

# The East Rock Record

133 NASH STREET, NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06511 MAY 2023 VOL. 11, NO. 1

## Pandemic Emergency Ends, But Covid Continues —and So Does Research

### East Rock Record Reporters Interview N.I.H. Head



Dr. Lawrence Tabak, acting director of the National Institutes of Health, holds a press conference via Zoom with East Rock Record reporters on April 20, 2023.

EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Covid Public Health Emergency officially ends this month, but Dr. Lawrence Tabak, acting director of the National Institutes of Health, told East Rock Record reporters that scientists are still trying to figure out how to help people with “long Covid.” The end of the public health emergency, he said, means that, for example, government will no longer pay for Covid testing. “People will be more dependent on health insurance,” he said.

In a 40-minute press conference over Zoom with Record reporters, Dr. Tabak, answered

questions about the development of the Covid vaccine, what it is like to work with U.S. Presidents, how the N.I.H. works, what his daily schedule is like (foreign visitors, testimony before Congress) and what it takes to become a scientist.

Students were awed by Dr. Tabak’s own research about saliva, which captured a lot of attention.

In response to a reporter question, he also shared breaking news about new N.I.H. research showing that a better treatment for babies born to mothers addicted to narcotics is not to give them drugs (what is now

done) but to provide them attention and care.

“What this study has shown is that you don’t need to use other drugs, you can be attentive to the babies, you can swaddle them,” he said, explaining that this means to “wrap them in a blanket and hug them and make sure they are well fed.”

The approach, he said, “will now be adopted in hospitals all over the place and as a result, the babies will be helped much more rapidly.”

Following the press conference, reporters recorded their impressions. Here they are:

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## SCHOOL SAFETY, SECURITY IS TOP PRIORITY

### Do We Need Metal Detectors?

BY SAHIL LEMAR, DARIEL CARBONELL-PEREZ,  
SAM PELLEGRINO, ELEANOR MATZ, CRISTINA AULES  
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF  
EDITED BY BRYAN VENTURA

Students should be able to feel safe and secure at school. But with school violence a reality across the country, safety measures to protect students have become a top priority.

This includes holding “lockdown drills,” which are now standard procedure in many schools, including at East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School.

During a lockdown drill, students and teachers are instructed to stay in their classrooms with the doors locked and the lights turned off. This is done to make it more difficult for any potential threat to enter the room.

East Rock School students practice for this situation, but students say there is always a little bit of fear that maybe something serious is going on when a lockdown happens. “For the amount of incidents that’s been happening, we need more security,” said Arielle Stevens, who is in seventh grade.

Lockdowns can be scary, even when teachers stay calm. “During lockdowns, I try not to show fear to not worry students,” said Jaleesa Wilson, who teaches third grade at East



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## Hungry For Lunch? First, what is your number?

BY MARLIN RODRIGUEZ, HAVEN PICKETT,  
SUMMER PHELPS, HAELLY PATEL  
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF  
EDITED BY ABBEY KIM

Picture this: you’re next in line, waiting for your lunch. You have your tray, but stop and ask yourself: What have I forgotten?

Then the lunch lady says, “Type in your ID.” Your palms are sweating. Your mind goes blank. Six digits stand between you and your meal.

You could be a new student and not know your lunch ID. You could be a younger student who forgot it. But if you want to eat lunch at East Rock Community & Cultural Magnet School – or any New Haven Public School – you need to know this number.

The number is actually a student’s official

school identification number, used for computer access and student tracking. But many know it as the number they need to eat lunch.

Samantha Naja, kindergarten teacher at East Rock School, said it is hard for her students to remember the number. “It’s really difficult,” she said, adding that learning it takes work. “I do think they’re capable, but it’s something we have to start immediately, at the beginning of the year,” Ms. Naja said.

The East Rock School guidance counselor, Monique Holloway, said that “remembering that number can be pretty challenging, especially if you have learning issues.” Ms. Holloway

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## We Have a Bad Behavior Problem. Can We Fix It?

BY DIVERA SIMON, CADY ALI,  
CHARLOTTE MARTINEZ  
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF  
EDITED BY GRAHAM LITZ

These days it is hard to walk down the hallways and NOT hear a bad word.

According to the East Rock Record Spring 2023 Survey, 91 percent of students who responded said they hear swear words in school “on a regular basis.” Even worse: 93 percent said they had seen students disrespect a teacher.

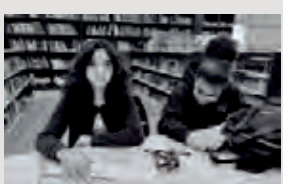
“I feel like some students started to care less about how they act because when a teacher

says, ‘I’m going to write you up,’ they don’t care,” said Cady Ali, in fourth grade. Third grader Sam Pellegrino has noticed it, too. “I just think in general a lot of kids are just mean to teachers. What I’ve seen is just kids that are really rude to them,” he said.

What’s going on? Why are we seeing rude behavior and swearing in hallways?

Many people and experts blame the Covid-19 pandemic for affect-

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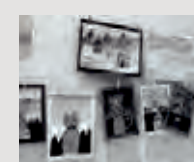


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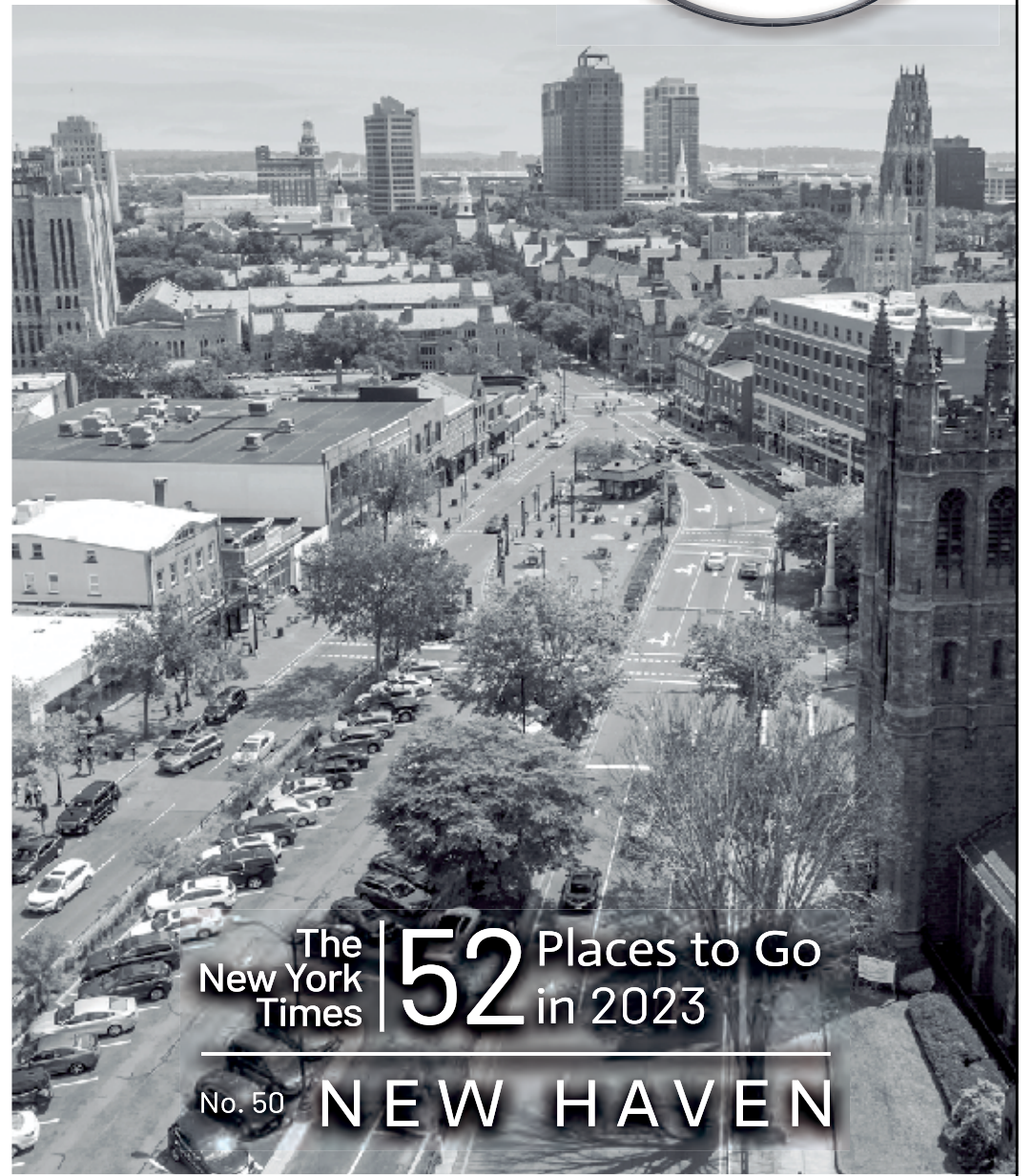
LEADING ON AND OFF THE COURT SEE PAGE 13



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# SCHOOL NEWS

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## School Looks Normal, But All is Not Well

BY JADE KINLOCK, LONDON INGRAM, AUTUMN DIXON- SHAW, KENDALL WALKER-GURLEY EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF EDITED BY NORA WYRTZEN

We're all back. The buses pull up, the bells ring. There are units and lessons and homework. There is lunch and afterschool. While everything looks normal, the fact is that students are actually struggling to cope with serious mental issues.

One student at East Rock Community & Cultural Magnet School described her experience with increased stress and anxiety following the pandemic. She said that her mental health worsened after being a victim of bullying. Although she was referred to the school counselor for help, she still feels students need more support and more resources to help with understanding and managing their mental health.

"During some time at this school I was a target for bullying, so I did have to go see the school counselor," the student said. "She was very nice and she definitely helped work things out. A lot of students need a lot of help, like even more resources than just the school counselor. But it's always very good to know that even if I have the tiniest thing that could set me off, it's always good to know that she's there to help me."

And this student is not the only one.

According to the East Rock Record Spring 2023 survey, less than half of students – 46 percent – felt that adults focused enough on student mental health issues in school. While 70 percent of students said they were happy to be back to school in person, 60 percent said it was harder to focus now than before the pandemic.

There is a lot of talk about student mental health. But what is it?

Mental health involves social and emotional wellbeing. Several experts we interviewed said that means feeding your brain the things it needs to process and regulate emotions. Mental health affects all aspects of life, including the ability to focus and succeed in school. It is also very important to handling the social and academic pressures of elementary, middle and high school. Around the world, students are struggling with anxiety and stress.

Dr. Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin, a professor and researcher in psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine, said there is no single cause for anxiety and stress.

She said it is believed to be a neurochemical process but is also influenced by the environment. Some people are less able to handle stress and anxiety if they have neurochemical issues that make it harder for them to respond and manage these feelings.

Because mental health impacts every



Reporters conduct interview via Zoom with Dr. Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin of Yale.

aspect of life, it can affect students in different ways. Some students might deal with stress by using substances, such as vaping. Students who lack healthy coping strategies may seek self-medication instead, which can be especially harmful.

Dr. Krishnan-Sarin said the adolescent brain is still developing, making it more sensitive to nicotine and alcohol. When kids abuse substances they become more addicted and have a harder time quitting than adults, she said. Vaping and mental health become a vicious circle in which each makes the other worse, she said.

There are, in fact, healthy strategies to cope with mental health issues, said Dr. Krishnan-Sarin. She said learning to recognize stressors, developing alternative behaviors like meditation or exercise, getting lots of sleep and practicing calming behaviors like deep breathing or stretching, can help a lot.

It also matters to have a positive, healthy environment around mental health at school, said Dr. Jessica Hoffmann, a research scientist at the Yale Child Study Center and director of Adolescent Initiatives at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.

A positive school atmosphere starts with ensuring physical and emotional safety, said Dr. Hoffmann. It also includes positive relationships among students and adults, supportive teaching practices and respect for and celebration of diversity, she said.

Schools have some programs to help.

60 percent of students said it is harder to focus now than before Covid

Source: East Rock Record Survey

Social Emotional Learning is incorporated into students' daily routines. "We implement SEL, which is Social Emotional Learning, into our routine so students are able to regulate their feelings and discuss the feelings that they may be having, said Jaleesa Wilson, a third grade teacher at East Rock School. She said that "taking the time out of your day to decompress, meaning just have a moment to yourself"

also helps students manage their emotions.

One sixth grade student we interviewed said it seemed like there was less time for SEL in the upper grades: "I do miss that brain break kind of thing."

Dr. Hoffmann, who studies student and educator wellbeing in schools and develops prevention approaches that include building student skills around mental health, said educators need more training and support. She said key characteristics of successful mental and emotional health programs include following a consistent sequence. School leaders, she said, need more input from students to figure out what help they need most.

Samantha Naja, a kindergarten teacher at East Rock School, said students receive resources when there is a problem. But she would like to see more preventative measures.

"A lot of times I feel like resources aren't necessarily presented until necessary," she said. Ms. Naja said she would rather be sure that "our students know who the social worker is, and the school psychologist and the school counselor before there is an issue, and creating that safe-space relationship."

The pandemic was hard on everyone.

Now that students are back at school, trying to catch up on their learning, it is important to pay attention to mental health support, too.

"A lot of people in my class aren't always thinking about good things," said one third grade student at East Rock School. "If I'm feeling mad, then I'll start being mean to other people, then they'll start being mean to other people... like dominoes."

"If I'm feeling mad, then I'll start being mean to other people, then they'll start being mean to other people... like dominoes."

— Third grade student at East Rock School



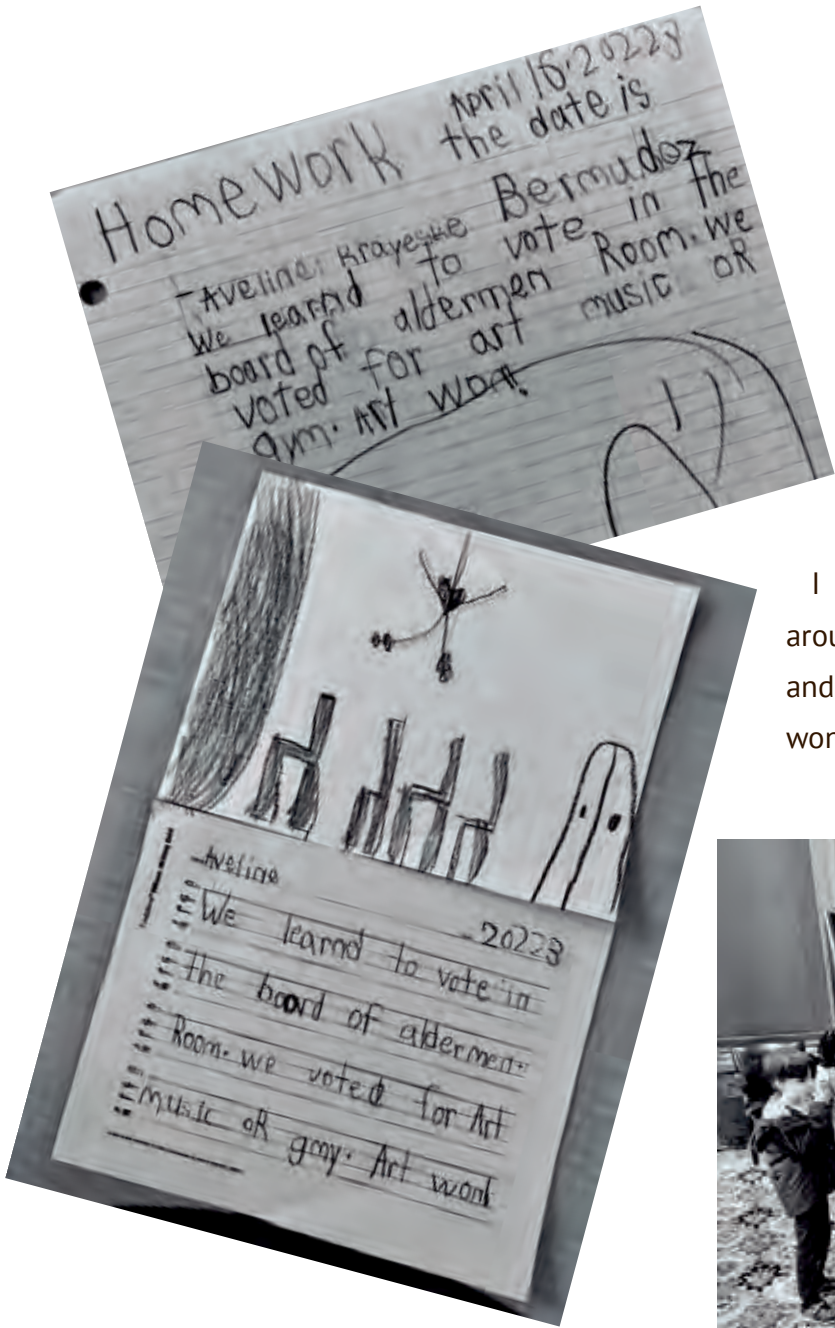


# SCHOOL NEWS

## EAST ROCK KINDERGARTNERS VISIT MAYOR AND VOTE!

BY EAST ROCK RECORD GUEST CORRESPONDENTS

Students from Samantha Naja's Kindergarten at East Rock Community & Cultural Magnet School traveled to City Hall on March 2, and met with Mayor Justin Elicker. Students toured the Mayor's Office and saw key members of his staff. Mr. Elicker read the book, "There's a Dinosaur on the 13th Floor" by Wade Bradford. The group then gathered in the room where the Board of Alders meets and voted on what they wanted more of: gym, music or art. Art won by a landslide!



I went to the Mayor's Office and looked around and then the Mayor read a story to me and we went to vote for art, music and gym. Art won and then we went back to school.

—Nisha Lemar



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# SCHOOL NEWS

## Lunch numbers are back, along with vegetarian options. Sustainability is next.

LUNCH NUMBERS FROM PAGE 1

way said that “there’s ways around it, but it would probably just be easier if they didn’t have that number.”

Some students do have memory issues that make using lunch numbers challenging. Other students easily remember their number by heart because of how often they use it. Some others write it down.

“My teacher writes it down on a piece of paper so students can do their thing,” said Thomas Prada, in fourth grade. He said he does not have trouble remembering his number but said when students forget it can slow things down. “Sometimes it takes a while. One time it took a long time, and we only had like five minutes to eat,” he said. “I really think that they should make lunch a little bit faster and longer.”

Still, according to the East Rock Record Spring 2023 survey, about one-quarter of students have forgotten their lunch ID at least once. Some students don’t like the lunch ID’s because they slow down the lunch line.

“It really makes the lunch line take a lot longer,” said Sahil Lemar, in seventh grade. “And it’s harder for everyone to eat and finish their food before the lunch period is up.”

According to the East Rock Record Spring 2023 survey, the 161 students who responded were split on using ID’s at lunch with 56 percent saying they liked having them and 44 percent saying they didn’t. Schools did not require lunch ID’s during in-person school toward the end of the pandemic.

Fifth grader Leia Vazquez remembers the times before lunch IDs, the break from them, and now their return. “Stopping using the lunch numbers, [the lunch line] got faster and kids would sit down with their friends more,” said Ms. Vazquez. “Now going back to it, it takes longer to get your lunch and go back to your table.”

So why do lunch IDs exist at all? And what are they?

Gail Sharry, Food Service Director for the New Haven Public Schools, said that lunch IDs are also used to log into PowerSchool, which tracks student information like grades, Google accounts, tests, and identification across the New Haven Public School system.

When it comes to lunches, Ms. Sharry said the IDs are important for accountability. The numbers ensure that students get fed and parents know that their children received their meals. The numbers also allow the school district to be reimbursed for meals under the federal National School Lunch Program. Ms Sharry said that the school district is responsible for student accountability and must report how it collects the data. The New Haven Public Schools use a computer software system that includes lunch ID numbers, barcodes on badges and even in some cases, a thumb print.

The lunch ID number requirements are enforced by the USDA and the Connecticut State Department of Education. Ms. Sharry said enforcement was suspended during Covid and came back at the beginning of this school year, first at the high

school level. Some students at East Rock School say they have only used lunch numbers a handful of times this year.

So, what happens when students haven’t memorized their lunch IDs?

There are three possible situations. The first is that the student goes back to the table and sits down, not getting any food. The second is they go all the way back to their classroom and ask their teacher. But by the time they come back, the kitchen may be closed. Mostly, however, cafeteria workers let students just pass through without using a lunch ID.

The return of ID numbers is something students notice and talk about. But it is not all that is changing around lunch. According to Ms. Sharry, New Haven Public Schools are now also trying to make food healthier – including vegetarian and vegan options.

You may have enjoyed a taco recently without realizing that it wasn’t meat, but pea protein in that crispy shell. The schools now have a “Meatless Monday” program that uses plant-based foods as meat substitutes, said Ms. Sharry.


“I don’t eat meat,” said Mr. Lemar. “I think [plant-based alternatives are] a good idea because I know I’m not the only one who can’t have meat, whether it’s just that you don’t want to or your religion... I know it affects some people.”

Right now, students don’t have a formal way to let Ms. Sharry or other food service leaders know their thoughts about menu options or portion sizes. If students agree or disagree on specific aspects of lunch, Ms. Sharry would like to know. While students we interviewed didn’t have much to say about Meatless Monday, it can help students who are vegetarian or vegan, have religious guidelines around food, or don’t like meat. Investing in plant-based food is also more sustainable.

The district is also working to limit food waste, which Ms. Sharry said requires help from more than just the food services team. She said groups including facilities staff, students, and teachers have offered ideas. Next year, they will work on sustainability, limiting food waste, composting and more plant-based options.





Meatless tacos served at East Rock School. The “meat” is actually pea protein. Photo courtesy of Gail Sharry, Food Services Director, NHPS.



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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Former ERR Reporter is School Board Rep, Community Leader! Q&A With Dave John Cruz-Bustamante

Dave John Cruz-Bustamante, a former East Rock Record reporter and a junior at Wilbur Cross High School, was elected as a student representative to the New Haven Board of Education in June 2022 on “an explicitly socialist platform emphasizing movement power and restorative justice.”

Mr. Cruz-Bustamante is a New Haven native and activist for issues from youth concerns to climate change and LGBTQ+ and worker’s rights. Growing up as “a queer, working-class, child of Ecuadorian immigrants has motivated me to live up to the historical task of our times: building and sustaining organized communities through parties, unions, and movements,” he said.

He created the Socialist Scholars Party along with 20 other high school students, and has worked with the Connecticut Democratic Socialists of America as a political literacy teacher. In 2022, Cruz-Bustamante received the “Rising Star” Dorothy Award from The New Haven Pride Center.

### 1. You have been extremely active in the New Haven community. What motivates you? How did you discover your voice?

Like many people, I got involved in 2020 during the Black Lives Matter uprising. I initially joined the Sunrise Movement [which focuses on climate change activism] and grew my skills in writing, public speaking, coordination, and advocacy work. My motivations are a mix of things: an intrinsic sense of duty, commitment to the ideals of justice, worker democracy, community actualization, the pursuit of joy and harmony, and the constant reminder of the beautiful humanity that all of us have. We often forget that we really do owe each other everything. My family and culture have instilled in me to value and nurture life, community, and joy. When I look at my sister, Sophia, with her sweet and tender face that speaks love so naturally, I feel compelled to do everything I can to create a better world with my comrades. Not just for her, but for all the children of today and tomorrow.

### 2. As a student representative to the Board of Education you are in tune with issues: What are students most concerned about?

Sadly, the same issues always come up with every generation of students: improper facilities, lack of funding, irrelevant classes, inadequate staffing. The list goes on. It’s hard to convey the seriousness of these issues on paper or through speech. But adults and people in power must realize that things cannot continue this way forever, that problems cannot continue to be thrown onto the backs of teachers and students. The sense of despair and discontent is growing, and reaching a fever pitch. New Haven students are met with constant deficit: substandard facilities, shortages of supplies (teachers oftentimes pay from their own pockets). We need and demand desks, pencils, books – and care.

### 3. Those of us at East Rock Record know how driven and deep-thinking you are. How have you grown most since leaving East Rock School?

I’ve grown tremendously since leaving East Rock School and I continue to grow every single day! I have learned to make time for personal leisure. Sometimes this looks like prioritizing getting a coffee with my friends over doing a homework assignment. I’ve had to learn that that is okay!



Dave interviews New Haven Independent Founder Paul Bass for the East Rock Record in 2019. left; Dave today, right, student representative and community activist.

### 4. Students often feel their voices don’t matter. You seem never to have been afraid to speak out or speak up. Is this true?

It’s funny when people tell me that, because in reality, I am always afraid. It’s very scary. It’s about making a choice. You can choose to be comfortable in your oppression, to not risk the uptick in heart rate or the rapid breathing or the dozens of eyes on you as you speak; or you can choose the fight. Fight for something different, for the things you need and want. I don’t do my work alone and I definitely don’t want to give the impression that I’m this stoic stone of a person. I’m always anxious and afraid, but it has to get done! There’s a place for everyone. We need public speakers, coordinators, researchers, medics, teachers, and artists. Protests and strikes are one percent of what is needed to make change. The background work is incredibly important.

### 5. What are your top three concerns for youth right now?

My top three concerns for youth right now are (1) building sustained student power institutions so that we have a loud and potent say in how our schools and society are run. (2) demilitarizing our schools and implementing new systems of care, violence prevention, and restorative justice that keep students and teachers safe. And (3) ensuring that all young people have the ability to exercise their rights. All young people, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or class, should not have to worry about where their next meal will come from or where they will lay their heads to rest. All children and all people deserve harmony and peace, clean land and air and abundant bread and water.

### 6. Lastly, what do we need MORE of today?

We need more hope! More joy! More time and space for laughter and comfort! Everywhere we go, there’s a surplus of despair and fear. What good will it do to indulge in that? What good will it do to merely complain and throw up your hands when confronted with the conflicts of the world? We need more time to be young, to grieve, cry till our eyes dry out, laugh till our belly hurts, to slow down, and to join the movement for a better world—together.

Thank you, Dave!

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Refugees Need Food, Clothing, Housing. They Also Need Friends.

BY NAYALA CONROE, AARAV LEMAR,  
CHARLIE PELLEGRINO, TUSKER PICKETT  
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF  
EDITED BY JACK DELANEY

When you imagine the challenges refugees face in a new country, finding a place to live, paying for food and getting a job are high on the list.

But you might not expect something just as important: Making friends.

“It can be as simple as offering to go with someone to the park,” Olga Markus, the religious school director at Temple Emanuel of Greater New Haven, who is from Ukraine and has been working to help refugees, told East Rock Record reporters during an interview.

Newcomers need “little opportunities” to build community, added her husband, Rabbi Michael Farbman of Temple Emanuel. Rabbi Farbman, who was born in Belarus, has traveled to Poland and Spain to help refugees.

After the war in Ukraine began in February 2022, the U.S. agreed to welcome 100,000 refugees. Hundreds have come to Connecticut, including to New Haven and surrounding communities. Individuals like Ms. Markus and Rabbi Farbman and organizations including the Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS) and the Jewish Community Alliance for Refugee Resettlement (JCARR) have been helping.

One new arrival is Arsen Kobylanskyi, a 12-year-old who fled to America with his mother in September 2022. His father is still in Ukraine fighting in the war. Arsen now lives in New Britain and goes to Pulaski Middle School.

He spoke with East Rock Record reporters about his experience via Zoom. When Arsen first arrived, he said he faced teasing from another boy at school, who made fun of the fact that he was from Ukraine. The boy didn’t stop until Arsen pinched his ear in retaliation.

After the second and third months, however, things started to get better, he said.

“The teacher is nice, and I started to learn some history,” he said, adding that they were studying the two world wars. Arsen also found friends in class and on his school bus, including two kids from Ukraine. “In the beginning, it was so hard adapting to a new culture,” he said. “But now I feel more comfortable.”

What does it take to feel comfortable? That is something many people in Connecticut are thinking about.

Kathy Sheppard, the Ukrainian Program Manager for IRIS, which has so far helped settle 450 families from Ukraine, said adjusting to life in America involves a lot of practical problems.

“A lot of times they just come with the clothes on their backs, sometimes they have a small suitcase, and they have to leave all their things in the country they’re fleeing from. So, when they come here, it’s really important that they get a bit of assistance,” she said during an interview with East Rock Record reporters.



Reporters interview Arsen Kobylansky, a Ukrainian refugee who is 12, via Zoom.

When refugees first arrive, she said, the organization asks them to fill out a questionnaire about whether they have shelter and food. Often these are provided by sponsor families. If not, IRIS helps them fill out applications for government support. After that, IRIS reaches out for check-ins at 30, 60, and 90 days to make sure their living situations are still stable.

There is also the issue of finding a job and getting healthcare. “To get these services, it’s a lot of paperwork,” said Ms. Sheppard. “That’s challenging for sponsors to learn how to do, and it’s really almost impossible for people who don’t know English to fill out these forms.”

Refugees also often need help getting to the social security office, figuring out how to get permission to work, get health insurance – all while dealing with culture shock.

Luckily, Ms. Sheppard said that IRIS has support from many local volunteers. She described two Ukrainian women who wanted to attend English classes but did not have driver’s licenses. Within 24 hours, she said, IRIS had volunteers signed up to drive them, with a schedule to make sure they could get to class consistently. “The community has really come to our rescue,” she said.

Typically, refugees coming to Connecticut are placed in either New Haven or Hartford by the government.

As part of a new program, however, Ukrainian refugees have been matched with private citizens in 62 different towns across the state. “So, it takes a village to help



Rabbi Michael Farbman meets with Ukrainian refugees at Temple Emanuel. Photo: Rabbi Farbman

our clients,” said Ms. Sheppard, “because they’re all over.”

IRIS has settled Ukrainians throughout Connecticut but works to connect families who might feel isolated.

“We’re always driving around taking things to people, helping them, meeting them in person, or doing little clubs and groups so that they can meet each other – kids can meet kids, teens can meet teens, moms can meet moms – so they don’t feel alone in a place where they struggle learning the language,” she said.

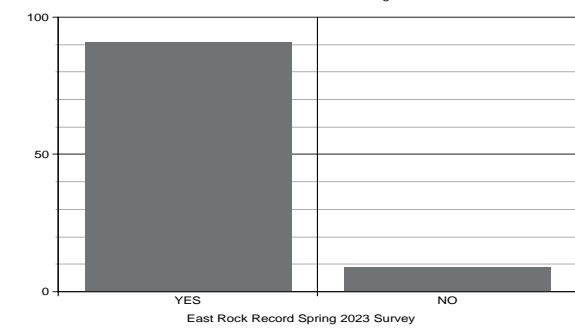
Many students at East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School want to help. According to the East Rock Record Spring 2023 Survey, about one-third of students know someone who is a refugee. The survey also found that 91 percent of students said they were proud that New Haven is a welcoming place for newcomers from around the world.

Ms. Markus and Rabbi Farbman got involved in helping soon after the invasion of Ukraine. Ms. Markus recognized streets where she had grown up shown on the news, which was “very painful to see,” she said. Both Ms. Markus and Rabbi Farbman feel a personal connection to the war.

Both said that they are still shocked. “We have accepted this as a reality, but we cannot believe or understand that something like this could happen between these two countries. It was as if the United States and Canada went to war with one another,” said Rabbi Farbman.

Ms. Markus that they the war, “is very complicated, but it’s also very simple. There’s no inherent conflict. Russian and Ukrainian people have nothing to fight over. People are being punished for the will to live their lives how they want.”

Because of their own experiences of leaving home and moving to a new place,” said Ms. Markus, they were eager to help. Their situation was not the same as having to flee, as refugees are now



doing. But, she said, they could relate to the challenge of having to “find a new home for themselves and establish themselves in a new place.”

As a result, Ms. Markus got involved right away, building “a collaborative volunteer hub” and coordinating help from Jewish organizations, including in Canada. Because Ms. Markus speaks Ukrainian and Russian, she was able to understand what was needed, interview volunteers and match them with opportunities to help.

Rabbi Farbman, who speaks Russian, traveled first to Poland and later to Spain. He was one of 30 people who traveled almost immediately, working as a translator at refugee centers.

“We could show up and make a difference,” because he could speak the language, he said.

Rabbi Farbman also made lists of items people needed. Both he and Ms. Markus have done “a lot of shopping,” buying necessities for refugees. They know that people do need, well, everything: a place to live, clothes, school supplies, furniture, and other basic necessities.

But being a refugee is also hard emotionally. Yes, people need things, said Rabbi Farbman, but it’s also important to reach out, like offering to play a game, or “invite them to a park. It doesn’t have to be anything special.”

“You are creating opportunities that are little, but it gives the sense of normalcy. You can say, ‘Hey a bunch of us are going to the park, and we are going to play a game of soccer or there is a local music festival – do you want to come with us?’

That is something, he said, “that each one of you can do and it goes a long, long way.”



# HEALTH & WELLBEING

## Making School Secure, Not Scary

SECURITY FROM PAGE 1

Rock School. She said that training does help. “We practice our drills in the beginning of the year so all students should know where to go and what to do,” said Ms. Wilson.

Since the start of the school year, there have been two real lockdowns at East Rock School. The first one happened on February 8, when a student brought a knife to school, resulting in the school going into lockdown for almost an hour. The second one occurred on February 27 due to an active shooter in the area, which led to several schools going into lockdown. At East Rock School, the lockdown lasted for 40 minutes.

Lockdowns are also scary for teachers who feel responsible for the safety of the students in their classroom. This is especially true if they have not been trained in how to handle an emergency situation.

“It’s stressful being responsible,” said John Kennedy, who teaches 7th and 8th grade math. “We just had a lockdown where kids were crying. It can be scary. I feel sad that kids are stressed out by what happens. School should be a safe place and having two lockdowns within two weeks doesn’t make you feel safe.”

The East Rock Record Spring 2023 Survey found that most students – 73 percent – said they “feel safe” at East Rock School. That doesn’t mean students aren’t thinking about security. The survey also found that almost 40 percent of students said the school needed more security and 62 percent said East Rock School should get metal detectors.

“We definitely need more security guards,” says 7th grader DyShawn Gray. “I don’t even see security guards. It’s a different security guard every other day.”

Sabrina Breland, Principal of East Rock School, said the school could use more security support. “We do not have a security guard right now and I do believe that a security guard in the middle school would make



### “Metal detectors send the wrong message”

— Principal Sabrina Breland

a difference,” she said.

What can make schools safer? Justin Harmon, director of marketing and communications for New Haven Public Schools, said district leaders are asking that question.

One concern is that there are not enough security guards. Mr. Harmon said being a school security guard requires a certain level of training and expertise that makes it difficult to find enough qualified candidates.

“We have openings for a dozen or more guards,” he said. “We would ideally have one at every school. We are not able to do that right now because we don’t have enough folks to take on those jobs.” Ms. Breland is aware of the problems and has heard “that there are hiring challenges.”

Another approach is to invest in technology like metal detectors. Mr. Harmon said that bringing weapons to school is happening more often than it used to and that metal detectors can help by preventing dan-

gerous objects from entering the school.

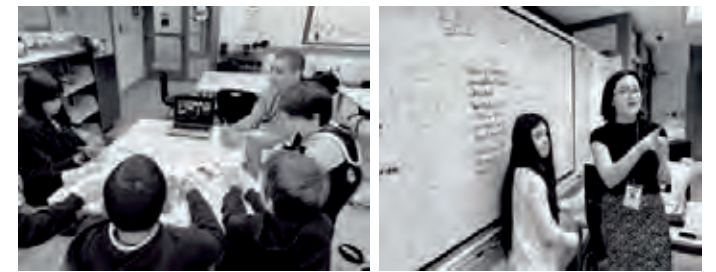
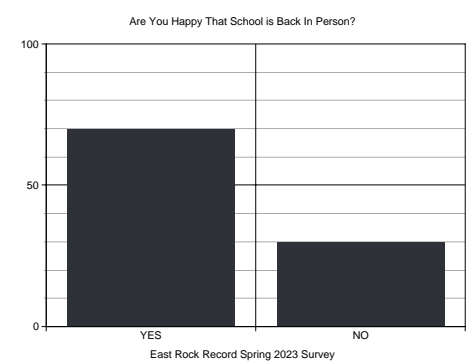
That said, he is not sure metal detectors are a good idea at East Rock School and others that serve students in Pre-K through Grade 8. “While there are metal detectors in all the high schools, we want our elementary schools to be welcoming places,” he said.

Ms. Breland agrees.

“Metal detectors send the wrong message,” she said. “Ninety percent of our students come to school for all of the right reasons and should not be treated like rule breakers and/or potential threats to our academic community.”

According to Mr. Harmon, school leaders “wonder how parents would feel if the students had to pass their bags and themselves through metal detectors. We believe that they’re effective in high school in the sense that they deter students from bringing weapons to school.

But the question is, ‘How would you feel as a student if you had to go through metal detectors every day?’” he said. “There’s a tradeoff there.”



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# HEALTH & WELLBEING

## Meeting Presidents, Researching Saliva or “Spit”

NIH HEAD FROM PAGE 1

We interviewed Dr. Larry Tabak, the acting director of N.I.H., who mentioned that he works with other countries and their leaders. Recently, he met with the Prime Minister of Health from Thailand. He doesn't just focus on the United States of America. He works with people from all around the world on worldwide health problems. We expected him to be just focused on the U.S.A. He also worked with some of the people who helped create the Covid vaccine. He didn't directly work with the vaccine, but worked with many of the people who were directly working with the Covid vaccine. He is a very interesting person and we were happy to meet and interview him.

— Nayala Conroe and Aarav Lemar

Biosynthesis sounds insanely interesting and I did not know that Dr. Tabak was the replacement director for N.I.H., though in my defense I only listen to that type of news occasionally because I am just a kid/pre-teen. It's cool as well that I just talked to the bleeping director of N.I.H. and we had a conversation!!!! He was very impressive and had very lengthy answers. This was also my first interview with a prominent government official. — Haven Pickett

What I found interesting about the interview was Dr. Tabak's meeting with a group from Thailand and that Thailand and the United States would work on a vaccine. Another thing that I enjoyed was that he studied spit. One more thing I enjoyed was that he organizes his meetings. — Autumn Dixon-Shaw

What is interesting was that Dr. Tabak talked about what or how to be successful as a scientist and that you have to know how to put pieces together. Science is based on math and figuring out, “why is something

that way?” I also found out that he studied spit. That was very interesting. — London Ingram

For students who want to be scientists, Dr. Tabak suggested they take all their studies seriously. He says that on top of having good mathematics and scientific skills, reading and writing is just as important because scientists are always reading studies and drafting new ones.

Dr. Tabak told us that behavior is very important to good health. He advises students to be conscious of what they're eating, and to stay away from snacks that are either too salty or too sweet. Instead, they should remember to eat vegetables with every meal to ensure a healthy lifestyle.

— Sahil Lemar and Eleanor Matz

Dr. Tabak's response to my question about what research he was most interested in was quite intriguing. He started explaining his favorite research and what he had learned about that research. It was brand new research that was just about to be published. He explained the study that was about the fact that if a mother were addicted to any kind of bad substance such as alcohol, or any sort of drug, that their soon-to-be-born child could be addicted in the future. To help the child the best, they don't really need any type of other drugs. — Marlin Rodriguez

What I found interesting was that Dr. Tabak studies spit. Another thing I found interesting was hearing Dr. Tabak talking about his N.I.H. team and what they talked about. He also explained his schedule and it sounded interesting. — Kendall Walker-Gurley

While interviewing Dr. Tabak I learned that he is not

the permanent director of N.I.H. and that he is the acting director. Another thing I learned is that he used to study spit! That is so cool I have always thought spit is interesting and hiding secrets that could save the world. — Tusker Pickett

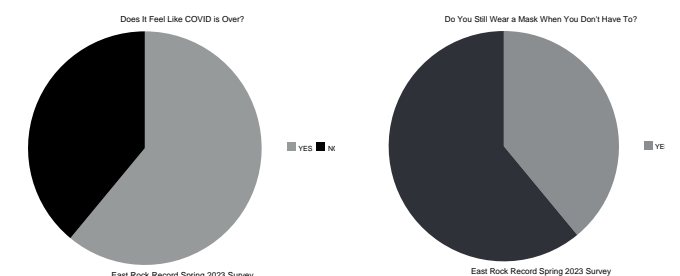
What I found interesting about the interview was hearing about Dr. Tabak's job and his day schedule. And also that he got to do important research. Another thing was that he worked with a leadership team at the N.I.H. One thing that was my favorite interesting part of the interview was that Dr. Tabak got to discover spit. And he told us facts about Covid. — Jade Kinlock

I think that the interview was very good, it was very informative and very helpful to me and the paper. It was also very interesting to see a person who has been working with the President. But the thing I really liked about the guy is that he used to study spit.

— Charlie Pellegrino



Dr. Lawrence Tabak of the N.I.H. speaks with Principal Sabrina Breland; teams of East Rock Record reporters took turns asking questions.



## Swearing, Disrespect are Post-Pandemic Problems

BEHAVIOR FROM PAGE 1

ing student behavior now that school is back in person.

“When everyone was at home, we missed out on one or two years of normalcy,” said Jessica Hoffmann, a research scientist at the Yale Child Study Center and Director of Adolescent Initiative at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.

For students at East Rock Community & Cultural Magnet School, this included not just learning, but socializing and “normal” school activities. Students often turned off their cameras and weren't engaged with classes. They also weren't making the friends they would have been making if they were in person.

According to Sabrina Breland, principal at East Rock School, when school resumed in-person, students “weren't as accepting and motivated as they used to be.” Part of this, Ms. Breland said, was due to many of new students who came to East Rock School. But it was also because some students were used to being online and “were hearing things they weren't normally listening to and weren't monitored as closely as they used to be monitored,” she said.

Returning students also weren't used to being with a whole school building of students, teachers, and staff all day long. All this togetherness, some experts say, has become a common source of stress for students. According to Dr. Hoffman, anxiety is the number one disorder that people, including students, are

reporting since the pandemic.

“Much of this anxiety,” she said, “stems from uncertainty of the future and fear of things that are happening in the present.”

Yet Dr. Hoffman said those increases may also be the result of people paying more attention to mental health. “During Covid there was a large amount of money dedicated to mental health, mental health staff, social-emotional learning at schools. More educators and parents have realized mental health isn't separate from how we do in school.”

Whatever the causes, levels of bad behavior in the classroom are unprecedented. “The disrespect students feel now we didn't see before in East Rock,” said Marissa Saucier, a special education teacher for grades seven and eight. “A lot of kids have a lot of bad behaviors because they're so used to being at home.” Without the monitoring of adults, students became used to disrespectful behaviors.

Bad behavior has been a problem across New Haven Public Schools, said Justin Harmon, director of marketing and communications for the district. “Students experienced a lot of stress re-entering the classroom, getting into habits that are effective in the school environment, getting used to the constraints of being in a classroom.”

Coming back, he said, has been a real struggle for all students, not just those at East Rock School. At the

same time, East Rock has tightened security rules.

Many students are divided over these new security protocols. The East Rock Record Spring 2023 survey found that 61 percent of students answered “no” to a question asking if the school needed more security. But fifth-grader Dariel Carbonell-Perez thinks “security is not strict enough,” he said. “Students are still behaving however they want. They don't care about the rules anymore.”

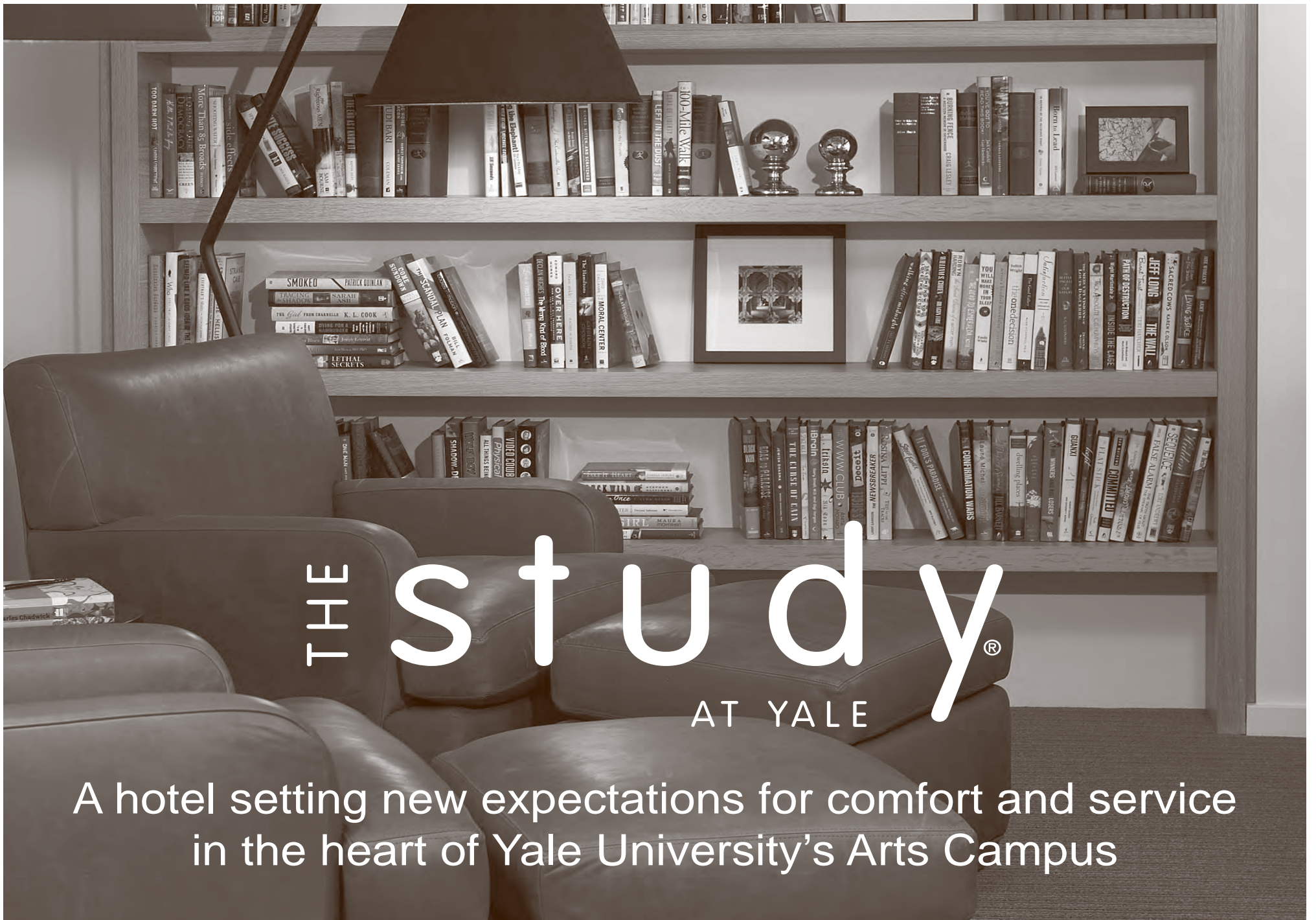
Schools are trying to fight these problems. “Administrators across New Haven are working hard to make the culture in our schools a better place for students and teachers,” Mr. Harmon said.

Across the district, schools are focusing on social-emotional learning and restorative justice to help students improve behavior instead of facing punishment. He said the goal is to re-establish students' social and emotional well-being and improve the school environment.

“What students learn about how to be happy, productive, kind human beings,” he said, “is equally important to what they learn about academic subjects.”

Mr. Harmon said that this could make schools a nicer, calmer and safer space for everyone. Divera Simon, a third-grade student in East Rock School, would like that. “I just want school to be kinder with how people use their words and actions,” she said.





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# MUSIC & SPORTS

## ICE SPICE: IT'S COMPLICATED

BY LONDON INGRAM  
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Have you seen Ice Spice's recent blow up in her music? Before Isis Naija Gaston joined the music industry, she worked as a cashier at Wendy's and Gap. Her new hit and collaboration with Pinkpantheress has everyone reciting the lyrics from her song. It's amazing but it gets annoying when everyone sings it repeatedly. Even though her music is great, I am a soft Christian and don't recommend Ice Spice because she called herself the devil in one of her music videos which is unacceptable to my community. As a soft Christian and lover of music, I would recommend only listening to her songs that do not include cuss words or the word of the fallen angel. Although she is empowering for women because she shows off her body, she also drives them apart. In one of her music videos, she says that if she was another girl that she'd hate her lot, that she has the type of energy that other women are jealous of.

## Blackpink K-Pop Popular

BY AUTUMN DIXON-SHAW  
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

A K-Pop group made up of four girls called Blackpink, has become one of the most popular female bands in the world. Blackpink was formed in 2016 by members Lisa, Rosé, Jennie and Jisoo. Lalisa Manobal ("Lisa") was born in 1997 in Satuek District, Thailand. Kim Ji-soo, ("Jisoo") was born in 1995 in Sanbon-dong,

Gunpo-si, South Korea. Roseanne Park ("Rosé") was born in Auckland, New Zealand. Jennie Kim ("Jennie") was born in 1996 in Cheongdam-dong, South Korea. Blackpink recently released a new album, "Born Pink." Their most popular songs are "How you like that" and "DDU-DU DDU-DU." Their recent hit is "Pink venom." What attracts me to Blackpink is the subtle messages in their songs.

## Soccer or Fútbol? Or Tchatali?

BY SAHIL LEMAR  
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

"Soccer" or "fútbol"? It's a question that has been debated around the world for years. Most people on the planet prefer "fútbol." But there is more to the history of both names – and the sport itself. I looked into the origin of the game and found that some believe the sport started around 2000 years ago with the Aztecs. They called it "Tchatali." Tchatali was a religious game in which the ball symbolized the sun and the captain of the losing team would be sacrificed to the gods. Another interesting thing: the ball was made of rubber whereas no other early culture had access to rubber. We may never know exactly when the game was created.

But that is not the most interesting part. The interesting part is that professional soccer has been around in England since the 1800s. Yes, you heard me. Soccer in England. The word "soccer" is actually a British invention that British people stopped using only 40 years ago. The reason this is important is that futbol/soccer 's invention (in its current form) is credited to England. The reason why I say "in its current

form" is because the game Tchatali couldn't have been the exact version of the game that is played today. As you can probably guess though, Tchatali is not the only form of the game with a ball. Another game, in China during the third and second century B.C.E., was Cuju. Cuju involved kicking around a leather ball on a square area. Another new or modified version of this game was spread to another part of Asia. In Japan it was called Kemari. One other ball game took place in Ancient Rome. Although it did not take place in a big arena, this game was brought to the island of Britannica. Unfortunately, I could not find to what degree the British used or created different versions. I have said all this to back up my opinion on whether this great game is called "soccer" or "futbol." In my opinion, the English named it "soccer" in the 19th century and get credit for inventing the game.

## Lionel Messi Is Best Player

BY SAM PELLEGRINO  
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

I have been on the soccer team for three years. In my opinion, Lionel Messi, who is part of the Argentinian soccer team, is the best player of all time. He is also the first soccer player I found out about Messi caught my attention with his impressive skills.

Messi has won one World Cup and I think he makes the game more exciting. He scores really impressive goals and does really good interceptions. If you play soccer, you might like a certain player. Who is it? They're probably good, too. However, I think Messi is the best of all time. That is why my favorite national soccer team is Argentina!



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# YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART



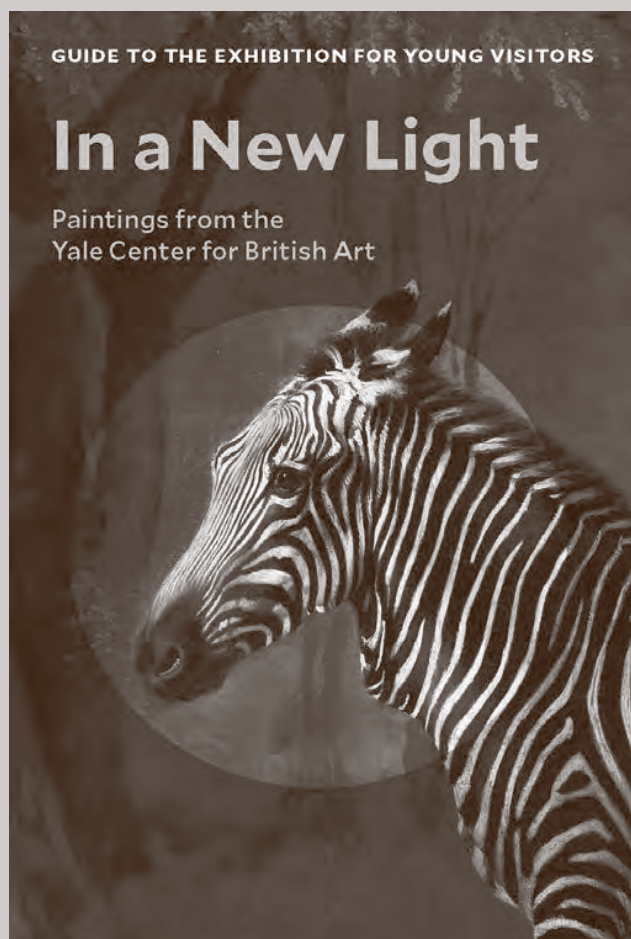
## SAD NEWS

Yale Center for British Art  
is closed until 2024.



## GOOD NEWS

Many of our favorite paintings are on view  
in an exhibition at the Yale University Art Gallery.



## MORE GOOD NEWS

We have made a guide to  
the exhibition for young visitors,  
now available for free at the  
Art Gallery (1111 Chapel Street).

[britishart.yale.edu](http://britishart.yale.edu)

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Top image: Francis Bacon, *Study of a Head*, 1952, Yale Center for British Art, gift of Beekman C. and Margaret H. Cannon, © The Estate of Francis Bacon. All rights reserved. / DACS, London / ARS, New York 2023. Middle image: Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Dort or Dordrecht: The Dort Packet-Boat from Rotterdam BeCALMED*, 1818, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. Bottom image: George Stubbs, *Zebra (detail)*, 1763, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.



# SPORTS & LEADERSHIP

## HUDDLE UP: Basketball, Life, Leadership is About Team

### Q&A with Principal Breland

Sabrina Breland, principal at East Rock Community & Cultural Magnet School, is a New Haven native, star basketball player and coach. In 1991, she was inducted into the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame. At Wilbur Cross High, she was member of the 1984 State Championship Team. She was voted to All-State and All-District teams and that year was voted the number one high school player in Connecticut (she averaged 29 points per game). Ms. Breland, whose was "Johnson" before she married, played for Rutgers before transferring to St. John's University, where she was a key member of school's 1987-88 team which won the Big East Championship. She coached the girl's Hillhouse High School team to two Class L State Championships. She was inducted into the Hillhouse Athletic Hall of Fame in 2022. Ms. Breland sees lots of connections between basketball and leadership. She answered our questions:

#### 1. What got you into basketball?

I grew up on East Street and there was a park directly across the street from my house (Jocelyn Square Park). It was equipped with interesting play-scapes and a full basketball court. I loved those play-scapes, but I was drawn to the hoops where I spent countless hours playing basketball with other neighborhood kids. What intensified my commitment to basketball was when my sister started playing for East Rock and was considered the best player on the team. I was so proud and wanted to be on the team with her.

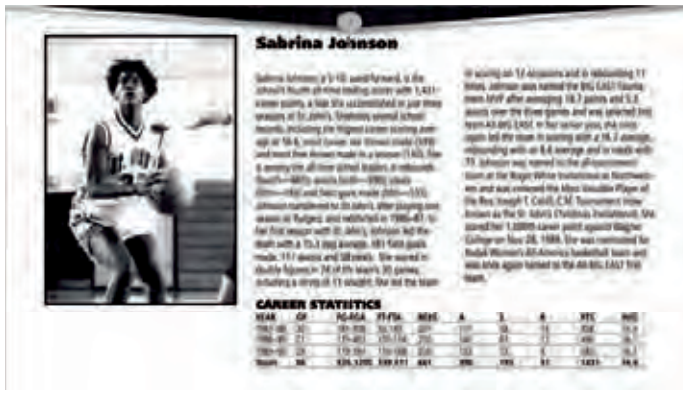
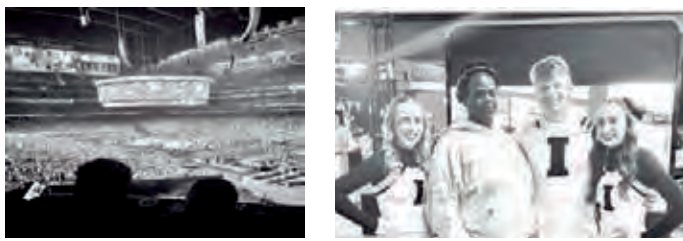
#### 2. How did you end up playing basketball in college? How did your experience hape your approach to leadership as a principal?

I was on the girl's basketball team at Wilbur Cross High School and played a major role on the team in 1984 when we won the Class LL Girls Basketball State Championship. After the championship game, I received interest from a number of high-level Division I women's basketball programs. I was intrigued with the possibility of continuing my career on the college level. I was a junior in high school at this point and began exploring my options.

I eventually decided to attend Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. During the 1985-1986 academic year, I learned so much about myself, basketball, people and life. I was without my normal support system and had to learn to navigate the world with minimal assistance.

Doing so increased my confidence, my focus and my resiliency. I was no longer the best player on the team and I had to learn to adjust and play a role. I learned that perseverance, hard work, teamwork, commitment and God can get me through anything.

As a principal I still lean on God and a solid team to get me through the tough times. God and my team are also there to celebrate wins and milestones. I continue to use my support system to problem solve and remind me of ALL of my blessings. I try to embrace a shared leadership model in which I consider many different vantage points before making a decision. I never want to make a permanent decision based on temporary emotions or situations without first discussing things with a team.



Top Left: Men's NCAA 2023 Finals in Houston; Top Right: Ms. Breland with Iowa cheer team at NCAA 2023 Women's Finals in Dallas, Bottom: Breland, then Johnson, as star standout at St. John's University.

#### 3. Do you love or like playing basketball? What was your favorite thing about playing?

I love basketball. Basketball is a safe place to be me. When I played basketball nothing else was important. My problems and shortcomings took a backseat. Basketball gave me freedom from ALL of my problems. It gave me PEACE and most of all, it gave me a free education.

#### 4. What is the value of sports in your life? What did playing basketball teach you? What lessons do you still apply in your life today?

Sports taught me the value of working within a team to accomplish goals. Everything is easier when you work together. While playing basketball or any team sport, community is highlighted and pushed. Basketball reminds me that no one person is more important than the team/community and every move made should be to build the team/community up.

#### 5. Why did you want to be a principal? What are the hardest things about the job?

I wanted to be a principal to help support and grow my community. I have lived in the New Haven area for almost my entire life (except when I left to attend college). I love it here and believe that New Haven is a wonderful place to be. East Rock School and Wilbur Cross High School afforded me so many opportunities in life and I wanted to help others experience all that is good in public education. I know it doesn't seem like it, but public education can be life-changing because it definitely changed my life's trajectory.

#### 6. What are your priorities for East Rock School this year?

When I was transferred to East Rock School in the summer of 2018, I was excited to be back in the community that gave me so many wonderful memories. I was a member of the first second grade class when the school first opened its doors in 1974. Although some of the programming that was available to me as a student was no longer offered, East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School was still an awesome place to learn and work. The staff was a cohesive team and 95 percent of students were truly dedicated, responsible, ethical, accepting and motivated. Lately, morale is lower than I would like it to be and the number of students exhibiting inappropriate behaviors have increased. My priorities for East Rock School are to increase the morale in the building, assist in restoring focus and dedication – all

while helping students reach their potential.

#### 7. What made you start the basketball program at school? What do you hope kids will learn from playing basketball?

When I attended East Rock School as a student, homeroom basketball was an activity that I loved and enjoyed so much. When speaking with a few of the students at lunch in the fall of 2018, I shared my love for the game. They asked if we could start a home-room basketball league here. I shared that I was not sure if I could pull that off but felt like I could start a school team and ask other area teams if they would be interested in competing against us.

#### 8. What advice would you give students who are interested in a career in sports and how can they balance school and athletics?

I would definitely support students pursuing their sports dreams. However, I would remind them that it won't be easy – but anything worth having takes work and often sacrifice. I would further add that sports are fun and rewarding, but the best reward will be getting an education.

Time management is important and keeping a healthy balance between balls and books is the optimal way to navigate the student-athlete journey. I would caution against using any controlled substances to help maintain focus, performance or drive. I would ask them to never get too high or too low. None of us are perfect and we all lose along the way. But while on the journey, I would ask them to treat ALL people with respect, take NO shortcuts and remember to love themselves at all times.

#### 9. Do you still play basketball? Do you watch basketball?

Due to arthritis and a knee surgery on September 26, I am not able to play basketball right now, but hopefully I can play a few games for fun in the near future. I watch my [L.A.] Lakers faithfully and recently attended my second women's basketball Final Four and my first men's basketball Final Four. The two Final Fours in Texas were just what the doctor ordered. I needed the time to rejuvenate.

#### 10. What did you think of the women's NCAA title game?

I watched the women's Final Four live and the crowd was exhilarating! Iowa's fans were how I would love to see all fan bases! It was so fun. I wanted South Carolina to win, but I definitely respected the love that the Iowa fans had for their girls. Caitlyn Clark is "that girl" and her swagger and skill are helping to shine a light on women's basketball and for that I am excited! When I found out the tickets for the women's game were more expensive and harder to come by than the men's game tickets, I was completely surprised and happy to see women's basketball appreciated.



East Rock School 2018-2019 Basketball Team.



# EDITORIAL & OPINION

## Letter from Principal Breland



Greetings Readers,

The East Rock Record is BACK! East Rock Record Reporters are meeting with each other in-person and the vibe in the media center is electric! This edition will be one of our best ever! It looks like things are getting back to normal and our community needs normalcy.

This principal's message may read a little like an editorial because I am very passionate about the health and welfare of our community.

Recently, I have noticed that not all of our community members are feeling like themselves. Between COVID and social media, our students find so many things to worry about. "Is my family safe?" "Will I get sick?" "Am I enough?" The feelings around fears of sickness due to COVID have subsided with most students. However, other feelings have surfaced. As a result, I would like to challenge each member of our school community to support our students as they navigate through this thing called "life."

I would like to designate May as East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School's mental health awareness month.

Mentally healthy students and adults are vital in an academic community. When students and adults are in good places socially and emotionally, they can be contributing members in their environments. But when there are feelings of inadequacy and sadness, things can be difficult.

I am asking each member of our community to become familiar with the warning signs of mental health problems. Feelings of sadness, fear, intense worrying, and severe mood swings are just a few. If our community recognizes the warning signs, we can offer help, love, understanding and compassion which can make a huge difference in our academic community.

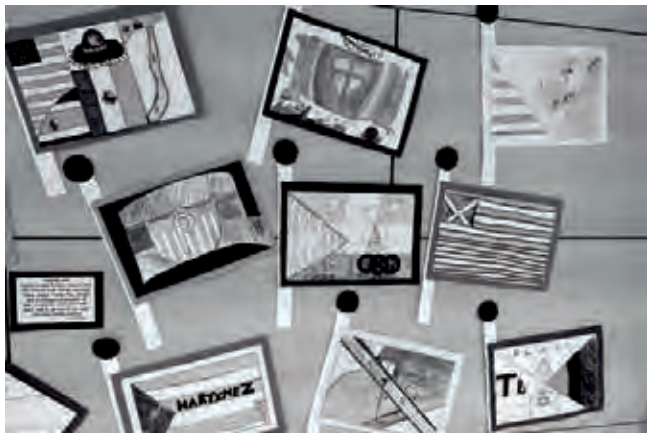
Let's make sure students and families who need support get connected with agencies and medical professionals who can help. Let's try to limit students' time on social media and spend more time talking to one another and enjoying nature.

If you know someone struggling, please encourage that person to call 2-1-1. This is a free, confidential information and referral service that connects people to essential health and human services 24 hours a day, seven days a week online and over the phone.

If we work together as a community to strengthen the mental health of our members, then the entire community prospers.

Respectfully,

Sabrina Breland, Principal



## The East Rock Record

East Rock Community & Cultural Studies  
Magnet School  
133 Nash Street, New Haven, CT 06511

## How Can You Know if You are (Really) Safe?

Are securities and officers in school enough? People may not have thought much about this, but a rise in violence pushes the issue of safety out front. How do we know something won't happen out of nowhere?

We have seen the news and feel this empty hole in our stomachs when we realize the numbers of innocent children that have been massacred. Why has this happened? School shooters cause a huge impact on education and add fear and trauma to students' mindsets. Shootings also affect students' safety, which comes first. Even if our school has never had a truly serious situation, we've experienced lockdowns that have made me feel unsafe or nervous.

How secure are our systems? We have alarms in school for different reasons and for good causes. We do drills with students and teachers and staff to get ready for what we would do in a real emergency. But we can never truly be ready because we never know when it could happen.

Even if we hide under our desks or go to a corner where an intruder cannot see us, turn down the lights, lock the door, and keep quiet, how will we know what will or might not happen? How do we know that everyone will be kept safe? There is no evidence to prove we are 100% safe, and we don't know the consequences for the intruder. How are we sure that same invader won't get away or come again or attack another public area?

These are only a few of the questions that I think about on many days. I could list many more. On March 28, 2023, we heard about a shooting that killed six people, including three children, at a Christian elementary school in Nashville. This is only the latest example. I am very upset about this era we live in, where some people think they can break the law and injure others. How can we help people in hard situations without them causing violence?

We have a dangerous situation in schools. Some high schools have added metal detectors. What more could schools do? And how can we ensure elementary schools and middle schools are safe? We have our present, our past, and our future. Violent incidents can happen in any timeline, and we may not be secure.

Kids shouldn't have to worry about this. We all know we have drills so students can practice how to protect themselves in case there is danger. But we need to pay attention to the effect on students' mental health and not only their physical well-being. There's more to safety than just security. — By Marlin Rodriguez

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# OPINION

## Vaping Won't Heal Your Stress (And It Could Make You Sick).

Why do young adults find it cool or helpful to vape? Vaping companies have been putting new flavors up on social media that cause young adults to get plugged into vaping. This is a problem. You can get lung cancer, heart disease and other diseases that risk your life from using vaping products. Young adults might be vaping to deal with stress. But vaping can cause more problems. They use toxic chemicals that are addictive and could make them sick later. There are sometimes ads telling people to quit and get help.

The vape companies post in social media about more flavors to get people to waste money on toxic products. Young adults might vape because it seems like a way to heal stress. But there's a lot of different things that you could do to handle stress. For example, you could take breathers when you're feeling stressed or anxious about something going on around you. Another option is to talk to a trusted adult and explain why you're feeling stressed or anxious about a situation. Vaping is NOT a solution for depression, anxiety or stress. — By Jade Kinlock

## YOU'LL NEVER GET BORED WITH THESE ONLINE GAMES

Poki is a really fun game site for your child. You can go to Safari or Google to play the games on Poki. It's really fun. There's a bunch of types of games, like Minecraft games or Stickman Battlecraft games. I especially love this game called "There is No Game." You have to make the server "angry" to win. The male voice of the game says things like "Don't do that." (But you should do them anyway!)

Playing online games is good because your parents don't have to buy anything. They're free and the only thing you need is a device. There are more than a hundred games per site so you'll never get bored.

Sometimes if you're playing outside games like tag or hide and seek, you get bored playing the same game. This doesn't happen online because you can just switch the game you're playing. There are also two-player games, which means you can play with all your friends, even if you're at your house and your friends aren't there. Online games are also the best because you can always play them — no matter what the weather is. — By Divera Simon

## HILLHOUSE AVE. "MOST BEAUTIFUL" ? NOT SO FAST.

Not many people know about the beautiful history in the roads of New Haven. So many are here in our city! Some people know Hillhouse Avenue because Charles Dickens and Mark Twain both said it was "the most beautiful street in America." However, I think Grove Street is even prettier — and more important.

The spot where Grove intersects with Prospect is the place I believe is most full of New Haven culture. On one side there is Beinecke Plaza and Grove Street Cemetery. On the other is Silliman College and the Yale University Dean's office. Some of the most influential people in the world are buried in the Grove Street Cemetery, including Eli Whitney, who made the cotton gin, and Noah Webster, who published the Webster Dictionary and spelling book.

Nearby, the Beinecke Library holds extremely important and old books and documents written by some of the influential people buried in Grove Street Cemetery! Grove Street really is very important — and beautiful. — By Eleanor Matz

## Bike for Polar Bears

Imagine a polar bear standing on a piece of ice floating in the middle of the water. How does it make you feel? It makes me feel bad because it's lonely and it's trapped. It got in this position because it was on a big ice cap and it started melting into pieces.

But why? People don't care for the earth. They are polluting the air by driving their cars too much. This causes global warming, so the ice caps melt. That's an issue because polar bears need ice caps to hunt.

But it's not just a problem for the polar bear population. If polar bears die, then there would be too many seals and not enough food for all the seals. If that happens, there will be too many fish and not enough food for them, so they will die, too. Basically, the entire ecosystem will collapse. People like eating fish, but there won't be any left.

People don't think that when they drive a lot it's affecting animals, but they should. Next time you think about driving somewhere not so far away, think about the polar bears, and if you have a bike then take your bike. — By Aarav Lemar

## Picking Up Trash Is Nice. But It's Not Enough. We Must Take on Carbon.

Climate change needs to be stopped. I'm not talking about going outside and picking up trash, though. I think things like that are good. But we can do so much more, even locally. On April 3, 2023 a group of people from around New Haven marched down to city hall to try to persuade the Board of Alders to actually do something. The Board has promised to take action toward climate change but has not yet truly done something to help with the carbon footprint in our city. People are just continuing to build more and more buildings. Only about a year ago, a building was built downtown with 450 gas hook ups. That is a lot of fossil fuel hurting our Earth. Therefore, I think people have to start taking action and the government has to start taking action. The local government can do so much to help. They can make New Haven a more electric city. They can do many things but they are not. I urge you to take action and protest! — By Nayala Conroe

## War in Ukraine Hurts Russians, too

The Russian-Ukrainian war has not only affected Ukrainians but also the people of Russia. In Russia, people that have only wanted to live a normal life must live every day with family members dying, and fathers and brothers who are fighting in the war against Ukraine. Ukrainian people are going through similar things, if not worse, because they are being invaded by Russia and Vladimir Putin. But the Russian people are not all bad. A lot of people in Russia do not support or want the war and do not want anything to do with the war. They just want to live their life peacefully and they don't want to do anything bad to the country of Ukraine. The people of East Rock Community & Cultural Studies Magnet School care. A survey showed that 91.8 percent of the students were proud that New Haven is taking in refugees from across the globe. A Russian poll showed that 75 percent of Russians support the war. That means that 25 percent are not supporting the war. The main reason people are supporting the war is because the government has told them to. This means the government is at war, not the people! The problem with the issue is that the public is only following the Ukraine side and not the whole war which is a BIG PROBLEM! — By Charlie Pellegrino

## Pancakes vs. Waffles

In a debate between pancakes and waffles, pancakes win. Pancakes win because pancakes are just better. Another is because pancakes taste sweeter than waffles. Although pancakes taste sweeter, if you don't change the recipe, they have 20 percent less sugar than waffles do due to the size of each pancake. You can make more pancakes with one batch of batter than you can with waffles.

Also, the pancakes have syrup and jam and waffles have nothing and that is kind of sad. But waffles have that one to five minutes in the toaster and then they are done. But pancakes have the fun of making them. Also pancakes you can make as big and crazy as you want but with waffles you will break the waffle maker.

— By Charlie Pellegrino

## Should Healthcare Be Free?

Currently, there are many countries (including Mexico, Malaysia, Singapore, etc.) with affordable healthcare and America absolutely needs to become one of them. Affordable healthcare sounds a little frightening to the government but there are many pros to it. Affordable healthcare would prevent the spread of disease because more people would have access to medicine. Expensive healthcare can threaten people's lives and can cause bankruptcy in families. Some sources also say that healthcare should be affordable because healthcare is a right.

Although a world with free healthcare can sound like paradise, it comes with problems. Medication costs money to make and affordable healthcare means companies would get less money for their medicine. Affordable healthcare would also require the government to spend more which could cause budget cuts and higher taxes. But the benefits of making sure every sick person gets treated outweighs the economic costs of affordable healthcare. —By Cory Anabelle Martinez

## Cats or Dogs?

Everyone always debates if dogs are better or if cats are better. But it really just depends on the person. If you're a calmer, quieter, more introverted person, maybe cats are better for you, since cats are calmer than dogs and usually stay inside. If you're a more energetic, outgoing, extroverted person, maybe dogs are better for you, since they're energetic and need lots of walks. One problem with cats is that their litter doesn't smell good and they shed a lot. One problem with dogs is that they really depend on their owners. There really is no reason to fight over which pet is better. It really just depends on the person. — By Cady Ali





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