

# *The* GROVE GAZETTE

Vol. VI, Issue 4

Union Grove ISD News

Dec. 2024

## Basketball Season *Begins*

JH One-Act Play,  
UIL Teams Prepare  
for District Meet

Annual Program  
Honors Local Veterans



# On the *Cover*

Senior Cason Cowan goes to line and drains both free throws, gaining two points for the team in the 66-42 tournament loss against Brook Hill. "Despite the loss, I feel like we learned a lot from the game and are ready to bounce back and win the next one," Cowan said. Photo by Jaxon Ledbetter

This page: Veterans enjoy coffee, breakfast items and each other's company before the annual program begins.  
Photo by Natalie Pritchett

The elementary and junior high campuses ranked among US News and World Report's 2025 Best Elementary Schools and Best Middle Schools, which was based on campuses demonstrating proficiency on math and language arts state assessments across socioeconomic demographics.

## *The* GROVE GAZETTE

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**BEST**  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



**BEST**  
MIDDLE SCHOOLS



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# LETTERS FROM THE PRINCIPALS

Hello from Union Grove Elementary!  
There's been a lot happening here.

Our fifth-grade students sang at the Veteran's Day program on Nov. 8. In addition, three of our sixth graders read a patriotic poem for the program.

We enjoyed having our families join us for Thanksgiving lunch on Nov. 20. Thank you to our cafeteria staff for the delicious food! We hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving break.

December is such a busy time, and I wanted to give you a heads-up about some of our events. Here are some things coming up in December:

- Band Christmas Concert - Dec. 5
- Painting with Kids - Dec. 9
- Santa Shop - Dec. 9-13
- JH (Sixth Grade) Academic UIL at Ore City - Dec. 11
- Third-Grade Caroling at Gilmer Banks - Dec. 12
- Pictures with Santa - Dec. 13
- Elementary Academic UIL at Big Sandy - Dec. 13
- Third-Grade Christmas Program - Dec. 16
- Christmas Parties, Early Release - Dec. 18
- Christmas Holidays - Dec. 19-Jan. 7

As always, if you need anything, my email is ballards@ugisd.org and my office phone number is 903-845-3481.

Sherrill Ballard  
Elementary Principal

It's almost Christmas Break!  
The fall semester has been jam-packed with Lion Pride awesomeness:

- Girls' Cross Country making it to state AND Landry Harris being named 2A All State Team!
- The Veteran's Day Program was a huge success. All the theatre, band, cheer, and culinary departments worked together to support this very special event.
- Our CTE Showcase went off great! The exposure for our 6th-8th grade students to all the hands-on, exciting options was a neat experience. The high school students who presented all did an excellent job.
- Junior high One-Act Play - I don't even have the words. The performance was spectacular. The amount of work and time invested paid off in a BIG way with a first place WIN!
- Our basketball season is off to a great start. Right before Thanksgiving we hosted a big tournament where the culinary team provided amazing meals and snacks for the Hospitality Room. Y'all are the best!

Up and coming:

- Exams/Exemptions
- Christmas Break starts Wednesday, December 18th (half day)
- Attendance! If you are NOT here, you are NOT learning. Saturday School is the last step before Truancy. Take care of your business and get here. We miss you when you are gone.

Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas,  
Amanda Childress  
JH/HS Assistant Principal  
childressa@ugisd.org / 903-845-5506

## Five Gift-Wrapping Songs to Instill Christmas Spirit

by Wesley Ratcliffe and Morgan Morrow

### "Carol of the Bells" (Lindsey Stirling)

Stirling's rendition of this iconic song has a depth unlike any other. Her violin skills and the hours she put in to make this masterpiece is obvious. Even when it is not Christmas, many people still listen to this beautiful song.

### "All I Want for Christmas" (Mariah Carey)

This instantly recognizable tune perfectly captures the festive spirit. Essentially, it's a well-crafted song with amazing vocals that evoke positive feelings about the holiday season and is fun to sing along to.

### "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year" (Andy Williams)

This song demonstrates the cozy joy of Christmas and how weather and jolly traditions like parties, caroling, hot chocolate and toasting marshmallows on an open fire make people feel.

### "Last Christmas" (Wham!)

Anyone who has experienced heartbreak or spent the holiday season alone can relate to the emotion in this song, which sounds upbeat but mourns a lost love.

### "Feliz Navidad" (José Feliciano)

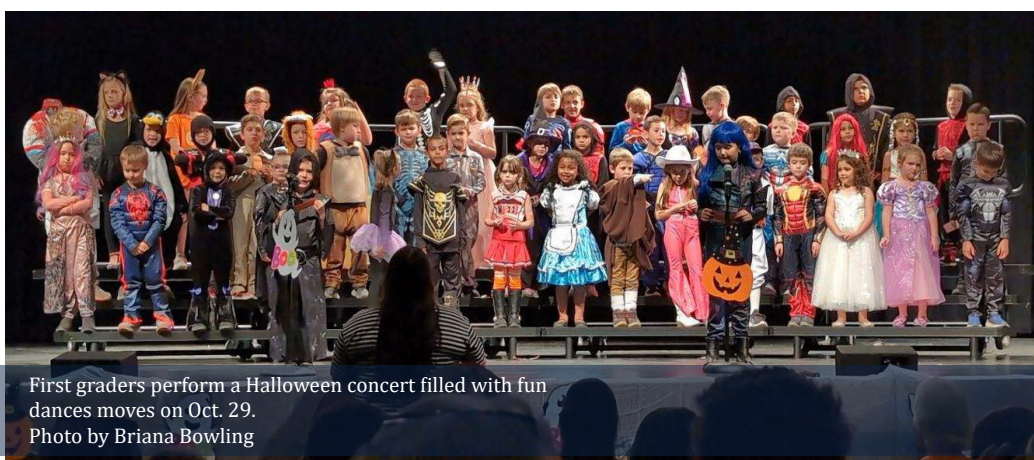
This song conveys a cheerful "Merry Christmas" greeting that perfectly mixes Spanish and English, making it appealing and recognizable to speakers of both languages. The rhythm of the song makes it a karaoke favorite.



Eighth-graders Kyleigh Blackstock and Blaiklee George learn color theory in Principles of A/V. Photo by K. Smith



Culinary Arts senior Keira Taylor fills in for cafeteria staff during junior high lunch Nov. 18. Photo by K. Smith



First graders perform a Halloween concert filled with fun dances moves on Oct. 29. Photo by Briana Bowling



The fifth graders perform "On Veterans' Day" and "We Will Not Forget" to show their appreciation for the veterans. Sixth graders Boyd Potter, Olivia Barbee and Khloe Payne also read "The Noble and the Brave" for the audience.  
Photo by Connor Stanford

Below: A veteran captures videos of the theater students' performance. "At first I was nervous, then once I started performing, I calmed down and I felt like it was just practice," junior Makynlie Young said. "[I loved] getting to be a part of it and showing my gratitude to all the veterans that had served for my country."  
Photo by Bella Foster

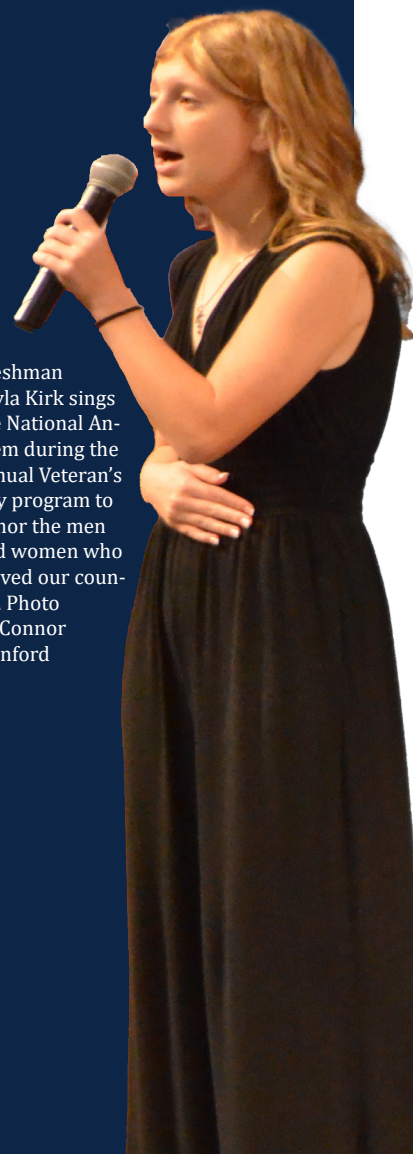


Above: Junior Olivia Dabreu pins nametags as veterans register. Photo by Natalie Pritchett

Right: Culinary Arts student Meredith Morgan (12) washes dishes on Nov. 8 in preparation to serve the veterans' breakfast and lunch. Photo by Konner Long



Freshman Layla Kirk sings the National Anthem during the annual Veteran's Day program to honor the men and women who served our country. Photo by Connor Stanford





Junior Malloie Cannon carries the Coast Guard flag and each veteran who served in the Coast Guard stands as the band plays "Veterans Salute".  
Photo by Hannah Caperton



# Honoring Heroes

## Annual Program Celebrates Local Veterans

by Bella Foster, Connor Stanford  
and Bailee Hosak

Flags parade down the auditorium aisles. Red, white and blue poms rustle with friction in the cheerleaders' quickly moving hands.

A chorus of voices and instruments permeates the air, and the crowd stares with reverence at the men and women who served in each branch of the U.S. military.

Soldiers, medics, pilots, engineers.  
Heroes all.

Sixty veterans attended the annual student-led program on Nov. 8, which featured on-stage performances from band, cheer and theater students; behind-the-scenes work of Culinary Arts students and speaking parts from upperclassmen.

Fifth graders Brinlee Orms and Konin Pharr led the pledges and freshman Layla Kirk sang the National Anthem.

"I was very excited and nervous to sing the National Anthem in front of my whole school and many veterans," Kirk said. "It was nerve-racking. When I was told that I would be singing, I was shocked but very honored to be given this opportunity. I practiced for almost two weeks in advance to prepare

myself."

Majorettes performed to "Sounds of Sousa", the entire fifth grade class sang "On Veterans' Day" and "We Will Not Forget", and the junior high and high school cheerleaders performed to "Red, White and Blue".

"We got off to a rough start dropping stunts, but after all the practices we got way better," eighth grader Carmen James said. "We all knew how serious this event was and were trying to put on a good performance for the veterans."

The high school band performed "Veterans Salute", "National Emblem March", "America the Beautiful" and "Taps"; sixth graders Boyd Potter, Olivia Barbee and Khloe Payne read "The Noble and the Brave"; and theater students performed "Soldier's Light", "Corns for my Country", "Decision Height", "Fighting for America" and "The Things They Carried". Senior Izzy Gregg performed in the women's Air Force skit.

"I felt very honored that I got to perform this in remembrance of the woman that served," Gregg said. "I also thought it was special because the people that I escorted were in the women's Air Force. So I felt very connected with them, and I have a lot of respect for them after learning more about

the women's Air Force in my skit."

Culinary Arts students prepared pulled pork sandwiches with baked beans, chips and a variety of desserts.

"It was an honor and privilege to serve the veterans, to ensure they were well-fed," senior Meredith Morgan said.

Other student contributions included Jamie Russell's (12) opening remarks, Hannah Coulter's (12) prayer, FFA officers' posting of the colors, Brendon Deary's (12) introduction of special guests, Rylee Aiken's (12) listing of veterans in attendance and Parker Haley's (11) closing remarks.

"Leading the prayer was a way to show respect and thank the veterans for all they've done," senior Hannah Coulter said. "I felt really honored when I found out. I hadn't led prayer at the Veterans Day program before, but I had done it for all of our home football games this year. Being trusted with something so special meant a lot to me."



Wrigley Roberts (11) drives the ball downcourt to score against King's Academy on Nov. 15. The varsity Lions won 59-14. Photo by Hannah Haggard



# Varsity *Victories*

## Lady Lions Enjoy Winning Streak, Lions Showcase Skills

by Olivia Dabreu and Charlotte Wright

The varsity Lady Lions are 7-2 at the end of November. The girls started the year with a 48-25 loss against Mt. Enterprise Nov. 9, but then went on a six-game win streak by defeating East Texas Home School, Glade-water, Kilgore, Christian Heritage, White Oak, and Carlisle. In the home tournament Nov. 21-23, the girls lost the championship game against Spring Hill 33-30, but foreign exchange junior Nico Carloni won a spot on the All-Tournament Team by scoring 45 points. The award was given to only nine players out of all 12 teams.

"I was happy and honored, and in general I just really like playing at UG with this team," Carloni said.

The varsity boys started their season in Troup Nov. 12, finishing just short with a score of 39-35 before demolishing King's Academy 59-14 on Nov. 15 and Carlisle 66-27 Nov. 19. In the home tournament, the Lions beat Christian Heritage and Hughes Springs but lost to Spring Hill and Brook Hill.

Senior Jace Roberts leads the team with points per game at 14.6 and total points with 117, followed by sophomore Hudson Wightman with 11.1/89 and senior Jesse Fulmer with 9.1/73. Roberts also leads the team in rebounds, junior Wrigley Roberts leads in assists, Wightman leads in steals and senior Cason Cowan leads in blocks.

During the home tournament, the JV girls played five games. On Nov. 21, they defeated Carlisle 48-6, but then Carlisle's JV dropped out of the tournament, so the UG girls were split into two teams. On Saturday, Nov. 23, one of the JV teams beat White Oak. Directly after the game against White Oak, the other team played Christian Heritage and won 34-28; then the first team to play faced Garrison and won again.

"I'm looking forward to playing the rest of this season with my teammates," sophomore Chloe Hector said. "I am excited to see how much we progress as a team over the course of the season."



Junior Ty Cook powers through the lane, trying to score against the Carlisle Indians on Nov. 19. "Going into the game against Carlisle, I felt well prepared for our opponents," Cook said. The boys won 66-27. Photo by Jaxon Ledbetter



Junior Carter Cooper drives to the basket, scoring the layup and drawing a foul for an and-1 on Tuesday, Nov. 19. Photo by Jaxon Ledbetter



Aubrie Coulter (9) and Mia Mullican (9) call for the ball at their game against Kilgore. "It was a great experience playing against a larger school than I have in the past," Mullican said. Photo by Alley Hale



Sophomore Danica Vestal pushes past a Carlisle defender at the home tournament. "I am so excited for this season and I feel like our team is going to do great because we have good team chemistry and are all putting in a lot of hard work," Vestal said. Photo by Hannah Haggard



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for more information.



# JH Basketball Teams Prepare for Season

by Charlotte Wright and Hannah Caperton

Junior high basketball teams will play Harleton on Dec. 2, girls at home and boys away, and Big Sandy on Dec. 9, girls away, boys at home. The girls will also play in the home round robin tournament on Dec. 14.

"I'm so excited for this basketball season," eighth grader Natalie Delaney said. "I feel like this season has gotten better from when we started. Now that we have had experience and played together once or twice, we are playing together as a team, and I love it."

Both boys teams have played and lost one game to Hawkins on Nov. 18, while both girls teams have played two games, McLeod on Nov. 4 and Hawkins on Nov. 18 and are currently 1-1.

"I think that as a team we play very well together," eighth grader Malachi Martin said. "Our team as a whole has improved greatly since last year, and we are growing closer together every day we play."

Since the Hawkins games, teams have practiced every school day to better prepare for the rest of the season.

"I think that our team will do very well this year," seventh grader Breanna Badgett said. "We all get along great, and we work together, which makes our team have a very strong bond."

Teams run through offensive and defensive plays and conduct ball handling drills, shooting drills, and various scrimmages,

"I feel like we are going to have a really good team this year," seventh grader Grayson Selph said. "I like playing with all my teammates, and I feel like as the season goes on we'll keep getting better."



Above: Eighth grader Kale Reeves steals a pass.

Photo by Hannah Caperton

Eighth grader Haiden Evans takes a jump shot during the Hawkins game Nov. 18.

Photo by Charlotte Wright

Right: Seventh grader Colt Moore drives to the basket "I think we played great out there," Moore said. "The team is dedicated and committed to the game, but above all things we give the glory to God."

Photo by Charlotte Wright

Below: Seventh grader Lawsyn Maines jumps for the tip-off in the girls' Nov. 4 game against McLeod. "When I go up to tip the ball, a lot of pressure goes down in my head, but when they are shortish, it's not that hard."

Photo by Zoey Johnston





Below: Seventh grader Kayson Forster shoots a layup against Hawkins during the home game Nov. 18. "Scoring is basically like work in school," Forster said. "If you put work into it, you have good results." Photo by Hannah Caperton



Seventh-grader Cooper Littlejohn shoots a free throw against McLeod Nov. 4. Photo by Jillian Russell

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LET'S GO LIONS





Adalyn Orms (8), Susanna Sturkie (8), Cooper Littlejohn (7), Hailey Lee (7) and Lilly Lane (8) comfort Jillian Russell's (8) character Clara in the moments before she succumbs to tuberculosis in the Nov. 14 junior high One-Act Play performance of "To See the Stars". Photo by Briana Bowling

## JH Theater, UIL Prepare for District Contests

Junior high One-Act Play cast and crew will rehearse Dec. 3 and compete at 10 a.m. on Dec. 4 before troupes from Hawkins, Harleton and Ore City. Judges will announce awards after the final performance.

OAP students have prepared "To See the Stars", a true story based on New York City shirtwaist girls who strike against factories' brutal working conditions in the early 1900s. The girls endure beatings; imprisonment in the Tombs, a woman's workhouse on Black Wells Island; and the death of a peer, but ultimately banding together makes a difference.

All other academic UIL competitors will travel to Ore City for the district meet on Dec. 11. Buses will depart around 8 a.m., and the first bus will likely head home around 2:45 p.m. Lunch will be provided for all participants and sponsors.

To prepare, students have been rotating to various practices during Academic period.

"I know my students in Science and Spelling have been working really hard," sponsor Tina Burns said. "We plan on Union Grove taking the championship again this year."

### Dec. 11 District Meet Schedule

9 a.m.	Mathematics, Oral Reading
10 a.m.	Maps, Graphs & Charts
10:30	Impromptu Speaking Prelims
11 a.m.	Dictionary Skills, Number Sense, Social Studies, Music Memory
11:30	Modern Oratory
Noon	Calculator Applications, Spelling
1 p.m.	Impromptu Speaking Finals
1:30	Science, Oral Reading Finals
2 p.m.	Art Smart, Modern Oratory Finals
3 p.m.	Listening Skills, Chess



## MORP

Junior High  
Winter Wonderland Dance

Dec. 14 from 7-9:30 p.m.  
JH/HS Cafeteria

Admission: \$5  
or Unwrapped Toy

Dress: Christmas Casual  
or Pajamas

Hosted by Student Council





# All or Nothin'

Left: Junior Makynlie Young, as Aunt Eller, threatens to shoot senior Brendon Deary's Will Parker until he sings "The Farmer and the Cowmen Should be Friends" with her. Fighting, cheering, and a gunshot make this group number one of the most exciting moments of the high school's performance of "Oklahoma!" Photo by Kimber Smith



Above: Junior Shane Deaton, as Jud Fry, points an accusatory finger at senior Colton Mead's Curly McLain after McLain wins the bidding for the basket put together by Lauri Williams, played by junior Callysta Reeves. Fry, who desperately wanted the date that basket symbolizes, threatens the couple, leading to violent conflict later in the play. Photo by Kimber Smith



Left: Ashlyn Heard (10), Emma Searcy (11), Alyssa Mullican (11), Kaylean Raley (12), Abigail Daugherty (9), Izzy Gregg (12), and Jamie Russell (12) sing "Out of My Dreams" to Callysta Reeves (12) who played Lauri Williams, begging her to make up her mind. A ballet sequence follows this song to explain how Lauri feels. Photo by Kimber Smith



# American

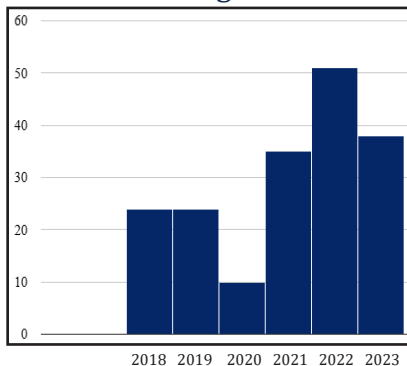
Story by Bailee Hosak  
Student Art by Taleah Samuels

## Nightmare A Cry to Stop School Shootings By Addressing Root Causes of America's Violent Epidemic

Columbine.  
Sandy Hook.  
Uvalde and Santa Fe right here in Texas.  
The most harrowing nightmare and #1 fear for many students and parents - a very real fear for American students.

According to World Population Review, America led the world in school shooting incidents between 2009 and 2018 with 288. Mexico was a distant second with only eight, and most shootings in other countries were associated with terrorism, which means that school shootings are a uniquely American epidemic. This outrageous statistic is on the rise. In 2021 alone, World Population Review reported 202 school shootings in America.

School Shootings 2018-2023



What makes American students turn into school shooters? And how can we help prevent the next shooting?

### Mental Illness

Having a mental illness does not make someone violent, but it can play a part in the equation. According to Psychiatry (Edmont), "the rate of violence increased linearly with the number of diagnoses", especially combinations of illnesses like schizophrenia and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and violence is more likely when mental health patients use or abuse substances like drugs or alcohol. Sandy Hook's shooter, for example, was diagnosed with anxiety, depression, OCD, ASD and anorexia nervosa.

But no mental health diagnosis doesn't equate to no mental health issues. Most, if not all, school shooters have been or could be diagnosed with at least one acute mental illness, although many conditions go unrecognized and undiagnosed, and subsequently can't go on record. Therefore, these illnesses won't stop someone from purchasing a gun or using one kept in the household.

Schools play a big part in a student's mental healthcare. Teachers and counselors undergo specific training in recognizing early signs of mental illness, including depression and anxiety, but counselors need

time to meet with students, which means most school districts need more counselors. Local, state, and federal governments also need to fund mental health care so that those suffering from mental illness can receive the help they need.

### Retaliation & Isolation

When first responders were asked to rank 16 probable reasons for school shootings, nearly 90% agreed that the shooter wanted to get revenge on those who hurt or bullied them, and a little over 60% agreed that physical abuse was occurring in the shooter's home. The 14-year-old gunman who carried a weapon to Apalachee High School, for example, reportedly suffered from neglect and domestic violence.

School shooters also often report feeling isolated or excluded. A 19-year-old graduate returned to his former school, Central Visual and Performing Arts High School, on Oct. 24, 2022, with an AR-15 style rifle, well over 600 rounds of ammunition and dozens of loaded magazines. He shot and killed 15-year-old Alexandria Bell and 61-year-old Jean Kuczka, who planned to retire soon but died protecting her students, and wounded several others. According to police, the shooter left a note in his car detailing how lonely he was, having no family or social life. Police called it "a perfect storm" for a mass shooter.



To prevent this, campuses must enforce bullying policies or create new ones if the previous policies prove to be inadequate, and students and staff must make efforts to be kind and inclusive. Everyone should be on the lookout for students who seem isolated.

#### Desire for Recognition

On Nov. 30, 2021, Oxford High's shooter gunned down Madisyn Baldwin, Tate Myre, Hana St. Juliana and Justin Shilling. He wounded seven others, and most of his victims were shot multiple times, including some of the deceased. The gunman admitted what he had done was unspeakable and horrible but claimed he wanted fame - to go down as one of Michigan's deadliest school shooters. He was sentenced to life in prison at the age of 17.

News outlets and social media posts cannot glorify or excuse school shootings and simultaneously expect them to stop. We cannot give shooters the fame they desire.

#### Ease of Access to Weapons

The Oxford High shooter's parents were charged with four counts of involuntary manslaughter. Although they pleaded not guilty and argued there were no legal grounds to charge them, prosecutors argued they had bought the gun used four days prior. They reportedly ignored their son's concern for his mental health and gave him easy access to the gun.

Federal laws limit legal firearm shopping to those with a clean record and an ID to prove they meet the age requirement - 21 to buy a handgun or 18 to buy a long gun. But while background checks on gun sales prevent legal sale to those with a history of aggression, there are other ways to buy

guns, and the only procedures keeping guns out of the hands of minors are precautions parents must take at home.

In addition to the threat of school shootings, the CDC reports that "unintentional injury is a leading cause of death among U.S. children and adolescents aged 0-17 years, and firearms are a leading injury method". The same report showed that "approximately one half of unintentional firearm injury deaths among children and adolescents occurred at their home".

In January of 2023, 14-year-old Demet-rae Miller was arrested and charged with felony manslaughter after he shot and killed a 12-year-old and injured a 15-year-old with a gun he and his friends were playing with.

Two-year-old Grace Rodriguez died in a hospital a few hours after she shot herself with her mother's firearm in early February of 2023. Her mother, Abigail Rodriguez, who was charged with neglect of a dependent, claimed she always stored the gun in the kitchen during the day. However, she'd forgotten it on her nightstand, where Grace found it, that day.

Both of these cases and thousands of others could've been prevented if parents educated themselves on laws relating to firearm storage - especially if there are children or other dependents in the house - and followed proper firearm storage guidelines, including locking the trigger, unloading the weapon, and placing it in a gun locker or safe away from the ammunition. Hiding a weapon is not enough.

#### Inadequate Safety Measures

The number and devastation of school shootings have pushed many districts to

add Student Resource Officers (SROs), metal detectors, guardian programs, and clear backpack policies. Government agencies have recommended active shooter plans and upgrading doors and locks.

Yes, even simple safety measures like locked doors can prevent some school violence, but some districts have not even enforced this policy.

And policy can only do so much. When classmates refused to open the locked classroom door between themselves and the Apalachee shooter, he opened fire on the hallway. At Uvalde, police retreated and waited for better-trained backup. Despite the countless safety measures taken to stop a gunman from entering a school or to lessen the damage if they do gain access, schools can never be safe enough. In America, students and staff must actually prepare for the worst. However, a three-year audit ending in 2020 revealed that only 200 of the 1,022 districts in Texas had active shooter policies, and only 67 were viable emergency operation plans. Districts must perform lockdown drills, and they must coordinate with emergency personnel to prepare for this worse-case scenario.

#### Cry for Action

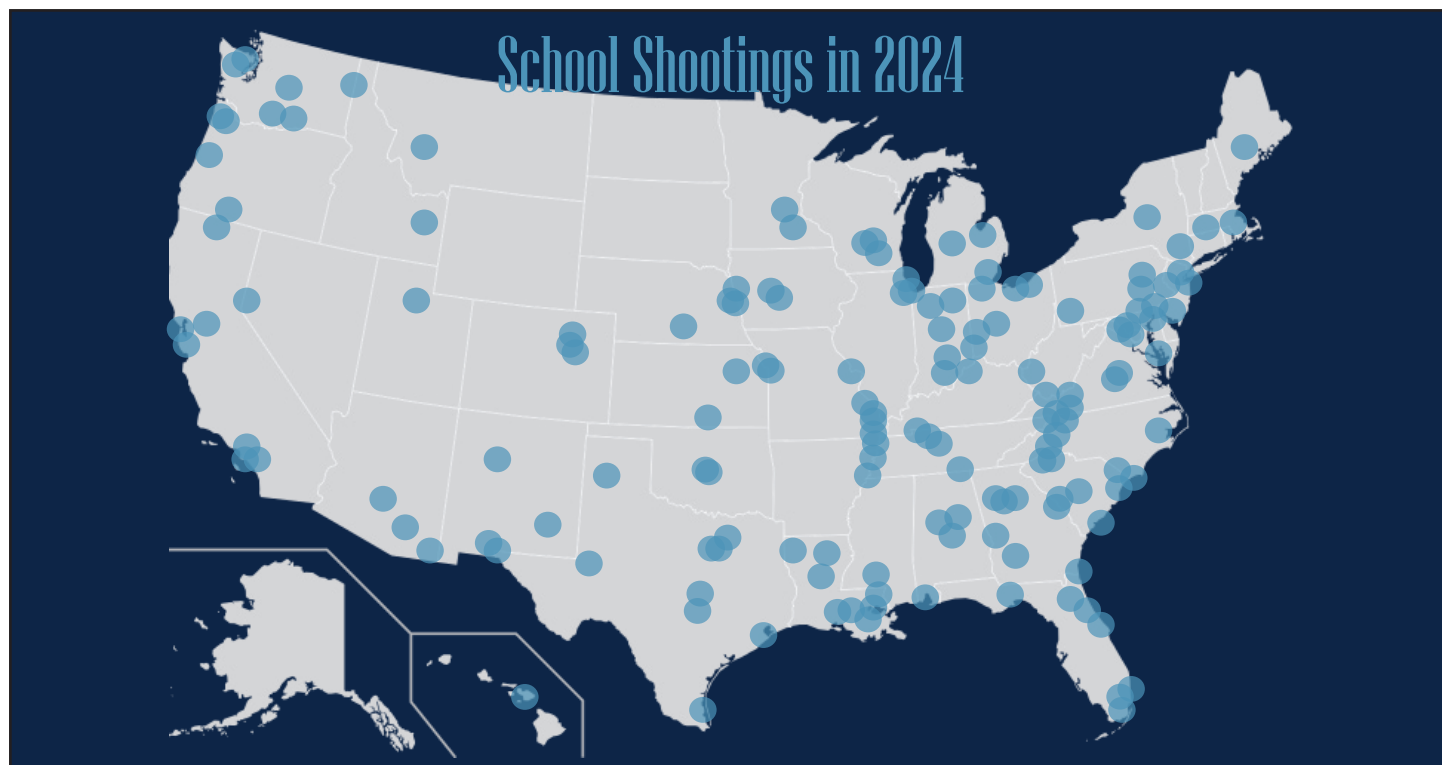
American students call upon our governments to fund mental healthcare.

We call upon news outlets and those who create social media posts to not glorify or excuse school shootings.

We call upon families to limit access to guns and other weapons.

And we call upon our peers to be kind and inclusive.

Lives depend on it.







Male competitors and judges use their voices, ballots, and words to silence women competing in speech and debate events. The words of a woman may be able to change the world, but at this point, they remain unheard. Concept demonstrated by freshmen debaters Briana Bowling and Connor Mead. Photo by Jamie Russell



# It's a Man's World

## Female Debaters Face Discrimination

Op./Ed. by Jamie Russell

"Shoes??"

"Make your dress more professional."

"Pull your hair into a ponytail next time."

"You look like you're in a cocktail dress. I expect professional dress at this level."

**"I can tell who the stupid partner is."**

All verbal or written feedback from male cross-examination debate judges when I hadn't even spoken yet.

Out of my whole speech and debate team, only one male has ever been critiqued on his attire -- once in all three years.

"Nice suit," his written critique said.

I receive one per tournament, as do my female teammates.

The National Speech and Debate handbook explains that attire must be presidential, but since there has never been a female president, shouldn't it be men who are held to an impossible standard?

Nope. Criticizing women is the standard.

As a debater, I am tasked with the job of proving my point and proving it well. Why should appearance even matter? Flats don't weaken the words I say. My lips speak the same with or without lipstick. My dress's pattern or style won't change my pronunciation.

If what I look like holds no ground in the speech and debate round, it should have no place in my critique. I should not have to put away every aspect of myself and hide my femininity to be heard.

My voice has power even if it is feminine.

But this attitude of belittling girls and reducing their worth to physical appearance pervades competition rounds.

In one three-minute questioning period this year, my male opponent interrupted me six times as his female partner shook her head. My opponent spoke over me so much that my partner Colton Mead started his round by imploring the judge to hold the opponent accountable.

It is common that female debaters are unable to get through a tournament without an opponent mansplaining something we have already thoroughly researched, and if not mansplaining, we experience outright name-calling. Before a district round last year, my opponent asked "Are you even good?" in front of the moderating adult who awarded that opponent with first place.

I wish I could say this behavior only came from my high school opponents, but honestly, it stems from judges and coaches who exhibit similar misogynistic attitudes and even

discrimination toward female competitors. One male judge, a college student that Colton and I were familiar with, pulled me aside to tell me that I needed to be less aggressive -- even though he acknowledged that Colton was more aggressive than me -- to not look like a bxxxx. Although he wasn't being purposely malicious, he taught me that only male assertiveness is acceptable. Whether a male judge likes or dislikes our case, they consistently engage with my partner over me, directly addressing Colton with compliments or questions. Even in Prose and Poetry Interpretation, judges appreciate male voices over female voices, and it's a common understanding that a woman needs to work twice as hard to beat a man. My male teammates even joke that they will automatically place higher because they are men.

This is the standard that keeps me and other young women from competing in more conversational styles of debate, like Congress or Public Forum. This is the standard that holds back so many female students from competing at all and prevents the ones who do from succeeding. This is the standard that tries to conform strong women of tomorrow into quiet bystanders.

It's time to change the standard.

## Upcoming Events

### Dec. 2

JH Boys Basketball @Harleton - 4:30 p.m.  
JH Girls Basketball v. Harleton - 5 p.m.

### Dec. 3

HS Boys Basketball v. Harts Bluff  
HS Girls Basketball @Garrison - 5 p.m.

### Dec. 4

JH One-Act Play Performances

### Dec. 5

Christmas Band Concert - 6 p.m.

### Dec. 5-7

HS Boys Basketball @Pine Tree Classic  
V Girls Basketball @All Saints Tournament

### Dec. 6-7

FFA State LDE Contest @Huntsville  
All-Region Band Tryouts

### Dec. 9

ASVAB Testing in HS Library  
STAAR EOC Retesting  
Painting with Kids - 3:45  
JH Boys Basketball v. Big Sandy - 4:30 p.m.  
JH Girls Basketball @Big Sandy - 5 p.m.

### Dec. 10

STAAR EOC Retesting  
HS Boys Basketball @Gladewater - 5 p.m.  
HS Girls Basketball v. McLeod - 5 p.m.

### Dec. 11

JH Academic UIL @Ore City  
FFA Fall Reward Lunch  
TSIA2 Testing

### Dec. 12

Band Performances, Third Grade Caroling @ Gilmer Banks  
Fall Sports Awards - 5:30 p.m.

### Dec. 12-13

FFA Greenhand Camp @Timberline Baptist  
HS Boys Basketball @Overton Tournament

### Dec 13

Elementary Academic UIL @Big Sandy - 1 p.m.  
Elementary Pictures with Santa

### Dec. 14

HS Boys Basketball @Overton Tournament  
JH Girls Basketball Tournament

### Dec. 16

JH Boys Basketball @Linden Kildare - 4:30 p.m.  
JH Girls Basketball v. Linden Kildare - 5 p.m.  
FFA Christmas Party - 6 p.m.  
Third Grade Christmas Program - 6:30 p.m.

### Dec. 18

Early Release

### Dec. 20

HS Basketball v. Harleton - 4 p.m.

### Dec. 21

Boys Basketball v. Alumni

### Dec. 26-28

V Girls Basketball @Boles Tournament

### Dec. 27

HS Boys Basketball @Overton

### Dec. 31

HS Boys Basketball @Harmony





Each CTE program set up a booth Nov. 20 for the first CTE showcase visited by sixth, seventh and eighth grade students.

Clockwise from top left: Nurse Jodie Mayhan showcases the health science program; Kylah Humphreys (11), Kaylean Raley (12), Makayla Smith (12), and Brianna Westmoreland (12) explain the culinary arts program; Jamie Russell (12) tells Isabella O'Neal (7) about journalism; rocketry students Parker Rogers (11), Nadia Ibarra (10) and Casey Bogue (10) talk between student groups. Photos: Alley Hale



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