



THE STINGER

Irmo High School Student
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It Does Exist

*Just because you can't see something,
doesn't mean it doesn't exist.*

— The Santa Clause

At this joyous time of year, one might suspect that the quote is referring to Santa Claus. If you have seen the movie, you know that little Charlie *was* talking about Santa Claus. But if he were an Irmo High School student, he might have been referring to The Stinger, Irmo High School's student newspaper. Wait. What? We have a student newspaper? Yep.

The Stinger has been around for many years. It was published by the journalism class in a traditional paper format. After a hiatus, the paper returned in a digital format, produced by students who want to have a voice. Today, The Stinger is more of a club. Right now, it's a very small club, with virtual meetings and submissions.

So, why should you join us? Your ideas have value. Seeing your words and pictures in print is fulfilling. No one is going to grade your work (although my inner-English teacher might want to). Being involved in extracurricular activities creates balance in your life and enhances your resume. I might even write you a letter of recommendation; it has been known to happen. Please think about joining The Stinger staff. Our Google Classroom join code is jsvj5je. The Irmo family needs to hear your voice!



Teacher Spotlight on Mr. Williams

by Neghemi Micah



Mr. Williams is a great philosophy and English teacher. He teaches a variety of CP and IB classes. He has taught for 20 years – 15 of those years at Irmo.

Mr. Williams has an interesting origin story. He had a degree in English and didn't know what to do with it. His wife encouraged him to be a teacher and before he knew it, he "secured me an interview at Saluda High School the very next day." With no experience, he earned his first teaching job.

The joys of teaching are different for every teacher you ask. The best part of teaching for him is the unpredictability of the kids. The hardest things about teaching are the lack of respect shown by the kids and seeing his seniors graduate. "I get so attached to them and it's hard to see them go," he explained.

COVID-19 has affected several aspects of life. Teachers feel the immense consequences of teaching either hybrid or virtually. Mr. Williams teaches hybrid, but it is slowly coming to an end. He liked that hybrid limited people from gathering and was "a very good way to help limit the spread of COVID." After COVID-19 is over, Mr. Williams looks forward to going to a movie and going to Carowinds. Don't we all?!

Fall Sports Roundup



Varsity football finished second in Region IV AAAA, and Coach Brand was named Region Coach of the year!



Girls' Cross Country was the regional champions for the third year in a row.

Girls' Cross Country finished 4th in the state, and Boys' Cross Country finished 10th.

Carina Burdick and David Williams made the All-State Cross Country team, finishing 9th and 8th in their respective races. They are shown here with Athletic Director, Coach Canady.

Girls' Swim finished 13th in the state. Freshman Emmanuel Gadson placed 6th in the state in the 100 breaststroke and 7th in the state in the 100 butterfly.



Girls' Golf finished second in the region.

Irmo High School won two consecutive Sonic night challenges.



Leadership

by Dr. Robin Hardy, Principal



Over Thanksgiving break, I had some quiet time to reflect on my efforts as your principal - what it means to lead in public education - at Irmo High School since 2018 - and now during a global pandemic. It is true what they say -- time waits for no one. So, I want to share some thoughts with you as we close out 2020 and start a new year together.

Leadership Isn't for Cowards is a professional text that was recently recommended to me. It is a bit of a self-help book that offers straightforward tips for driving performance. Obviously, the title caught my attention, as I am no coward.

One of the quotations that stood out is as follows: "The best thing you can do for your followers is to not allow them to settle. Remember, leadership is influencing others to achieve results beyond those that they believe are possible. One of the first steps in that process is getting them to understand three key areas in which they possess responsibility: their choices, their attitudes/mindsets, and their performance, in that order" (Staver, p. 102).

Personal responsibility has always been an important character trait to me. We speak of these expectations when we

say, "Be where you are supposed to be, when you are supposed to be, doing what you are supposed to be doing." So, I challenge you now to consider all the choices you have going forward. Will you make the most of them? What is your attitude and mindset? They are within your sole control. And performance. Why are you at Irmo High School International School for the Arts? What is the ultimate outcome? Bottom line for students - earning your high school diploma. Bottom line for teachers, support staff, and administrators - to give students every feasible opportunity to earn their high school diploma. Other experiences - the arts, athletics, activities, friendships, service, and the like are certainly added bonuses.

So, as you reflect on your choices, attitude/mindset, and performance during this pandemic, I hope you find new appreciation for the opportunities afforded to you. It is my sincere wish that my leadership positively influences you to achieve accomplishments well above and beyond what you believed to be possible. I will cherish the journey.



Perspectives on Learning and Teaching

By Neghemi Micah and Angela McGregor

During these unsure times, coming back to school is hard for everyone. School is a sacred place for students, but recently school has been kind of depressing. It was scary when school was closed for the end of the last school year, and sometimes it feels like things will never get better. School is now a completely different experience, a mixture of shock and fear that this is what the world has come to. It is scary because students don't know what to do -- especially hybrid students. They go to school but never know what might happen; although it is very nice to be among friends, it is also confusing and nerve-racking that they might spread COVID to the people at home.

The school is taking necessary and aggressive precautions, but hybrid students are basically left with no choice because hybrid is constantly changing, especially the schedules. Students are forced to choose between going to school with more than a handful of students and risk catching COVID, or stay home and learn virtually. These shouldn't be the only options. Some classes force kids to learn in person (like CATE, for example) when they would rather not. Parents are worried about the arrangement in the first place. and now the kids get more and more unsure about the constant changes to the arrangement. COVID has put the school in a tough situation, and hybrid students are uncertain about their futures.

Neghemi is a junior at Irmo High School. This editorial was written shortly after hybrid students switched to four-day in-person learning.

One day, I went to Publix and the young man who was cleaning carts addressed me by name and introduced himself to me. I was getting my hair braided when a young woman asked me if I taught Fundamentals of Computing. I was walking my dog when a young man yelled out his car window, "Hi, Ms. McGregor. I'm one of your students!" You could have fooled me. You see, I am an Irmo High School teacher, teaching virtually for FIVE. The incidents I described were the only times I had ever seen the students in person (I think!); the pleasure of getting to know my students is what I miss most about teaching face-to-face. Honestly, even if the students had their cameras and mics on the whole time, I'm not sure I would recognize them in person. Fortunately, they recognize me.

Teaching with FIVE was a fairly easy choice for me, and I am infinitely grateful to have had that choice. I am a seasoned (read, "old") professional with preexisting health conditions. I don't live in fear of catching COVID, but if I caught it, I would likely have a serious case. When I lived in Minnesota, I didn't live in fear of freezing to death, but I wore a coat when I went outside!

Most teachers, students and parents believe that a five-day in person model is the optimal teaching structure. I agree. I look forward to when I can return to teach with my colleagues and interact in person with my students. Until then, I will be loving life, sleeping an hour later, not wearing dresses, and getting to walk my dog during the day.

Ms. McGregor is a business education teacher.

Kids in the Hall

Girls Come Up Big!

Kids in the Hall is a feature of The Stinger that asks a burning question of a student from each grade level. It is called Kids in the Hall because the question is typically asked of a student while they are in the hall of the school. Things are different this year. Thanks to the girls who answered the question!

2020 has been unique. Although a lot has gone wrong, much has gone right. What are you most thankful for?

I am thankful for the ability to still learn



through these challenging times. I am also thankful for the faculty and staff who continue to support us during these troubling times.

Casey Fore, Class of 2021



Something that I am most thankful for is that I have some great teachers that are very understanding about the situations going on.

Zoe Starr, Class of 2022

Wishing you a restful, peaceful, and healthy winter break!