

Students walk out in response to shooting

Oracle survey revealed earlier concerns about gun violence, school safety

By Nathan Fuentes & Leah Schatz
STAFF WRITERS

School is supposed to be a space for students to learn and congregate safely. But Skyline students have never been more unsure of that than after the Nov. 12 bathroom shooting during 7th period, which left one student injured. Police say two students are under arrest. Less than 24 hours later, legendary former Skyline football coach John Beam was shot at Laney College and died the next day. Nine Skyline students were on a field trip at Laney while the active shooter was on campus and had to go into their second lockdown in two school days.

The Nov. 12 shooting marked Skyline's third lockdown this year and another traumatic event for students, especially those who have been on campus for four years. The campus had two nonfatal shootings in 2023-24, a nonfatal stabbing in

2022-23, and other violent fights.

In response to the back-to-back shootings, more than 600 Skyline students walked out on Nov. 18, calling for an end to gun violence in student spaces.

Blake Rogers, an AED junior who helped organize the walkout at Skyline, said the protest has made an impact.

"A lot of people maybe felt heard and felt more of a sense of community because there were so many people at that walkout, she said, adding it was nice for students to see so many like-minded people at their school."

Rogers said she hopes people realize how widespread the damage is when there is an act of gun violence and "how damaging it is for not only the person who's shooting, the person who got shot, but the people around it."

Even before the walkout, many students had been voicing concerns about how adults at the school, district, state, and national levels handle gun violence and security. That was clear in responses to a survey *The Oracle*

conducted after the Sept. 10 assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk. The 84 respondents shared their opinions on gun violence and other safety issues. Only 20 percent of students answered that they felt safe from gun violence happening at Skyline. Later, students were asked to give a written response about what they wanted adults to understand.

"I want adults and leaders to understand that many teenagers feel unsafe in school due to the significant increase in gun violence in recent years," wrote one 9th grader who did not provide their name for the survey.

The student also expressed frustration with the communication about the first lockdown, which took place when police received an alert that a student had a firearm on campus. A two-hour search by police did not uncover any truth to the report.

"Parents were not informed until almost 40 minutes later," the student wrote. "A staff member even told me they had no idea what was happening, which



Photo by Jackson Masuret

MARCH FOR CHANGE Students march down Redwood Road after walking out of second period on Nov. 18 to protest gun violence and demand a safer Skyline High School. About 600 students participated.

underscores the dysfunctional system at Skyline that could lead to future problems."

Another anonymous 9th grader had much to say about what adults should know.

"I would like them to know that we don't feel safe. Even if we say we do, we don't. I still see everyone's heads snap around when they hear a door slam. As

a trans kid with trans friends, I know how scared we all are about the future. Many people in America think we're just mentally ill. We don't feel free, and we feel taken over by a dictator. Do people really think this is okay? That this is what the founders of America wanted?"

This student was not alone; See **WALKOUT** page 2

California counters Texas with temporary new maps

Skyline reacts to Prop. 50, but many eligible students didn't cast their ballots

By Oliver Forrest
STAFF WRITER

Texas gerrymandered first. Then California got even by passing Proposition 50. The whole thing left many at Skyline mixed about what was the right thing to do.

Prop. 50, also known as the Election Rigging Response Act, was on the California ballot on Nov. 4. With the majority of voters saying yes, California's congressional district lines will change, likely giving the Democratic Party five more seats in the House of Representatives.

The proposition was a response to Texas, where re-mapped districts approved by state lawmakers could likely give Republicans five more seats in Washington, D.C.

Skyline teachers overall are divided, with some seeing Prop 50 as increasing the political influence of California and others worrying it could reduce representation for individuals.

Brandon Johnson, a government and history teacher, is disappointed by the results of the election and the motivation behind it.

"It was supported to go against President Trump, and that's a sad thing," he said. "It does give people less representation."

Republicans who live in California districts that were once safely Republican now will likely have Democrats representing them in Washington.

"I wanted to vote, but I didn't have the information on how to vote because I'd never done it before."

— Jenecis Floriano
AED senior

Calvin Reed, an Ethnic Studies and AP Human Geography teacher, said voters supported it because the point was to give California more political weight.

When asked if the proposition would encourage unfair elections, Mr. Reed added, "If it gets out of hand, then it would increase corruption."

Lydia Ropp, another AP Human Geography teacher, said the proposition will not affect Skyline's congressional district.

Ms. Ropp said other states have proposed similar measures "but it will be a fight to pass those."

Skyline students who are 18 or older had the opportunity to vote on Prop. 50, but many first-time voters didn't know how.

Jenecis Floriano, an AED senior, heard her Economics teacher talking about the proposition in class. She said she would have voted yes but couldn't because she was missing key information.

"I wanted to vote, but I didn't have information on how to vote, because I've never done it before," Floriano said.

Patricia Arabia, a former OUSD teacher, volunteers with



Photo by Oliver Forrest

CIVIC DUTY English teacher Michael Roe points to the "I voted" sticker he received after casting his ballot on Nov. 4. The ballot asked: Should California change congressional maps?

the League of Women Voters to help Skyline students and other young people know what to do when they are old enough to vote. She gave *The Oracle* information on how students can vote.

Ms. Arabia advises that students who are 16 or older and want to vote should first call the county registrar of voters (510) 272-6973 to register. (Oakland allows 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in school board races, but not on statewide measures like Prop. 50)

When the time to vote comes, Arabia said, students should go to the Alameda County Registrar of Voters or California Secretary of State website to look for the correct place to vote. She also mentioned that voting by mail will alleviate any confusion about where to go.

The QR code below is for those who want to register to vote now.



Titan Techies, Stagecraft serve up chills, screams

By Viviane Toure
STAFF WRITER

Dim red lights, eerie music and sudden screams.

The Skyline Haunted Theater is a familiar tradition to upperclassmen, but it would be safe to say students from all grades were surprised by the Oct. 29 and 30 production.

On those days, hundreds of students and their teachers lined up outside the Rawley T. Farnsworth Theater to see how the Skyline Tech Club and Stagecraft classes had turned the stage into a Victorian dollhouse nightmare. Visitors were led up a staircase and into a dim hallway as a student performer played somber music on a grand piano. Flashing strobe lights kept students on edge as actors dressed in Victorian costumes popped out of hidden spaces.

Two old-fashioned rooms showcased faded paintings, antique chairs and dusty skeletons. The final scare, an actor popping out from above a wall, had students screaming and laughing all the way out the door.

While the haunted dollhouse only took up a small section of the theater, it was clear to many visitors how much time and effort had gone into the set design.

"Right as the school year began, we started developing themes and deciding on departments," said Theater Tech Club president Fiona Kordosky.

"We couldn't start any actual building though until after preview night," the AED senior added, referring to a performing



Photo by Lisa Shafer

SCARY DOLLS Freshman Hameeda Caluya (in back) and senior Fiona Kordosky (under table) frighten visitors in the Haunted Dollhouse on Oct. 30. arts event held on Oct. 8.

Construction took about a month, and the project was completed entirely with materials the theater already had.

"It was a labor of love," Kordosky said, adding that the Stagecraft classes taught by Yusuke Soi were a big help.

"They did most of the building we couldn't do and developed the eerie set. The (club) may have come up with the ideas and costumes and whatnot, but the class really pulled it together."

The club and class also collaborated to walk about 600 people through the haunted dollhouse.

"We had so many people who wanted to help out. When everyone you're working with wants to be there, everything else just falls into place," Kordosky said.



Photo by Lisa Leal

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS Junior Elliot Keeffe (right) catches up with teammate Otis Davies during the Oakland Athletic League Cross Country championship held at Skyline on Nov. 19. The boys and girls teams both won titles. Keeffe came in first individually, while Davies was third. For the girls, it was a full team effort as their sixth runner helped break a tie with a strong team from Oakland Tech.

Titan athletes reflect on fall season

By Joseph Cannon-Wright & Tiffany Cheung
STAFF WRITERS

Skyline's Boys and Girls Cross Country teams both captured OAL titles with the girls earning a tie-breaker thanks to their sixth runner finishing one place ahead of Oakland Tech's sixth runner. Usually, team scores are based on only five runners.

Freshman Zia Kenny Wolf finished first in the JV division and said cross country is often misunderstood.

"Though many see it as a solo game, it couldn't be further than the truth," she said. "We push ourselves and our peers to the limits and that's what makes us like no other."

Below is a wrap up of other fall sports at Skyline.

The Girls Volleyball season ended with a 12-7 record when it lost on Nov. 5 to Kipp King 3-2.

The highlight of the winning season was the Oct. 9 game against Oakland High, said captain Brea O'Neal.

"As a team, we battled with determination and held onto our lead," O'Neal said. "It was a high-energy matchup, and both sides were hungry for the win. Even when Oakland High started closing the gap and playing efficiently, we stayed focused and kept pushing."

Flag Football continued to grow its reputation, ending the season with a 7-6 record.

The team's last game came in the first round of the playoffs against Oakland High on Nov. 17 at Castlemont. The team lost

by just one touchdown, 13-7.

The season highlight was beating McClymonds 26-12 despite having three players out with injuries, said Jane Alexander, senior quarterback.

The Titans needed that game to secure their spot in the OAL championships.

Freshman doubles team Mia Louie and Efrata Afardew took second place in the OAL girls tennis championships at Davie Tennis Stadium.

After three intense rounds, they lost the first set 2-6, won the second 6-1, and edged out a 10-8 tiebreaker. The team went on to face Oakland Tech but lost, making Nov. 21 their final game of the season.

Senior Aspen Johnson said Senior Night was another highlight that "showed all the seniors how loved we are on the team ... it truly shows how close we are."

Skyline Football had its first Homecoming touchdown in four years against Castlemont on Oct. 17, despite losing the game 6-28.

Just before his Senior Night game against Fremont, Senior Kaiden Taylor said, "If this is going to be our last game, then let's go out with a big bang and bring the memories with us as we move on with our lives."

Taylor and his teammates came just one point away of that big bang, losing 20-21 on Nov. 7.



Teachers, students weigh in on AI's role in school, society

Growing use alarms some; others see benefits to learning

By Jackson Masuret
STAFF WRITER

As artificial intelligence becomes more common in classrooms, students and teachers are divided over how — and whether — it should be used for schoolwork.

Students' opinions ranged from calling AI a "cheat code" to worrying about its environmental impact, according to surveys conducted by *The Oracle*.

A student survey received 339 responses, while the teacher survey received 20 replies. To encourage honest answers, respondents were not required to provide their names.

A quarter of teachers said they believe only 20 to 30 percent of students use AI, but 57 percent reported using it sometimes or always, and 27 percent acknowledged they use it for homework.

Meanwhile, 30 percent of teachers said they use AI themselves for grading or lesson planning. Others said they use it in their personal life for things such as generating pet activities.

Students show a wide spectrum of opinions on how AI is shaping the world.

"Even though I use it, I'm trying to stop because it's damaging the environment," one student wrote.

Another said, "Lately, whenever I see AI being used or an AI video on TikTok, it irks me. ... I HATE AI."

Others were even more conflicted. "AI is good but it should be limited for students.

This cycle of using AI will cause the fall of critical thinking in the future generation. However, AI can be beneficial if used correctly for studying, not instantaneous answers."

One student wrote that they use AI only for ideas but not to write a whole essay.

Another admitted AI made assignments easier — sometimes too easy.

"For my Spanish work, I like to use Gemini and also ChatGPT Pro. If I know I can't get things done, I can just AI it," they said, adding it makes them procrastinate more.

Teachers are also divided.

Laurel Sinclair prohibits her English students from using AI,

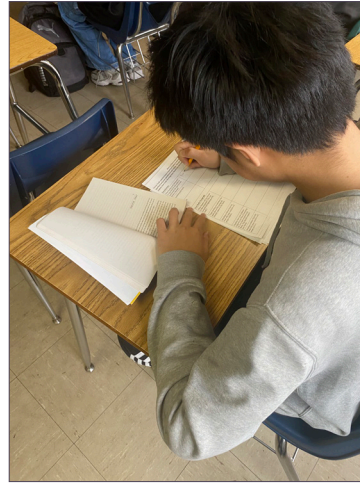


Photo by Oliver Forrest

OLD SCHOOL Freshman Tony Chen works on an essay by hand in Laurel Sinclair's English class. AI is prohibited by Ms. Sinclair.

requiring essays and other assignments to be written by hand.

"If I see AI being used by students in their work, I'll talk to the students face-to-face and I (will) send a message home to their parents," she said.

However, Ms. Sinclair sees banning AI as an uphill battle.

"Because of the advancements

in AI, there is no real escape from it," she said, adding that she thinks teachers will be replaced by AI someday.

In an interview, freshman Cesar Krishna Ortiz said he understands that the reliance on AI can prevent a student from understanding new material.

"There are some students out there that don't know how to use AI the right way and not just plagiarize," he said, explaining

why he would like teachers to show students how to use the powerful technology instead of simply banning or ignoring it.

That's what Wilmot Yeh wants. He is a physics teacher and one of Skyline's digital leaders.

"When students use AI, most of them don't use it to its full potential," he said. "It can be a tool for people to use as a responsible source of information or help."

He explained that AI shouldn't replace real research, but instead support it. For example, students working on their capstones might use AI to brainstorm topics or identify sources, but still need to read articles, verify facts, and build their own arguments.

As he put it, "If you use AI to do the hard stuff so you can do the easy stuff, you'll have no value. If you use AI to do the easy stuff so you can do even harder stuff, you'll have more value."

57% of students say they use AI at least sometimes.

30% of teachers say they use AI for grading or lesson planning

WALKOUT: Parents also mobilize

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many wrote about fear and national politics in the open-ended portion of the survey.

Students who stayed on campus during the walkout were invited to a listening session in the library with school leaders. A Town Hall on Nov. 20 to discuss safety drew 300 parents, stu-

dents, teachers and school and district leaders to the auditorium. Meanwhile, parents have been taking various actions, including a Dec. 1 support rally for Skyline on a nearby overpass and near the campus.

The Oracle plans to report more about actions to improve school safety in its next issue.



How do I navigate difficult teachers?

By Jonas Jones
STAFF WRITER

Dear Oracle,

How does one deal with a difficult teacher or authority figure?

—Fed Up Freshman

Dear Fed Up,

I understand your frustration; dealing with a tough teacher or authority figure can be especially challenging, as expressing your feelings or concerns to those in higher positions could lead to serious consequences.

I still suggest speaking with them first, since they may be going through a personal issue that has impacted their actions, or they may not have noticed their behavior and need you to bring it to their attention.

If speaking with them neither works nor is an option, you should definitely reach out to your counselor, who should be able to help resolve the issue.

Dear Oracle,

How do I stay on top of my classes? I feel like I'm drowning in homework.

—Drowning in Work

Dear Drowning,

I understand the challenges of juggling multiple classes at once. They demand constant attention, diverting time from hobbies and enjoyable activities, creating a cycle of school, homework, and repeat.

I recommend creating a schedule or routine that works for you. I like to create a short homework list on my phone, prioritizing homework assignments from most urgent to least, and I check them off after completing each one to ensure I don't forget any assignments.

I also advise giving yourself a grace period of at least an hour to allow for mental recuperation before diving into your workload. This time can be used to relax, take a break, watch a video, or even eat something, because giving yourself this time will allow you to approach your work with a clear mind, which is an essential tool for success.

The advice provided by *The Oracle* was also reviewed and approved by Skyline counselor Nanci Roman Gonzalez.

Use the QR code below to submit your concern to Dear Oracle.



The Oracle

The Oracle is a vehicle of student freedom of expression and a public forum for the Skyline High School community. It is produced during the academic year by the journalism class and advised by Lisa Shafer

We welcome feedback about our content and would also like to hear ideas for future coverage. Signed letters on topics of concern to our community are welcomed.

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