



The Western Breeze

Project 2025 Sparks Controversy

By Jalymar Ruiz Rosa, '27

Imagine living in a society where you can be discriminated against with no repercussions, where it will be illegal to undo something that will completely alter your life, and where your life and choices aren't really yours.

What's Project 2025? This is a conservative plan that will completely change our government as we know it to fit the conservatory views. This is being run by The Heritage Plan. Every single person you know will be affected. Now the real question: Is this what's best for our country?

Do you think you won't be effected? If you can't be bothered to care, let's break it down.

Do you work? You can be discriminated against at work and it will go unpunished. You will be worked overtime with no pay. Do you or your child go to school? They plan to start censoring important discussions in history and cutting back funding on schools that include these subjects in their curriculum.

Project 2025 stands against abortion, reproduction rights, free

“We, as the next generation, need to know what's going on in the world, and especially in our country.”

speech, LGBTQ rights, racial equity, and hospitals will lose their Medicaid funding if they provide care to transgender people to affirm their gender.

There will be new and reinstated immigrant laws, mass deportations and raids, or as the official Project 2025 website words it, “deport illegal aliens.” They will terminate our asylum system, and our birthright citizenship.

Project 2025 would be put into effect the first 180 days if a republican candidate gets elected. This could start off with completely throwing off the power balance, giving the president more power. They plan to make an “Effective conservative administration.” An anonymous teacher at Western Hills describes the plan as, “Dangerous and a reward system for hatred.”

We as the next generation need

to know what's going on in the world and especially in our country. Tristan, a sophomore at West high says “I've heard about it I just don't know what's going on.”

Yes, we might not be adults yet but everything that goes on and every decision made effects us or will in the future. These laws and our government won't just magically become what we want and need when we get there. And how are we supposed to make a change when we aren't aware of our surroundings?

Now more than ever its important to stay updated on everything going on political wise. The elections are on their course. Listen to the candidates, listen to what they are planning to implement and what needs to be. We need a change its up to us to make sure it happens for the better.

It is important to stay educated and updated with the election. This may happen under the next conservative administration. Vote if you can use it to your advantage, make sure the people around you are. This affects everyone. You have to fight for the change if you want to see and be it.

Yondr Pouches: A New West High Norm

By Sommora Marshall, '25

Some of the Cincinnati Public School students are outraged. Governor Mike DeWine made policies that restricts phones from most students during school. The CPS district decided to use Yonder pouches to enforce these policies.

With Yonder pouches, students place phones inside of magnetically locked pouches until the end of the day; it will be only unlocked with a special magnet at the end of the day.

Mr. Fischer, a math instructor from Western Hills High School thinks, “It will have an overall positive impact on student behavior.”

However, now that we have received these pouches, I've noticed a lot more students are getting distracted, becoming louder, and



causing more interruption.

Some feel it is unnecessary to restrict phones because high school is all about becoming prepared for the real world. Outside of school or in college, no one is going to take your phone and tell you it's a big distraction. You have to be responsible and know your priorities yourself.

It could also become an emergency issue. Kids won't be able to contact their parents unless they go to the office. So when schools decide to make restrictions like this, is it really helping the students?

On the other hand, student Serenity Ridley from Western Hills High School says, “I feel like we shouldn't be getting them because some people need their phone for music etc.”

Some disagree

Yondr pouches are effective because they provide a phone-free space where students and teachers can engage more.

As students use the pouches, more are becoming accustomed to them. Over time you hear less complaining and more engagement.

Western Hills Spanish instructor Sr. Vincent says, “My students complained about it at first, but they quickly realized it was now a fact of life”.

With change there will always be a positive outlook and a negative outlook. Overall, Yondr pouches help maintain a controlled environment where students can focus their attention on what is important.

Important West High Dates!

October 13th:
Beginning of Quarter 2

October 21st:
CPS College Fair

November 5th: Election Day (no school)

November 11th: Veterans' Day (no school)

November 25th to 29th: Thanksgiving break

OPINIONS

The Factors of Fashion Today

By Mylee Meyer, 26

Have you noticed the recent change regarding children's fashion? Lately the topic of children's clothing has begun to spark concerns for many. Today children can be seen wearing crop tops, strapless shirts, short shorts, mini skirts, ect... While some outfits are deemed "cute", how far until "cute" is seen as inappropriate?

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated in 2022 that 3.3 million children are being exploited and sex trafficked at any given moment. These "cute" outfits could make the children easier targets for potential predators; every 40 seconds a child goes missing. It's estimated that 2,300 American children go missing every day and 460,000 a year. With numbers these high parents should be taking precautions to ensure their children's safety the best they can. (Hernando Sun- "Revealing Clothing on Children is a Trend

that Must Stop") Some parents tend to cross boundaries when it comes to keeping their children up to date in the latest trends. While parents may intend to keep their children fashionable as a show of love, pride, or to build confidence this can unfortunately result in kids getting their childhood innocence robbed.

Dressing children in age-inappropriate clothing can oversexualize them and expose them to manipulation, even exploitation from predators. It can also unintentionally expose them to adult themes at an early age, causing them to be wary about the length of their skirts, shorts, shirts, and the effect those clothes have on other people seeing them, making them overly self-aware about themselves and their decency at early ages. (Nairobi News- "This is the harm you do by dressing your kids inappropriately...").

Kiara Brooks, a junior at Western Hills High School says, "I

feel that we should implement some type of age restriction when it comes to children's clothing for their safety. Things like short shorts, shirts that show the children's stomach and certain swimsuits should be restricted because children are meant to be protected for as long as they can be, wearing these types of clothes at their age can attract predators."

We can all admit that social media plays a big role in everyday life. Even influencing the way we clean, cook, talk, and dress. Tighter and more revealing clothes have become more popular in recent years, so it's no shock that children are starting to follow these trends to fit in.

While following a couple trends may not seem like such a bad thing it can bring potential harm to the children wearing those styles of clothes. Social media has started to reach the hands of children who may not really understand the dangers of social media. So a simple TikTok dance in clothes like a crop top may seem

like harmless fun and can catch the attention of predators. Predators who can easily pose as another child to contact, lure, or manipulate them.

Mishila Collins, a senior at Western Hills High School says, "I feel like social media is impacting the way kids dress nowadays. Everyone wants to fit the social standards and the first way to do that is to dress how everyone else does. If they don't they can easily be considered weird and get made fun of strictly because of the way they dress."

Parents should figure out how to approach the topic of age-appropriate clothing and the danger age-inappropriate clothing can bring them. A simple outfit can attract the wrong person, we can't always tell who it is, and we can't always stop it. However, going out of your way to make sure your child is as safe as they can be can be as simple as dressing them in looser, less revealing clothes.

Let us hear YOUR
OPINION!

*Submit letters to be printed in The Breeze.
Letters can be sent to room 1236, or placed in
Ms. Silbernagel's mailbox
(Letters may be edited for clarity, taste, and length.)*

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Are Dress Codes Necessary?

By Dai'Jae Banks, '25

According to Ohio State University, about 20% of public schools required school uniforms from 2011-12, and about 6 out of 10 private schools required uniforms in 2011-12. Advocates of school uniforms have argued that, among other things, school uniforms promote better attendance, and also a stronger sense of community, which results in less confrontations and bullying ("School uniforms don't improve child behavior, study finds").

In Western Hills University, there is more confrontation with authority figures being so stern with dress code and with what students are wearing, then there is with bullying about what one has on. Being so engaged with what a student wears, takes away learning opportunities.

Some may say that the "dress code" isn't the issue with the students but rather than it (dress code) being applied to everyone throughout Western Hills University. So the question is "Does monitoring what students can and can't wear affects their learning ability?"

Students in Western Hills Hs would in fact be more engaged in academics, and may raise the attendance rate if there was not a dress code. Being so deemed, and strict on what students decide to wear to express themselves can make students feel out of place, and not accepting of their individuality. Even if Western Hills High School is such an environment, maybe we should just enforce school uniforms.

Mustafaa Yisreal, a history teacher at Western Hills High School says, "Anything that helps students stay focused on learning moves us in a positive direc-

tion. Far too often students engage in shaming because of materialism, making one feel uncomfortable because their parents can afford it is beneath us as a human family."

In Western Hills High School, there's also controversy about whether "Dress code" falls more heavily on the female students than male students and whether it limits students from expressing themselves. The vast majority of dress codes ban 90% of clothing associated with girls. Almost 69% limit clothing associated with boys (School Dress Code Debates, Explained - EdW).

Meg Groat, an English teacher at Western Hills responded to the topic: "Yes dress codes do limit students to express themselves. Students do not generally appear or verbally show that they are distracted by the clothing choice of students - therefore, adults may need to adjust our views on 'appropriate' vs. 'inappropriate' dress."

Being a student at West High, I see a lot of biased actions and unfair treatment with this dress code. I also see that rather than the students being distracted by their and others appearance it's the faculty that seems diverted from the underlying and serious issues throughout the building.

Another site Smartasset says, dress codes can break down class barriers between students. When students don't wear school uniforms it can be easy to spot kids with the most or least economic privilege. Another argument is that dress codes may increase students' focus in school.

OPINIONS

NEW CELL PHONE POLICY CAN IMPROVE GRADES

By Shawnae Rodgers, '25

The No Cellphone Policy has become a big thing to most schools. No cellphone policy is being taken very seriously during the school year 2024-2025 and maybe so on. Schools have provided Yondr Pouches, you are to put your phone in the Yondr pouch during the whole school day. Most students were very upset about this idea. I interviewed three Western Hills students about the No Cellphone Policy.

The first question I asked was should all schools have a no cellphone policy? A senior student named Rihanna Braxton said, "Yes and no; I'm biased about it because kids should not be on their phones all day during school, but down time is optional."

I absolutely agree that all schools should have a no cellphone policy. I agree with this because students get distracted very easily. Most students would sit on their phone all day during school and not complete any work. Teachers shouldn't have to tell students every five minutes to put their phones away. The no cellphone policy also makes it easier for teachers to teach.

The second question I asked was

why do you think schools have no cellphone? An 8th grade student named Patience Powell said, "Students are on their phones rather than doing their classwork."

I think schools have the No Cell-

phone Policy because phones said, "Yes students should take it seriously because cell phones cause so many unnecessary problems during school."

I agree that students should take it seriously because not having

more drama in school. I say this because whether students have a phone in school or not there would still be drama. Students can argue outside of school and bring it to school; that mainly happens. Students can also communicate through mouth and rumors during school so that can cause drama also. However cell phones can play a part in drama, it's just not a big part.

Then I last asked, do you think the no cellphone policy would have a better impact on grades? Rodgers said, "Yes, students would focus better in school if there were no cell phones".

I agree with this because, personally, putting my cell phone in the Yondr pouch has caused such a great effect on my grades. I think if all students actually put their phones in the Yondr pouch they would also see a good effect on their grades. Students should try the whole school year by putting their phones in the pouches and see how their grades look from the school year 2023-2024 to 2024-2025, I guarantee there would be a change in their grades.



phone Policy because phones seem to be a very big distraction to students now. Cell phones are an extra way for students to communicate more during class. Schools also have that policy because they want students to focus better. Students also are on their phone during class the majority of the time.

The third question I asked was should students take the No Cellphone Policy seriously? A senior student named Chaunell Rodgers

your phone during school hours. I agree with this because students don't realize without their phone their day would be more productive during school hours. It is okay for students to want to use their phones for music to concentrate, but it is a distraction to most students.

I also asked, do cellphones cause more drama in school? Braxton said, "yes and no depends on circumstances".

I think cellphones do not cause

PRISON PARDONS PROMOTE OPPORTUNITES

By Rhianna Braxton, '25

Imagine being charged with life for a crime of very low severity. If you are stunned, well, you are in for a crazy rude awakening! In 2016, our former president of a 2 terms, Barack Obama, pardoned over 1,000 people. Nearly 2,000 individuals convicted on drug charges often received mandatory sentences, leading to a significant number of clemency acts, including commutations and pardons (Eggleston).

A pardon is a way for their president to show forgiveness to someone who was convicted of a crime. Following up with a few of my peers and staff at Western Hills High

School, I found out a few some opinions.

According English teacher, Ms. Meg Groat, a neutral woman about crimes, thinks that when pardons a criminal democratic voting policy. Leading more towards it should be up to the people of the city and it should have an open debate. Crimes shouldn't be major and excuse able to all whom have done the crime

Looking more into the pardons of the crimes I talked to a staff member Mr. Lenhart touched a few bases. Generally speaking about crime and the justice system, one finds out lots of ways things might not be fair. So when approaching the topic about pardons it is great to have. Pardons can help you get better jobs and better chances.

Mr. Lenhart spoke about how Trump was an example of why it's not after he won a whole presidential election and was accused of a variety of crimes. While in office had a whole cases plead on him.

"Why should someone do lots of bad things and still be able to be pardoned?" stated Lenhart.

Overall, crime of low severity can lead to a pardon, a way for the president to show forgiveness. Some educators and students argue that pardons should be a democratic voting policy, with open debates. Pardons provide better jobs and opportunities for those convicted.

The Bengals' Season Awaits Success

By Reginald Payne, '25

I won't say the Bengals are a good team cause we're 2-5 right now. They have good uniforms though my friend states that "The white ones are their best ones".

The uniforms made their debut in the 2022 season and have been worn once each season since debuting. Both times the Bengals have worn the all-white look, the Paycor Stadium field has also gone with the color scheme with a whited-out midfield logo and end zones.

Their quarterback is their best player, Joe Burrow. Joe Burrow. Burrow had a breakout

season in 2021 when he led the Bengals to their first playoff win since 1990, ending the longest active drought in the four major North American sports, and an appearance in Super Bowl LVI.

The following year, he led the Bengals to their first consecutive division title in franchise history. According to senior Demarion Kelly, "Joe Burrow is the most important player on the field".

The Bengals aren't the best. They need help also it's the coaching. The Bengals will lose a game and people will blame the players but the players aren't the ones calling the plays. The coaching needs to learn how to understand the players.

For example, some coaches will just put the

players out there and have them play based on how famous they are. Although some coaches listen to the fans and just coach off of what they hear, that's how the Bengals lose games.

It's also their offensive side of the ball they need help with the offensive-line. The o-line doesn't block sometimes they just stand there and let them get pass, although this also falls back on the offensive line coach too. Maybe the players aren't learning anything, it's the big league so coaches expect you to already know the basics but you always have to know the basics to be great.

Kelly states, "Offensive line needs help the most."

FEATURES

West High Observations

“A Look at West High’s Teachers”

By Dominik Creech, ‘25

The teachers at West High. What do you see when you think about that? Do you like them, or hate them? Are they good at teaching, or are they not? Well, in my opinion and many others, there are good and bad teachers! Now none of the teachers I have ever had since my seventh grade year have been bad at what they do. But obviously I can’t make a good story with that information!

So I have taken the liberty to interview our fellow peers and classmates on their opinion on the teachers they have had at the High. First, I interviewed eighth grader Konviction Parsons (Vic to many of you). I asked him his opinion on the education system at West High. “I have been going to West High for a year now. The things they teach us are actually benefiting us.” The understanding of a lesson given to us depends on the teacher because

some of the teachers explain things in a way that is confusing, while others are clear and understandable. I have always gotten along with all of my teachers. My favorite teacher is Mrs. Lewis-Thorton, though, because she knows how to talk to the class, and she gives us candy every day. All of my teachers have always interacted with me and other students really well. The overall mood of his classes are fun, humorous, and enjoyable.

As you can see, there are a lot of good things that the education system here can help you with. Our graduation rate is starting to improve, and hopefully we can reach at least 80% by the end of the next school year. As long as the students pay attention in their classes, and the teachers are teaching in a helpful and understandable way, the future of West High’s education system will be something to look forward to.

How Safe Are We?

By Jules Matheny, ‘25

Over 383,000 students have experienced gun violence in schools since the Columbine High School massacre that happened on April 20th, 1999, according to The Washington Post. The most recent shooting was on September 17th, 2024, in the parking lot of Washington Technology Magnet School in St. Paul, Minnesota. Children seem to be the most responsible for a majority of the school shootings that happen, as they are able to have some sort of access to firearms, which they may carry to school with them and begin to enact violence. It is most commonly sympathized that these children may have been bullied or harassed in school, although there is no excuse for murder.

Just how safe are we in schools, a building where we are supposed to go to be secure and to learn? Students and educators shouldn’t have to worry about the next time they go to

school, if they’re going to be safe throughout the day. When asked how she thinks we could prevent school shootings, senior English Teacher, Meg said,

leave those guns out for their children to reach. Kids being able to access such weapons may not only pose a danger to themselves, but to others as well. While the second amend-

they are. Some people may sympathize that the perpetrators had been bullied or they grew up not knowing right from wrong. “To an extent, that only extends so far. There are other ways to fix the situation that don’t involve hurting other people,” said School Psychologist, Kate Ryder. People can be ruthless and bullying can take place anywhere, but most cases are reported in schools. Oftentimes, some people may not reach out for help, whether it’s because they’re too scared of what others might think of them or because they think they can handle it on their own. Even though school’s may have psychologists and therapists on hand for the students when needed, mental health hasn’t been advocated for as much as it should. According to Ryder, “I think we can always do more to support students’ mental health. It’d be nice to have more mental health partners in the building.”

“I think we can always do more to support students’ mental health,” said Kate Ryder.

“The only way to prevent mass shootings is to prevent mass access.” Parents may be buying guns to have either for hunting or safety reasons, and some of those parents may be irresponsible and

ment states that the people have the right to bear arms, some people might say that gun laws should be stricter; however, others might argue that the parents should be more responsible and that gun laws should be left as

West High’s Soccer Team Wins All Games

By Diana Lopez-Sanchez, ‘25

Have you ever done something amazing and didn’t get any recognition for it? How would it make you feel if you worked so hard every day and accomplished goals no one else has done, yet no one cares? Well, these Western Hills Soccer boys are quite something. These boys always train hard, very hard everyday to make sure they accomplish their goals. They will practice in the cold, rain, and heat, the weather most people don’t like. Yet most people don’t recognize them at all. During their whole season last year, they won all their games. During this season they have won all their games. Yet most people don’t know or notice them. Jose Fernando Rodriguez, a senior captain who plays for the men’s soccer team at Western Hills

High School says, “No, our soccer team isn’t talked about much since they are too focused on the football team... We are the only fall sport who win all our games, yet no one really knows or notices.” No one ever seems to notice these amazing athletes; there are few people who see them and recognize them for their hard work and accomplishments. Even so, it’s mostly people who play the same sport or close teachers to the soccer players. Cheickna Diaby, a senior at Western Hills High School on the men’s soccer team says, “Mostly my teachers congratulate us, and the only students who congratulate us and hype us up are the girls on the women’s soccer team.” Most people in different varieties of sports have gear, even if some of these sports don’t win all their games. These boys see people having gear in their

sports and sometimes feel some sort of way, realizing they win all of their games and put in so much work and effort every week for them not to have gear. Emerson Colindres, a senior captain who plays for the men’s soccer team at Dater High School says, “We are a great team, every year we have won all our games, so I feel upset; like we have no recognition when I see other people having gear and we don’t.” Maybe in the next season or a couple more seasons, this great soccer team will get the recognition they deserve. Rodriguez says, “I do feel like we deserve more recognition since we really do win all our games, we are the face of West High too. We put in hard work every day and yet really no one really notices.”

FEATURES

Is Football too Dangerous?

Danyon’K Justice, ’25

“Football does have inherent risk as it is a contact sport. However, it is not necessarily ‘too dangerous’ if managed properly,” says coach and school social worker at Western Hills High School Mr. Kameron Johnson. It is not necessarily controversial to say that football is a dangerous sport. We do know that it can also cause long-term harm and injuries to the players that play the sport. The NFL and the NCAA are starting to make a bigger statement on their player safety. Johnson says “both the NFL and NCAA are increasingly focused on player safety. They implemented numerous rules, regulations, and protocols, particularly concussions.” Concussions are the most common injury in the sport of football. Just because football could be a little harmful, doesn’t mean it isn’t permissible to watch it. Another staff member from Western Hills High School, Ms.

Carly Schwartz says “Absolutely, watching football is permissible. It is a sport that brings people together and can teach valuable life lessons.” Teamwork and being a team player are the biggest lessons that could be learned on and off the field. A team player could be a particular person being selfish and not thinking of others, so that’s why it is important to think about others in your life, circle,



(Senior Danyon’k Justice)

group, etc. “To make football safer we should be focusing on three key areas: Better equipment, improved training techniques, and stringent adherence to safety protocols,” says Johnson. Those key areas are very important for player safety in this sport. Being a football player for Western Hills High School, (Center, #52) I will say high school football safety needs to improve their equipment and training techniques. The position that I play requires me to bend down and squat throughout the game which requires a lot of stress and pain to the knees and ankles, which I think some schools in the tri-states need to improve. Also speaking on the behalf of the training technique side, West High has not had a trainer in two years. Trainers know more than just your regular doctor. If you get injured during or before the season a doctor will tell you to sit unnecessary weeks. A trainer, on the other hand, will give you a needed exercise and tell you to sit a respectful amount of weeks and give you injury prevention like knee braces, ankle brace or an arm or leg wrap. It is just more than one person that is responsible for violence in football. Coach Kam says, “It is not just one person’s responsibility. It falls on a number of people, league officials, coaches, players, and even fans that causes damage.”

The Debate Over Extended Summer Break

By Aicha Soumare, 27

The debate over whether summer break should be extended longer has been a topic discussion among students, parents, and educators. There are compelling arguments on both sides, each presenting potential benefits and drawbacks of a longer summer vacation. On one side, many believe that extending summer break could have significant positive impacts on students' mental health and overall well-being. A former senior from Dater Gilbert high school, Fiona Marshall said, “yes in my opinion summer break should be extended longer”. Some people argue that having a longer break provides an essential period for mental health recovery. “Some things that are beneficial for having a longer break include working on your mental health. Sometimes school can be hard and can also mess with your mental health. Having a long school break can help you deal with your mental health, and heal from things.” School can often be stressful, and a longer break allows students to recharge, reduce anxiety, and return to school with a clearer mind. According to a study by the American Psychological Association, extended break from academic routines can significantly reduce stress levels in students, leading to better mental health outcomes. Additionally a longer break gives students more time for fami-

ly vacations, camps and other social activities that contribute to their overall development and well being. These experiences can foster new friendships and life skills outside the classroom. Joseph Jones, a sophomore from Gamble Montessori said, “Summer camps and family trips offer unique learning experiences that cannot be replicated in a classroom setting”. Said Audrey Thompkins, a Sophomore from Gamble Montessori. Furthermore, the extended break

can provide students with opportunities to engage in hobbies and interests that they may not have time for during the school year. For example, students can take up new sports, learn musical instruments, or participate in community service projects. These activities can help in building a well-rounded personality and developing essential life skills. Audrey Thompkins, a sophomore from Gamble Montessori said, “I learned so much about

teamwork and leadership by participating in a soccer league, which I wouldn't have had time for during the school year.” However, there are also disadvantages to consider. A long summer break can lead to a greater loss of academic knowledge. This can make it challenging for students to catch up when the new school year begins. Research from the National summer learning Association indicates that students typically lose about two months of grade-level skills over the summer months. This academic regression can affect students from lower-income families, who might not have access to educational resources during the break. Marshall said, “Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often return to school with a gap in their learning making it harder for them to keep up with their peers.” In conclusion, while extending summer break has its advantages in terms of mental health and personal development, it also presents challenges related to academic and financial stability for families and educators. Balancing these perspectives is crucial in making an informed decision about the length of summer vacation. Ultimately the decision should consider the needs of students, families and educators to create a system that supports the well-being and academic success of all involved.



FEATURES

DOUBLE STANDARDS SPARK DEBATE

Naeasha Anderson, ‘25

Did you know during the 60’s Double Standards existed but there wasn’t much attention brought to it since it was considered the “norm” of how things went back then. Have these “Double Standards” ever felt, I don’t know, a bit sexist? Have you ever been too scared of speaking up about this matter? Well, don’t be because today I will be talking about these things for you.

Double standards are these standards they have set for a certain gender group most are very stereotypical and others are just arrogant and make absolutely no

sense.

A student named Trinity Radcliff, a senior student at Western Hills University High School, has expressed her feelings towards the matter. Radcliff says “I have strong feelings about double standards. I feel this way because so much is expected and barely anything is done.”

Another Senior student at Western Hills University HS Juliette Temaj-Diaz also answers this question with her own opinion: “I feel that double standards are annoying and hypocritical. I feel that way because why have a set standard for one gender group and not the other?”

These quotes explain and tell us how most of these Double Standards are set and expected but only for a certain gender group and not the other which makes it completely unfair, and both agree that Double Standards shouldn’t be a thing at all and people should be able to do whatever they want.

In other words, they believe people should be allowed to do whatever they want and it shouldn’t matter about their gender and people shouldn’t be expecting these things from others because of what their gender is or because of what they believe in.

What do you think should be done? Should people believe in

Double Standards and use them in the real world? Should people feel obligated to follow these Standards?

Let’s hear what Megan Groat, 12th Grade English Teacher, had to say about this matter: “I feel that those who have societal privilege create double standards”

In the most simplest terms to what Mrs. Meg had to say that basically she believes only certain individuals in different gender groups are the ones who tend to create these double standards. They were grown to feel obligated to pass it onto others who weren’t raised the same way as they were.

Music’s Power to Heal

By Marques Partin, ‘26

Music is able to help people in all kinds of ways. Respondents say that listening to music improves their mental health by helping them stay sane (85%), boosting productivity (85%) and greatly decreasing loneliness (79%). Music is a very effective way to help a person relieve their stress, cheer themselves up, and many other things. (Sound United).

Music is an art form that combines either vocal and instrumental sounds using form, harmony, and expression of emotion to convey soothing sounds to the listener. Music represents many different forms that are important in cultures around the world. Listening to music can majorly help a person’s stress and reduce it. Music engages with a person’s emotions and triggers responses in our brain that help counter stress.

Paul Dombrowski, a teacher at Western Hills High School, sees music as an important part of his life.

"It energizes me, but also calms me down," Dombrowski explains, saying how music serves both as a calming and energizing force. He listens to a wide variety of music, noting that while he listens to "everything except

country." The genre isn't as important as the emotional and psychological effects that music can provide. Dombrowski believes that music's ability to ease stress is undeniable, stating, "100% yes," when asked if music can help reduce anxiety.

Skyler Welbers, an 11th grade student at Western Hills High School, finds music essential for zoning out other noises and creating a more focused environment.

"It helps by zoning out other noises and replaces it with soothing sounds," he shares. Welbers, who prefers hip-hop, describes music as an "assistant to things like doing work," highlighting its role in helping him concentrate on tasks and making mundane activities more enjoyable.

Ariel Hemphill offers another view on the effect of music, specifically in emotional processing and relaxation. For Hemphill, music is deeply personal and therapeutic.

"The beat relaxes my body. It is difficult to explain," she says, capturing how music helps her unwind after a long day.

She finds that music can also help in emotional processing, noting, "Sometimes I think crying can help you process things, and music can help with that." Hemphill, who listens to a

wide range of music with a preference for a good beat, describes music as a "love language," underscoring its capacity to connect people to their emotions and to each other.

The benefits of listening to music, whether for relaxation, focus, or emotional clarity, are widely recognized. While opinions differ on whether students should be allowed to listen to music whenever they feel like it, there is a consensus on its positive impact. Dombrowski, Welbers, and Hemphill all agree that music can play a significant role in improving mood and concentration, especially during independent work.

As Hemphill suggests, "During independent work, yes. When a teacher is instructing, no," reflecting a balanced approach to integrating music into educational settings.

In conclusion, music's influence on relaxation and stress relief is powerful and multifaceted. Whether it is Dombrowski's "everything except country" playlist, Welbers' hip-hop beats, or Hemphill's emotionally driven songs, music remains a universal tool for managing stress, enhancing focus, and navigating complex emotions. As these voices suggest, the right song at the right time can make all the difference in our daily lives.

Succumbing to Social Media: Pros and Cons

By Sir’Quitsha Brown, ‘27

Have you ever gotten social media and felt extremely overwhelmed or surprisingly inspired by a post or a song? Social media has impacted people in so many different ways. Social media is very popular and is one of the main things people get on when they get on their phone. Social media allows you to have your own personal account, where you can add people and contact people as well. You can also post and share your personal opinion to the world and post important information as well. But social media isn't all good; there are a lot of pros and cons that come with social media.

Mr. Scott Shepard, Western Hills Assistant

Principle states that “social media isn't so healthy for the mind because it is very addicting, and also persuades false images”.

This is one of the cons of having social media. Having social media can impact people in negative way as well.

One way to avoid conflicts on social media like this one is, being able to block people. Making them no longer able to contact you in any way on that platform account. You can also make your social media accounts private.

The pros of having social media is just as high as the cons. For example, people have started business brands and even expanded their knowledge. People make thousands of dollars from posting on social media, and people can also start their business by using social

media as well. Social media is a way people make their money, inform people about important information, and learn new things. Social media can also be a way of protection.

Mrs. Jillian Whitaker, Western Hills 9th grade ELA teacher states, “live streaming in dangerous situations brings awareness to injustice.”

While the person who was live streaming was in danger, the viewers could be calling the police or they could be eyewitnesses to the crime and inform the police so that they can find the suspect. There are so many pros and cons of having social media. Good, bad and sometimes in the middle but there's always a solution to the conflicts presented to us on social media.

“Sometimes we have way too much compassion, we forget that not everything on social media is real,” Whitaker says.

Guardian Helmets Promote Safety

By Danyon’K Justice, ‘25

The Guardian Cap was created in 2010 to address the clear need to advance the standard helmet, which has changed little since the 1960s.

Erin and Lee Hanson, owners of The Hanson Group LLC, utilized their 20+

years in the material science business to engineer, patent, and manufacture the Guardian Cap. I asked people, what were the best recommendations for football players when it was time to choose a football helmet that prevents concussions. The answer I heard the most was a Riddell Speedflex Helmet.

DreShon Noah, a student-athlete at Western Hills High School, why that helmet he chose and he told me,

“The Speedflex has a game-changing flex design, it makes me feel like I’m wearing nothing at all. It makes me stand out because it’s a good looking helmet.”

The Speedflex Helmet may be a comfortable helmet for some players, but it doesn’t keep you the utmost safe from concussion. So that is why the guardian caps were in-

vented by Erin and Lee Hanson back in 2011.

Tim Coleman, a security guard at Western Hills High School stated, “The Guardian Caps are very effective because they can add more

protection to the top of your head, you can’t fully recover from a concussion.”

It takes

years to fully recover from a concussion, so the best thing to do is not rush the recovery of a concussion, the brain needs all the time it naturally needs to heal itself. I also asked him why players wear the guardian caps.

Coleman said, “Players are demanding themselves to wear these caps because the fundamentals of tackling are not taught correctly anymore.”

I asked two players for the Western Hills Mustangs football team (Emir Williams #7 & DreShon Noah #57) does the Guardian Caps work to the best of their abilities, and they both said yes.

Williams stated, “I can really feel the difference in tackling with a cap on and when it’s off the helmet.”

Coleman said, “Players are demanding themselves to wear these caps because the fundamentals of tackling are not taught correctly anymore.”

DO HOROSCOPES DEFINE YOU?

By Sommora Marshall, ’25

When you talk about astrology most people think of the 12 Zodiac signs, but it’s so much deeper than that. Astrology dates back about 2,400 years ago. The first ever known to us astrology was the Babylonians. Astrology is very worldwide but depending on where you are it can mean something a little different.

Up until the 17th century astrology was taught in some schools; it fell under the category of science. Astrology stopped being taught in schools because scientists believe it to be pseudo science.

Even though it has not been scientifically proven to be true, many people still use astrology. People have horoscope readings, learn about their future, look deeper into your personalities and ect. A popular tool people use would be their birthchart; This is supposed to tell you how things in the present or future will affect you.

On the other hand scientists rely on logic, evidence, and reasoning. Many studies on astrology have

proven there is no guaranteed link between future, personalities and ect.

Since there are different astrologers like western astrology, Chinese astrology, Vedic astrology, It is hard to determine what certain things mean if it can change in every astrology.

However, learning more about your Zodiac Sign can be fun! When out socializing it can be an interesting topic to converse about; you have three signs, sun, moon, and rising. Once you learn all three of your signs you can really dive deeper into yourself. It can even help you make tough decisions in your life.

Although learning your three signs can be amusing, researchers have found it not to be completely true.

People who have the same sun sign would share very similar personality traits, but studies have shown different.

Western Hills senior Jamarion Mincy thinks, “People act certain ways when they’re around certain people.”

Peer Pressure Comes in a Variety of Forms

Mylee Meyer, ’26

85 percent of high school students have felt peer pressure at some point in their life. (Cathrine Reed, “23 Insightful Peer Pressure Statistics”). Being a teenager with grades, tests, college, and jobs is already incredibly stressful. However, on top of the pressure from your peers, can be a lot.

Peer pressure is often spoken about but not often truly understood. Peer pressure doesn’t need to be aggressive and demanding; it can be subtle to the point you don’t realize you’re being pressured. Peer pressure is often used when discussing behaviors that aren’t necessarily socially acceptable like experimenting with drugs or alcohol. However this isn’t always the case, peer pressure can be connected with bullying, dressing a certain way, socializing with specific groups, and sports.

Kayla Murphy, a senior at Western Hills High School says, “People typically get peer pressured into stuff like drugs, alcohol, sneaking out, or going to parties.”

Peer pressure can come in different forms, from positive to negative, and spoken to silent. Negative Peer pressure is the most commonly discussed example of peer pressure. According to sedonasky.org, How Does Peer Pressure Affect A Teen’s Development, “Negative peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by peers to engage in harmful, risky behaviors or go against one’s values and beliefs. It involves feeling pressured to conform to the attitudes, actions, or decisions of others,

even if they are detrimental or contrary to one’s well-being.” Negative peer pressure increases stress and anxiety, lowers self-esteem, causes depression, causes academic difficulties, and causes addictive behaviors.

Aliyah Thoman, a junior at Western Hills High School says, “I believe there is such a thing as positive peer pressure and it helps you better yourself or make a difference for you and your community.”

Peer pressure isn’t always negative.(What are the 6 Types of Peer Pressure) Teens look to their peers for guidance and one peer’s good example can go a long way. Positive peer pressure includes more support and encouragement than persuasion or pressure. Teens demonstrate the behavior of their peers and this can lead to positive academic changes, putting a stop to bullying, and trying new things.

Peer pressure can be spoken or silent (“What are the 6 Types of Peer Pressure”). Spoken peer pressure is when a peer directly asks, persuades, or suggests that another peer needs to perform or partake in a specific action or behavior. Spoken peer pressure is typically more direct and upfront. If this happens in a group setting it can be incredibly difficult to stick to one’s personal beliefs. Silent peer pressure is when one is exposed to the actions and behaviors of their peers and is left to decide whether they want to follow along. This is common with fashion choices, personal interactions, and social groups. Younger teens lack the maturity to control certain impulses and long-term decisions and due to

this, they’re easily influenced by older and more popular peers.

Kara Smith, a junior at Western Hills High School says, “If my friends were doing something I disagreed with I’d talk to them about it, and if they continued to do it I’d stay away from them while they were doing it.”

Positive peer pressure can encourage and influence someone to make positive choices regarding academics, bullying, or trying something new. However Negative peer pressure can make you lose a sense of judgment, negatively shift morals, shake your sense of identity, ruin self-confidence, increase anxiety, and partake in dangerous activities that can be life-altering.

Not falling for peer pressure can feel difficult however you just need to understand your values and beliefs and set boundaries for yourself. You can also try and offer an alternative if you’re being pressured to partake in a specific activity you don’t agree with. However if the pressure gets too much do not hesitate to seek outside help.

Peer pressure is concerning, common, and comes in many forms. This can make it hard to detect and stop. However, It’s important to surround yourself with positive influences. People who will support your values, beliefs, and boundaries, and would never attempt to persuade you to do something they know you wouldn’t want to without their influence.

Academic Pressures: Common Amongst Students

Marques Partain, '26

Academic pressure is a common experience for students across all levels of education. With increasing expectations from parents, teachers, and society, students often feel the weight of performing well academically. The competition for high grades, scholarships, and future career opportunities adds to this burden. As a result, many students find themselves struggling to balance the expectations of their studies with their personal lives.

Academic pressure is the stress and anxiety students feel due to the expectation to achieve academic success. This pressure can come from many things, including family, peers, and the students' own standards. It can lead to a range of negative outcomes such as burnout, loss of sleep, and mental health issues like anxiety and depression. In some cases, the overwhelming stress can even result in students losing motivation or developing a fear of failure, eventually impacting their academic performance and overall well-being.

For Aniya Wolfenberg, a student at Achieve Point, a regular approach to dealing with school stress is by stepping away. "When I am stressed with school, I tend to take a break from it and do something else until I feel like I'm ready to tackle it," she explains. Wolfenberg feels that students are often brought down by too much homework in addition to classwork, leading to heightened stress. "I think we should only have in-class work or homework, not both," she states, emphasizing how the current system puts unnecessary pressure on students. She believes that this extreme focus on grades takes away from the learning experience and adds to her anxiety.

Mental health challenges like anxiety are common among students like Wolfenberg, who feels the demands are too much to handle at times. She also talks about the lack of support, saying she receives "little to no" help from teachers, parents,

or peers when it comes to managing academic pressures.

On the other hand, Mamadou Diallo, a student at Western Hills High School, who juggles both school and a job, takes a different approach to managing his stress.

He believes that the help he receives from teachers, parents, and friends makes a difference. Teachers play an important role in helping him understand difficult subjects, while his parents and friends provide additional homework support.



Diallo copes by finding support in music and by seeking out help from teachers when his grades become a concern. "Music and talking to teachers about my grades" helps him get through the challenging moments of academic life. He admits that the weight of homework often feels overwhelming, especially when combined with his job.

"Sometimes I get too much homework at the same time. I don't have much time to do it after school because of my job," he explains. Balancing work and school only adds to the pressure he feels to perform academically. However, Diallo be-

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temporarily escape the overwhelming stress of school.

Like Wolfenberg and Diallo, Lordeus feels the pressure to focus on grades is counterproductive.

"It can add pressure and distract us away from learning," she explains, pointing out that students often feel trapped in a cycle of academic competition and the need to perform well. Lordeus also faces the challenge of isolation; she tends to keep to herself and rarely seeks help from others. "I usually just keep to myself, so I don't really get any support," she admits, which makes it harder for her to navigate the mental health struggles brought on by academic stress. Despite the stress, Lordeus acknowledges that school offers some preparation for the future, though she believes it could be improved. "Yes, it does a little bit, because it teaches students the important things we'll need," she says, referring to the basic skills that schools do teach.

Each of these students experiences academic pressure differently, but they all agree that the intense focus on grades can be overwhelming and counterproductive. Wolfenberg, Diallo, and Lordeus each suggest that while grades matter, the pressure to constantly perform adds unnecessary stress, detracting from the overall learning experience. Whether it's taking a break, turning to music, or reflecting quietly, these students are finding ways to manage the mental and emotional strain that comes with academic life.

Ultimately, their stories highlight a larger issue that many students face: the struggle to balance academic performance with personal well-being. As Wolfenberg suggests, a rework of the current academic system, including a reduction in the amount of homework and a shift in focus away from constant grading, could help alleviate some of the pressures students experience daily. By making these changes, schools could create a healthier, more balanced environment that better supports both learning and mental health.

What Being Athletic Does to Students

By Diana Lopez-Sanchez, '25

Imagine being on a big field feeling relaxed, excited and hyped up to work on yourself. You feel the breeze and the sun hit you at the same time, forgetting about everything that has happened today. This is what being athletic feels like.

When being active or playing a sport your mind and overall well being is being helped by playing sports. Playing some kind of sport helps you be healthy mentally, physically and emotionally. It is also helpful by reducing stress, and improving the strength of one's mind. You also battle with self confidence.

José Fernando Rodriguez, a senior who plays for the men's soccer team at Western Hills High School says, "When I have a challenging game I push myself by focusing on why I love the sport and staying pro-

fessional in each moment. I also remind myself of all the effort I've put in to get to where I am right now, and that motivates me to give it my all."

Also, being athletic and having something to do rather than going home and watching television for hours helps you escape from problems better. You also feel like you have a second home where you could go to distract you from the problems or difficulties you face.

Federico Ventura, a senior athlete at Western Hills High School says, "When playing soccer, I forget about the things I think about and focus on playing soccer. So yes, I use it as an escape from problems."

Although being an athlete can be hard by pushing yourself mentally, physically and emotionally, you still have motivation to keep going. Some people even stop being active for a while and start to miss the feel-

ing of how playing a sport made them feel as a person.

Jhaiden Ormsby, a senior who plays for the men's soccer team at Western Hills High School says, "When I take a break from sports, I feel like I miss it and that I need to go back and play the sport."

Being athletic doesn't only help with your mentality, physical, and emotional state of well being, but it also helps with the longevity of your life. Some say that some sports are linked to people living longer and have scientific proof of that.

Rodriguez says, "Yes, being athletic and active can help you live longer. Regular exercise improves your heart, your health, strengthens your muscles, and boosts your overall well being. It also enhances mood and energy levels leading to a healthier and longer life."