights movement that will be remembered forever.

Dr. Patricia Era Bath: Ophthalmologist, Inventor, Humanitarian

By Jenny Aguilar

Dr. Patricia Era Bath not only invented the first laser-based surgery to remove cataracts but also helped expand primary eye care to impoverished communities. Born on November 4, 1942, Bath first took an interest in science at age 16 when she was selected by the National Science Foundation to participate in a summer program at Yeshiva University. After completing high school in 2 ½ years, Bath went to Hunter College in New York and studied chemistry and physics, later obtaining her graduate degree at Howard University where

she formed and became the first President of the Student National Medical Association. Later, she began pediatric research in Yugoslavia where she became interested in care for the underprivileged. While interning at Harlem Hospital and having a fellowship in ophthalmology at Columbia, Bath became aware of the contrast in care based on economic factors, most notably that Harlem had a higher number of individuals who were visually impaired or blind. After being the first African American resident in ophthalmology at New York University and the first woman

appointed to the faculty of UCLA Jules Stein Eye Institute, Bath helped form the American Institute for the Prevention of Blindness in 1976, which aimed to provide primary eye care worldwide. Then, in 1981, Bath began working on inventing a laser-based surgical device to remove cataracts. The final invention, named Laserphaco, used small irrigation and aspiration tubes along with a one-millimeter laser incision to wash, remove, and replace the cataract. Bath died on May 30, 2019, but spent her whole life extending primary eye care to everyone.



Photo from Wikimedia Commons

Dr. Charles Richard Drew: Surgeon, Educator, Researcher, Innovator



Photo from Wikimedia Commons

By Michelle Agyemang

America's national blood bank system should be credited to Dr. Charles Richard Drew. Drew revolutionized medicine in America forever by pioneering methods of storing plasma for blood transfusions and organizing the nation's first blood bank.

Despite growing up in an African-American community during racial segregation, Drew was able to go to an excellent public school and attend Amherst College. After the death of his sister, Drew's interest in medical sciences peaked. Although admitted to Harvard, Drew decided to receive his medical education at McGill University, partly because of

their better treatment of minorities.

In 1940, just as World War II began in Europe, Drew was asked to direct the Blood for Britain project, created in response to Britain's need for blood and plasma to treat wounded soldiers and civilians. Drew created uniform procedures and standards for collecting blood and plasma samples at participating hospitals. A few months later, the American Red Cross appointed Drew as the director of the first Red Cross Blood Bank. Drew would create his career-defining innovation mobile blood donation stations, called "bloodmobiles."

However, Drew's reign in the military was tragically short-lived

when the armed forces made a policy that restricted African-Americans from donating blood. Drew publicly protested against the policy, calling it "unscientific" and "insulting to African-Americans." Drew spent the next years of his life working as a leading surgeon and faculty member at Howard University College of Medicine. Drew changed medical education for all future generations saying, "We believe that the Negro in the field of physical sciences has not only opened a small passageway to the outside world, but is carving a road in many untrod areas, along which later generations will find it more easy to travel."

Jacob Lawrence: Historic Painter

by Jenny Aguilar

Jacob Lawrence was born on September 7, 1917. At 12 years old he began attending an after-school arts and crafters program directed by Harlem artist Charles Alston. During his junior year of high school,



Photo from Wikimedia Commons

Lawrence dropped out to support his family during the Great Depression.

Throughout the 1930s, Lawrence flourished his artistic ability under the mentorship of Henry Bannarn and Augusta Savage. In 1940, Lawrence began his 60 panel series *The Migration of the Negro* which depicted the Great Migration of African Americans from the South to the North. At 24 years old, Lawrence became the first Black artist sponsored by a prominent New York Gallery.

In 1943, he joined the U.S. Coast Guard. Here, Lawrence was promoted to combat artist, becoming the official Coast Guard painter. In the late 1940s, Lawrence became psychologically depressed, eventually going to Hillside Hospital ad from 1949 to 1950.

Lawrence died on June 9, 2000, having spent his entire life depicting the lives of famous African Americans and eventually becoming one of those African Americans celebrated for his achievements.

Shirley Chilsom: Trailblazing Politician

By Michelle Agyemang

Shirley Anita St. Hill Chilsom, born on November 30, 1924, in Brooklyn, NY, was the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Congress and the first to run for president from a major political party. Chilsom's campaign motto, "Unbought and Unbossed," was evident through her work in advocacy for women and minority rights. While being an education consultant in New York, Chisholm became active with community and political groups like the NAACP and her local Democratic Unity Club. Chisholm was later elected to the New York state legislature, being the second African-American to serve in the state.

Chilson ran and won a seat in Congress, where she took a strong liberal stance earning her the name "Fighting Shirley." Fighting Shirley would fight for over 50 pieces of legislation that would advocate for racial and gender equality, the end of the Vietnam War, and low-income families. Chilson faced many challenges while seeking 1972



Photo from Flickr.com

Presidential Democratic nomination, most notably being blocked from participating in televised primary debates, but still earned 10% of the primary vote. Chisholm retired from Congress in 1983, leaving a lasting legacy of change for both women and people of color.

Amanda Gorman Inspires Justice, Equality Through Poetry

By Sarah Guerrero

"I am the daughter of Black writers. We are descended from freedom fighters who broke their chains and changed the world. They call me." Those are the words Amanda Gorman, the youngest inaugural poet in U.S. history and first National Youth Poet Laureate repeats as she prepares to recite a poem.

Twenty-two-year-old Amanda Gorman, born and raised in Los Angeles, is no stranger to the beauty of poetry, for she fell in love with the artistic language at a young age. From writing in journals at the playground to drawing inspiration from poets like Yusef Komunyakaa, Phillis Wheatley, Tracy K. Smith, Maya Angelou, and Sonia Sanchez, Gorman quickly distinguished herself and her talent, spending every waking moment writing, her work often surrounding topics she is passionate about, like race and feminism.

Gorman, a Harvard 2020 graduate, captured the attention of millions worldwide with her poem, "The Hill We Climb", which she performed at President Joe Biden's inauguration on January 20th. Dr. Jill Biden had discovered her work, soon making Gorman her number one choice for inaugural poet, and soon afterward, Gorman was notified that she had been chosen to present this year's inaugural poem. The poem, which highlighted the need of "uniting with purpose" as our country moved onto a new chapter, came together the night of January 6th: the attack on the Capitol and the attack on democracy. Gorman knew she could not address the nation and gloss over the dark era of our country, so she went on and spoke the truths she believed we, the American people, needed to hear. "We've seen a force that would shatter our nation rather than share it. Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy. And this effort very nearly succeeded. But while democracy can be periodically delayed, it can never be permanently defeated," reads a section of the poem.

In a conversation with Michelle Obama for *Time* magazine, Gorman continues her call for unity and justice, saying "To me, unity without a sense

of justice, equality and fairness is just toxic mob mentality. Unity that actually moves us toward the future means that we accept our differences—we embrace them and we lean into that diversity. It's not linking arms without questioning what we're linking arms for. It's unity with purpose."

In that same interview, Gorman speaks about how she has used writing as a tool to help her overcome her speech impediment over the years. "For a long time, I looked at it as a weakness. Now I really look at it as a strength because going through that process, it made me a writer, for one, because I had to find a form in which I could communicate other than through my mouth, and two, when I was brave enough to try to take those words from the page onto the stage, I brought with me this understanding of the complexity of sound, pronunciation, emphasis," she says.

On February 7th, Gorman also became the first to recite a poem at the Super Bowl. Her original poem, "Chorus of Captains" honors and celebrates 3 heroes during the COVID-19 pandemic: Marine veteran James Martin, who works with at-risk children and the Wounded Warrior Project, Trinaime David, a Los Angeles educator who goes above and beyond to help his students succeed in school and life, and Suzie Dorner, an ICU nurse manager who risks her life everyday at the frontline to save the lives of others.

The stories of these 3 warriors remind us "that even in tragedy, hope is possible," and that we celebrate these captains "by acting with courage and compassion, by doing what is right and just. For while we honor them today, it is they who every day honor us."

With her two new books, *Change Sings* and *The Hill We Climb and Other Poems* set to release in September of 2021, Gorman reminds us she is not yet finished with her campaign for social justice, ending her interview by saying, "I'm learning that I am not lightning that strikes once. I am the hurricane that comes every single year, and you can expect to see me again soon."

Fenton Administers Over 1500 Covid-19 Vaccines to Community

By Olivia Markowski

On January 29th, 2021, Fenton teachers and staff members received their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, hosted by Fenton High School. While this vaccine was offered, it was not mandatory for all to receive. Almost 1,500 staff members were provided with the vaccine, and along with Fenton's staff, the vaccine was also provided to teachers and staff members at Bensenville School District 2 and Wood Dale School District 7, teachers and staff at NDSEC, the special education cooperative Fenton is part of, and employees of the Village of Bensenville and City of Wood Dale, Bensenville and Wood Dale Public Library, and Bensenville and Wood Dale Park District.

Jewel-Osco pharmacy directed Fenton in giving out the Pfizer vaccine, which is a vaccine that requires two separate doses. For these staff members, their first dose was taken on January 29th, and after about three weeks, they will all return and receive the second dose.

On the day that the government announced the eligibility for educators and municipal workers to get vaccinated, Fenton was already very organized with the plan they were going to take. Other schools were still planning and reviewing criteria for the very first time, while Fenton was ready to go, and were already vaccinating their staff members.

During the vaccination event, Fenton strived to keep the school very safe for each individual by coordinating a one-way traffic system throughout the whole building. Everyone had to enter through Door 1 and sign in, followed by the waiting area in the front gym, the vaccination stations in the field house that then lead to an observation area in the cafeteria, and finally, the exit out of Door 2. To make sure everything went as smoothly as possible, medical professionals were at Fenton just in case.

Mrs. Kimberly Miltz, a Fenton Science teacher, shares her experience by stating, "Fenton did an excellent job orchestrating the vaccine roll-out. The process was well laid out and efficient, from scheduling your first appointment and filling out the required paperwork, to the check-in at Fenton and then receiving the shot. Communication was also great throughout the entire process. My own personal experience included feeling perfectly fine immediately after the first shot, but the following day I did have arm soreness, chills, an all-day headache and exhaustion. I laid down for just a few minutes and ended up waking up 4 1/2 hours later!"

After the first vaccination event, Mr. Ontengco expressed, "We are one family. We all serve the same loving and compassionate residents, I applaud my counterparts at District 2, District 7, and our municipalities for organizing their teams on such short notice. Thank you to the District 100 Board of Education for giving me wide latitude to act fast on this initiative."

And because the vaccination event happened so smoothly, Mr. Patel and Jewel Osco had asked if Fenton could host a community vaccination event. Mr. Ongtengco agreed to let this event happen again, but only if it was aimed to be distributed to members of our community.

The Village of Bensenville and the City of Wood Dale then worked together with Mr. Ongtengco to register the next group of residents and frontline workers for the vaccination who may have missed the event on January 29th. Fenton had them shorten the event held on February 13th to help with senior citizens who were less mobile.

During the process of setting up the next vaccination event, The Bensenville Community Public Library stepped in and created a call center for people who may have questions about the event.

Several other staff members at Fenton had also worked to help with the scheduling, setup, and helped facilitate many of the stations at the actual event that was now held in the front gym.

Mr. Kambic shares the process of how Fenton was able to be involved with the second vaccination event by explaining, "This opportunity occurred as the federal and state governments were about to transition into the next stage of eligibility. Superintendent James Ongtengco and Principal Jovan Lazarevic routinely monitor updates and investigate possible new opportunities. In this case, Mr. Ongtengco had heard about the possible shift and he made dozens of "cold calls" to different health care providers to see if what he heard was true. Some of them didn't know, while others verified what he heard but told Mr. Ongtengco that their company wasn't ready. Then Mr. Ongtengco made contact with Mr. Ronak Patel, one of Jewel-Osco's pharmacy district managers. As soon as Mr. Patel said Jewel-Osco was able to provide vaccines, Mr. Ongtengco and Mr. Lazarevic worked nonstop to build a floor plan for an event at our school and to rally our staff to see who was interested in being vaccinated. Mr. Ongtengco made sure to adapt what Fenton was planning in order to comply with every rule and to avoid any potential problems. Jewel-Osco was so impressed and the process was working so well that it became possible to include other organizations."

As these events were a huge success in our community, Mr. Ongtengco expresses his gratitude for everyone's help by sharing, "Thank you a million times over to Mr. Patel and Mr. Clark from Jewel Osco Pharmacy, and thank you to all of our truly dedicated staff members who put themselves on the front line of these vaccination events. We have received an overwhelming amount of heartfelt thank yous from all across our communities. These efforts are saving lives and decreasing the spread of COVID in our communities."



Photo courtesy of Patrick Escobedo

Fenton District Continues Development of New Equity Plan

By Michelle Agyemang

The summer of 2020 caused many large institutions, like schools, to reflect on their way of dealing with bias and discrimination against marginalized groups. Being an array of cultures and backgrounds, Fenton has had to face this issue for far longer.

Having equity in schools ensures that all students will have a fair chance at a quality education. Social science teacher, Ranjana Radrendran, commented on the necessity of equity, saying, "Equity has always been a really strong motivation for me to be in education. I believe that everyone has the potential to achieve great things... But, without access to the same things, we are unable to achieve the potential we're able to get. We [deny] ourselves so many things when we don't give all individuals the ability

to succeed and reach their potential." Over the past several years, Fenton has worked on improving equity through programs, such as social-emotional learning, culturally relevant teaching, personalized learning, and Equal Opportunity Schools.

Michelle Papanicolaou, director of curriculum and instruction, says, "Fenton was already working toward "equity" before I arrived, and because we believe wholeheartedly in the importance of it, our team continues to move the work forward and grow it...The students spend most of their waking hours in our classrooms and extra-curricular activities. We have to ensure this is a safe and engaging place for everybody, especially students who identify with minoritized populations."

Last school year, Fenton wanted to take a more systemic approach to equity, to further its

impact inside the school. They started by forming the District Equity Leadership Team, (DELT), which is a team of teachers and administrators who create professional development on bringing more equity into classrooms. The school also hired an equity expert and started putting effort towards an Equity Action Plan. Before actual development of a plan, Dr. Ivette Dubiel, an equity consultant, formed an audit where she invited students, families and staff members to share their experiences about equity at Fenton. Dubiel also analyzed information like disciplinary referrals, grades, attendance, and SAT scores. She then shared her findings and recommendations to DELT, so that they could begin developing an action plan.

Forming DELT and getting quantitative data from community members was just the beginning of

action plan development. Currently, Fenton wants to work on providing a safe environment for all people at Fenton. "Our focus right now is on ensuring an anti-racist and anti-bias environment at Fenton. We are learning about it as a staff and considering how to engage all people who enter this building, including our students, in this effort. We are not only thinking about racial equity, but also trying to be targeted about equity for our students who are impacted by socioeconomic status, ethnicity, immigration status, gender identity, and sexual orientation," says Papanicolaou.

The school hopes to finish its plan by the end of this school year. During the summer, they plan to present it to the board of education and community, with hopes of implementing it in the fall of next school year.

Speech Team Ends Their Season, Wins 7th Overall at State Tournament

By Olivia Baran

The Speech team has been progressing very well during e-learning. Although times have been quite tough during this time, the Speech team has showcased nothing but perseverance and positivity.

Coach Ms. Nicole Hendricks states, "Fenton speech won the Upstate Eight Conference title for the second year in a row. We took second place at regionals with 5 tournament champions. Our Performance in the Round directed by Carolina Rosas and Chris Kovich won the plaque for first place at regionals."

After doing exceptionally well at regionals, four students moved on to the state tournament: Alexander Pizzaro, Carolina Rosas, Karissa Lara, and Evelyn Perez. Carolina Rosas placed 6th at the final round of state in Humorous Interpretation. Karissa Lara also advanced to the final round of state and won both of her events, Informative Speaking and Poetry Reading, making her the first double state champion since 1994.

Hendricks describes these members performances saying,

"Karissa Lara, Carolina Rosas, Alex Pizarro, and Evelyn Perez share their voices with such confidence, heart, and authenticity that we know they will just 'own the room' at state this year. Alex expounds on the dangers of blind patriotism in his original oratory, Evelyn convinces her audience to embrace the younger generation and their strong voices despite ageism in her special occasion speech, Karissa lyrically expresses the pain and progress of women in her poetry, and Karissa informs us of the many ways CBD is used in her informative, Carolina embodies the character Rebecca who discovers her own truth and dares to fearlessly love another woman in a world that doesn't always accept the LGBTQIA community in her dramatic interpretation, and Carolina comically embodies Micah's relatable struggles as a teenager who procrastinates on writing her Great Gatsby essay and finds herself tempted by the rabbit hole of internet distractions."

Speech team member, Carolina Rosas shares, "Speech this year has definitely been different.

Every individual had to find motivation from their homes to compete virtually every weekend. Every piece has a voice, we just happen to be it. Although I do miss having speech in person, I was definitely tested this season. I learned to find joy in small things, be easier on myself when I mess up, and to just breathe. We might not have been in the same room, but we were on the same team. Speech is what you make of it, and for me, speech was great. The coaches were understanding and supportive through it all."

The Speech team has shown such immense dedication as they continue to progress during the pandemic. There truly is such an amazing bond created between the coaches and Speech members. However, an online setting can prove to have challenges of its own.

Member Emanie Kashif says, "Some challenges that our team faces due to remote learning, is not being able to perform in front of our teammates, to get extra assistance, and also we don't get peer coaching from other teammates. That's a big

struggle that our team faces."

It is so vital to be around your teammates as you perform. In-person human interaction is something that many of us crave. Missing out on that extra support from your teammates can really be a struggle.

Hendricks states, "Our only challenge is making sure we have a strong Wi-Fi connection. We all miss the personal connection time that speech provides us to bond with our teammates, so we generally have a drop in Google Meet on our competition days to create the "cafeteria table" hang outs we would have in real life. This has been one way our team stays connected with one another."

Seeking a sense of normalcy is so vital during this time, especially when most of us are deprived of interactions with friends/teammates. The Speech team has endured various challenges and changes due to the pandemic; however, it is so inspiring to see how motivated the coaches and Speech members were to continue their season and make their fellow Bison proud.



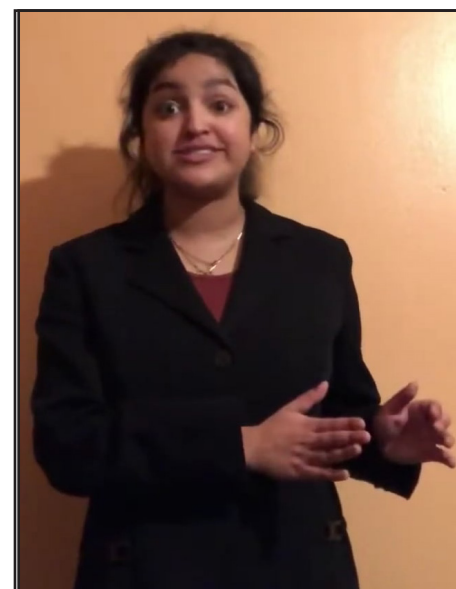
Junior Carolina Rosas



Junior Alex Pizzaro



Junior Karissa Lara



Junior Evelyn Perez

FCCLA Perseveres Through Remote Learning, Students Qualify for State

By Michelle Agyemang

Fenton's own FCCLA (Family Careers & Community Leaders of America) did a fantastic job at their virtual section competition on February 5th. Five students competed in the "Children Literature" portion of the sectional, where they performed a presentation based on a children's book of their choice to a panel of judges. Seniors John Quinto and Lizbeth Ramirez did excellent, scoring perfect 100's, with Ramirez taking home the "Most Outstanding Award."

When asked what it felt like to win the "Most Outstanding Award" Ramirez said, "I was honestly shocked I never expected the award! I guess my singing was okay after all. In all seriousness, I was super proud and I felt one step closer to reaching my dream of becoming an early

childhood educator."

Senior Coral Roque and Juniors Alexa Toledo and Yamileth Morales also scored exceptionally well in the upper 90's.

For the past few weeks, FCCLA members have been working extremely hard to get ready for the sectional competition. "Students had to pick a children's story and plan out how they would present their story. They prepared by writing a formal lesson plan, created their own props (felt board pieces, puppets, costume pieces, etc.), memorized their story, and practiced a lot!" says sponsor Kellie Engle.

The team was able to meet, in-person at Fenton the day of the competition. They prepared and practiced for their presentations, which was a stark contrast to how they practice. "I am really proud of how

well everyone did with the challenges we had with being remote. Everyone took the initiative to prepare and practice at home when normally we would be together in person."

Being completely virtual has changed the environment of FCCLA for Alexa Toledo, saying, "A big part of FCCLA was interacting with other club members, I missed the interaction with the other competitors. [At] competitions, you had the opportunities to meet new people and see other people's talents from all over Illinois."

All students mentioned above will be moving onto the state competition taking place in early April. Toledo commented on her win to state, saying, "Making it to the state has definitely been a fantastic accomplishment...All of the hard work leading up to the competition

has definitely paid off, from the late nights of rehearsing to the stressful day of the competition."



Photo courtesy of Kellie Engle

Chinese New Year 2021: Year of the Ox, Golz Shares Traditional Craft

By Jadyn Golz

We hoped that 2021 would be different - a fresh start to put all of that COVID-19 stuff behind us. Well, for now at least, COVID-19 is still around and thriving. Some of you may have gotten great gains out of 2021 and others may have not. But for the latter there's hope. Let me introduce you to my second New Year, Chinese New Year.

The Chinese New Year Celebration lasts for 16 days and culminates this year on the 26th with the Lantern Festival. The 12th is the Spring Festival and is formally the date of Chinese New year. Although we don't get any work or school off in the US, China gets the first seven days of celebration off.

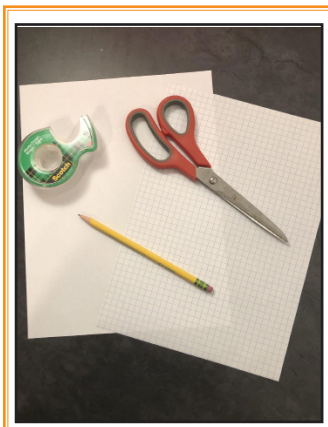
As me and my family are able, we celebrate as much as we can. We all wear red, we eat Chinese food (do NOT cut your noodles - it signifies a shorter lifespan), and we spend time together. It's one of my favorite holidays and I look forward to it every year.

This year is the year of the ox. In the Chinese Myth of the Zodiac (at least in my favorite telling), the Jade Emperor hosted a party and the order in which the animals came depicts the order they come in the Zodiac. The Ox was doing very well and was in first place. Along his journey to the party, the ox stopped to help out the rat. But just as they were reaching the finish line, the rat jumped off of the ox and the ox became 2nd with the rat becoming the first.

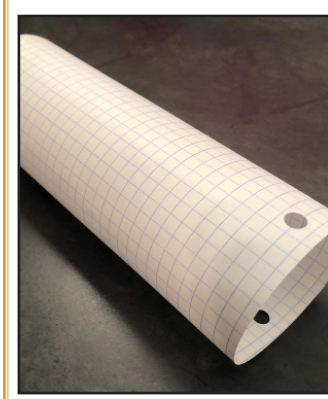
Oxen are valued in Chinese culture because of their role in agriculture. Traits such as being hard-working and honest are also associated with the Ox. If someone was born in 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, or this year (2021), their Chinese Zodiac is an Ox. As mentioned before, Oxen are hard-working. They're modest and earnest, rarely searching for praise. Although never seeking it, oxen can gain recognition through their actions. Lucky colors

for an ox include yellow, blue, and green and the numbers 1 and 4 are lucky. But watch out for red, brown, and 3, and 6 as they're unlucky.

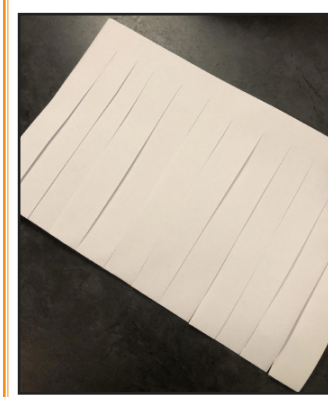
Although, at the time of publication, this celebration will be over you can still celebrate. Here's a quick and easy craft that I learned when I was very young: Paper Lanterns!



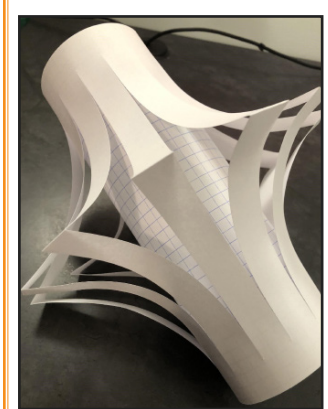
Here's what you'll need: Two sheets of paper (preferably different colors), tape, scissors, and a pencil.



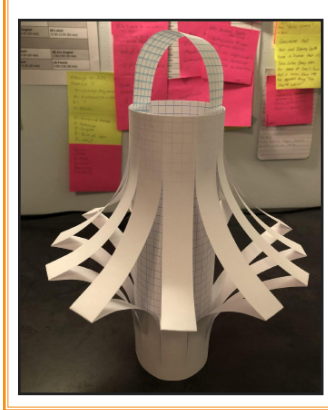
1. Take a piece of colored paper and roll it lengthwise to create a cylinder. Tape or glue it together.




2. Then take another piece of paper (the same or different color) and fold it width-wise.



3. Make a line across the opposite of the folded edge and cut strips.



4. Unfold the paper and secure it onto the cylinder using tape or glue.



5. Finally, take string or a strip of paper and attach it to the top to create a handle.

6. If you would like, you can also add a circle of paper to the inside of the cylinder and place a fake candle there. Or you can draw one of the 12 Zodiac animals (Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and/or Pig) on the inner cylinder. Get creative!

DACA Revived by Biden Administration; What does this mean for Fenton Students?

By Julissa Velazquez

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals is a program created in 2012 by Barack Obama during his presidency. Qualifiers for this program are young people who have grown up in America and have been unable to gain residency although they have spent nearly their whole lives in the United States. They are called Dreamers. The purpose of the program is to give undocumented immigrants protection from deportation and a permit to work. After two years, the program expires and must be renewed. Since 2012, around 825,000 people have been included in the program.

In September 2017, the Trump Administration made efforts to put an end to DACA. Under this change, no new applicants were to be accepted including participants whose program has expired.

Although the court did not pass this effort, Donald Trump expressed his thoughts in a statement, "I do not favor punishing children, most of whom are now adults, for the actions of their parents. But we must also recognize that we are a nation of opportunity *because* we are a nation of laws."

Before the date of his inauguration, Joe Biden tweeted, "Dreamers are Americans, but Trump's ripped away the hard-won protections of DACA recipients, throwing their lives into upheaval. It's unacceptable, and on day one of my presidency I will protect them from deportation and send a bill to Congress."

That's just what he did. On his first day of presidency, President Biden signed many executive orders

that would reverse the effects of the Trump Administration on immigration. This included strengthening DACA protections. DACA seems popular between both parties, but it still must pass Congressional approval.

How does this affect life at Fenton? In an interview with our principal, Mr. Jovan Lazarevic stated, "We're nearly 70% students of color here at Fenton."

When asked how the new implementation will affect students, he replied, "We'll constantly support our families. The new implementation of DACA gives us the legal right to continue to do that."

Our superintendent, Mr. James Ongtengco, also expressed his views on the topic, saying, "We love all our kids. Do we know kids are here without papers? Yes, we do. We love those folks even more."

Both Lazarevic and Ongtengco agree that the Biden Administration is doing the right thing, as Ongtengco said, "Better life for our children - that's what immigration is."

DACA is a great first step for students and families who have always been protected here and will continue to be protected and provided with necessary resources. Fenton staff does everything possible to make life for students and their families easier.

Ongtengco said, "We've given 175,000 meals, free hotspots, and students can come study at school. If the country could do that for its citizens, for its neighboring countries, wouldn't it be a better world?"

When Surviving a Pandemic Isn't Enough; Mental Health During Remote Learning

By Abby Niehoff

Adapting to a new reality is difficult for high school students- especially when it's adapting to a completely new lifestyle and daily routine. Going anywhere without any restrictions and learning at school was normal and expected for the rest of our lives until the COVID-19 pandemic took footing in the world. Before COVID-19, I myself spent hours at school, both before and after. Both extra-curriculars and time spent with friends kept me sane. School "was a form of escapism for so many," as one anonymous student detailed, and having it swept out from under our feet was shocking.

In a time when a teen's mind is scattered with various issues, remote learning has either been the best or worst situation for schooling for FHS students with very little to no gray area. In a casual survey through an anonymous Google Form posted to Snapchat, a yes or no question was asked: "Would you call yourself mentally stable during remote learning/the pandemic in general?" The result was an overwhelming no- 80.4% of 92 responses. If this number wasn't alarming enough, in elaboration, students detailed severe lack of motivation, exhaustion, and diagnoses of mental issues like depression and anxiety. Positive responses had hope for the future, found independence, and found new

hobbies and ways of coping, like writing music.

A trend throughout these responses was that students felt lost in many aspects of their lives- especially in themselves. In a follow-up survey conducted in the same fashion as the first asking students to elaborate about their struggles, one student said, "I don't know if you'll understand me because I don't understand me." Another simply stated, "I don't even know who I am anymore." Students detailed struggles with identifying and processing emotions like anger and sadness in a world where they're expected to be numb. Others lost friends due to a lack of social contact. Seniors said that they were frustrated with the loss of so many traditions.

Another trend was constant pressure and misunderstanding from the adults in their lives. A few felt that adults could never understand

what was happening in their lives at the moment, try as they might. One student wrote, "Please, don't ever say you understand. I get that when adults were younger, they didn't have the advanced technology we have today but, I have never struggled this much." Another stated, "Making time isn't always easy, so I think being patient, honest and trusting plays a big role into our mental health and we have to trust one another to make sure we will have everything completed," when speaking about teachers and the struggles of meeting deadlines. Homework has always been a part of a student's life, but it has taken on a new role of gnawing away at a student's mental well-being. Many students felt the workload was too similar to an in-person year with no accommodations for the conditions of remote learning.

Students found peace in

anonymity and talking casually to a peer. They were able to tell me, someone willing to listen, about their struggles, concerns for the future, and gripes with homework amounts. In terms of solutions for the problems presented by remote learning, there's hardly any that come to mind. There's no way to eliminate homework or speed up the process to normalcy. All that a student, teacher, parent, or any other person struggling in the COVID-19 pandemic can do is be patient, understanding, and open. It's also important to not categorize anyone as struggling the least or most during this time. Everyone processes events like this differently, so to lump student experiences together is invalidating and harmful.

"Be gentle," "I just don't have enough time," "...my love for school and learning has gone down the drain, replaced with apathy towards subjects I used to thoroughly enjoy-" these are a few comments and pleas from struggling students. As hard as these results and statements are to process and recognize, we as a community need to realize that our students of Fenton Community High School and beyond are struggling in more ways than previously thought. I speak for the entire student body who consider themselves to be struggling when I say that we are simply doing our best- it's all we can do in these unprecedented times.

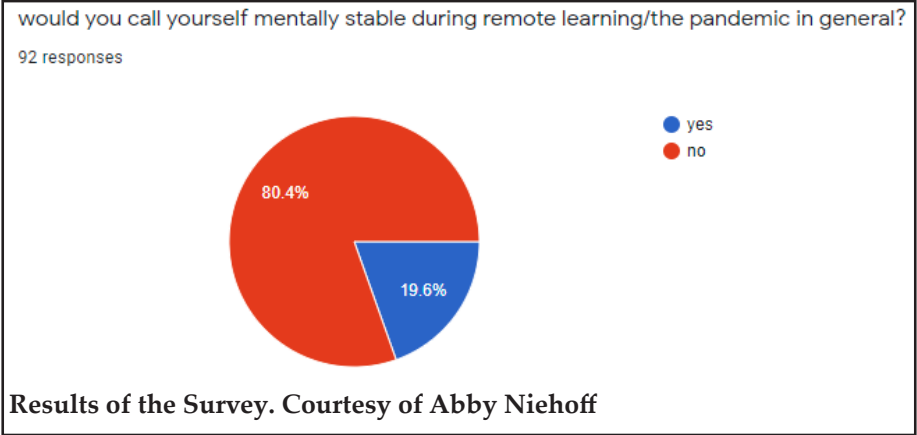


Photo Op: What is your favorite season and why?

By Erica Ayala



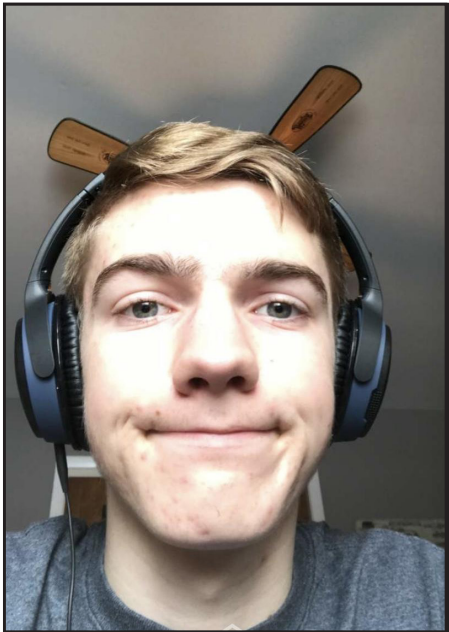
Sophomore McAleigh Logue
"My favorite season is summer due to the fact that it's stress free, the weather is nice, and I get to go to the beach."



Junior Ahtziri Cardenas
"My favorite season is Fall. I love the crispy weather and all the activities I get to do! Especially going to pumpkin patches."



Junior Sophia Haska
"Summer is definitely my favorite season because that is when I am not doing anything related to school. I also get to spend a lot more time with my friends and family."



Sophomore Ryan Peterson
"I love summer because there isn't school and it's sunny outside, which really improves my mood!"

February Club Corner: Updates from Fenton’s Extracurriculars

By Erica Ayala

Jazz Band, Pep Band Makerspace Club (Current Project: “Crocheted Creatures”)	Mr. George - george@fenton100.org	Jazz Band: jfgc7mr Pep Band: dn3srqf	Jazz: Tuesdays 4:30-6, Pep: Thursdays 3:30-4:30	Jazz Bands attended the virtual Purdue Jazz Festival last month and they are attending the virtual NIU Jazz Festival this Friday!
	Elizabeth Wright, wright@fenton100.org	g2mcehr	Tuesdays, 3:15-4:15 pm	Order a free crochet starter kit here: https://forms.gle/pG1Q67VHnpkxZWeBA No experience necessary.
Language Club	Mrs. Vazquez - vazquez@fenton100.org	dhad77m	Monday’s and Thursday’s at 4:30pm on Google Meets (in our Google Classroom)	Come craft with us! Any club members or new club members who attend meetings the week of 2/8 get a free book!
Group Interpretation (Reader’s Theater)	Ms. Hendricks: hendricks@fenton100.org Ms. Feinberg: feinberg@fenton100.org	5miyw5e	Schedule to be determined based on the needs of the cast	We are holding auditions via flipgrid and are looking for students who want to have fun bringing stories to life. We will compete in a conference, sectionals, and state. We compete alongside Contest Drama.
Boys Soccer	Head Coach: Victor Ruiz ruiz@fenton100.org - Assistant coaches: (Varsity) Alexis Herrera herrera@fenton100.org - (Freshmen) Simon Sanchez sanchez@fenton100.org - (JV) Gerardo Lopez lopez@fenton100.org - (Jv) Leo Mora mora@fenton100.org	https://classroom.google.com/c/	We will meet Friday February 5th via zoom 4:15	Boys Soccer season will start March 1st 2021
STUNT	Mrs.Valente-valente@fenton100.org	dzlgbsn	Every other Thursday	We are currently putting together a virtual talent show.
Bison Buddies	Mrs. Taylor (taylor@fenton100.org) and Mrs. Szkorla (szkorla@fenton100.org)	vii6w3o	Wednesdays, Biweekly	Next meeting will be Wednesday, 2/10, at 3:30 PM
Student Council	larson@fenton100.org, rajendran@fenton100.orgmussman@fenton100.orgcassidy@fenton100.org	35pqkg	Wednesdays at 7:45	Working on a second semester service project currently as a Large Council and individual classes may be doing something else.
Math Team	porter@fenton100.org, santinello@fenton100.orgstern@fenton100.org	N/A	Varies by grade level	We are currently practicing for the Upstate Eight Conference. Our Regional Competition will be in March.
BEAT	Kelly Lamey - lamey@fenton100.org		We haven’t met yet this year, but I’d be interested in getting a group together on Wednesdays after school.	
Stage Crew	Mr. Barr-Email	https://classroom.google.com/u/1/c/	Tuesday/Thursdays/Fridays	We are starting Stage Crew for Contest Drama and the Spring Musical-Sign up at the google classroom for work days and more information



STUNT Presents Annual Talent Show

By Erica Ayala

STUNT is hosting their annual school talent show! The show will take a new format this year and be shared through a Google Drive link. There will be various acts including singing, dancing, rapping, and other social media creations. As part of the show, there are featured guest teachers and seniors to commentate!

- When will it take place?

The video of the virtual talent show will be available the week of March 15th
- Where can we find it?

The talent show will be shared with a Google Drive link through Fenton email.
- Who will be performing?

The following students will be performing: Joan Hitt, Delilah Johnson, Dante Matias, Adam Millard, Aaliyah Reed, Carolyn Stadnyk, Anthony Wick and Quinn Wilcoxen.