

The Westword

Student voice of the Westhill Community

"The test of good journalism is the measure of its public service."

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WIFI LIMITS IN SCHOOL

Bathroom Closures Continue

By: the Editorial Board

Every student at Westhill knows the feeling of heading to the bathroom only to be met with a closed door, whereupon they must embark on a seemingly impossible quest: to find an unlocked bathroom before class starts.

“Today, this morning (March 16, 2022) the Finch building had all of its bathrooms (basement, 100s, 200s) locked during passing time. It’s not uncommon for both men’s and women’s bathrooms to be unnecessarily locked at WHS but why is that allowed?” wrote the Westhill feminist club’s Instagram account (@whs.feminism).

Indeed, this is a common problem at Westhill. Both levels of each building have two bathrooms to make it easy for students to access the restroom in between classes. But during the 2022 school year, many of these bathrooms have been locked with no explanation. Certain bathrooms are closed more often than not, while others open and close with no discernable pattern.

For some students, the inconvenience of finding an open bathroom is the worst part. For others, it’s the inconsistency that remains the problem. Every day is a guessing game of which bathrooms will be open.

“I walked out of Tobin’s class which is directly next to the 400s bathrooms. Boys bathroom: locked. I then went back upstairs because I figured the bathrooms near the cafeteria would be open. They were, but there were groups of people hanging out there and I did not feel comfortable walking in there. I went to

the 600s only to find the bathroom door locked,” Gavin Stops (‘22) said.

“Finally, I went down to the 500s and used the bathroom there since that was the only open bathroom,” Stops said.

Three tardies to a class counts as an ab-

more class-time missed.

It’s not only attendance that’s being damaged by these closures; it’s students’ health and dignity. Many students have health conditions that necessitate easy access to a restroom, while others

ism, are often pointed to as the likely reason. However, these are not new issues. Unless there has been a drastic increase in these behaviors in the past year, which security has not indicated, it is unlikely that misbehavior is to blame.

short-staffed as well. Perhaps the bathrooms are being closed so security can concentrate all their efforts in fewer places, to accommodate a lack of staff. If this is the case, the bathroom closures are the district’s way of maintaining safety for students in bathrooms.

Another aspect that supports this theory is that bathrooms are sometimes not supplied with necessary items, such as soap, hand towels, and even toilet paper. This indicates that there are not enough staff to make sure that all the bathrooms are sanitary and secure.

Both security and administration have declined to comment.

But if student misbehavior is the cause of the issue, closing the bathrooms is not an appropriate response. Disciplinary action is warranted when students abuse spaces such as the restroom, not shutting down the space to anyone who might need it. The misbehavior of a few students does not mean that other students deserve to suffer the health consequences of not being able to access a bathroom. Students should not be punished with tardies for having to hunt for a bathroom between classes.

Overall, it is likely that the bathrooms have been closed to focus resources on moderating the remaining ones. The best course of action would be to increase the number of security guards to ensure that the bathrooms can remain open without sacrificing safety. Additionally, the attendance policy could be updated to accommodate the amount of time it takes to find a restroom, and then wait in line, between classes.

Bottom Line: It’s not only attendance that’s being damaged by these closures; it’s students’ health and dignity.



CLOSED BATHROOM The 200s boy’s bathroom (left) is closed and locked with a sign that says “out of service.” The girls’ bathroom (right) is open. Photo by **Mahathi Uppuluri**/reporter

sence. So when students are sent on a wild goose chase to find an appropriate bathroom before class starts, it can harm their attendance record. To add insult to injury, these tardies cannot be appealed, so students have no chance to explain themselves if this is the case. To go to the bathroom during passing is to put one’s class attendance at risk, which necessitates asking teachers for bathroom passes, which results in

have mobility aids that require them to use an elevator, which adds to the amount of time it takes to find a different bathroom.

Even among able-bodied students, lack of access to bathrooms can cause health issues such as UTIs, and negatively affect girls who are on their periods.

Many are quick to blame students for the closures. Certain issues that plague high schools, like vaping or vandal-

The answer may lie in something more nuanced and off students’ radars: staff shortages.

Usually there are enough staff to moderate the bathrooms for misbehavior. But if security is faced with a staff shortage, there might not be enough staff to supervise all the Westhill bathrooms at once. Bus drivers, nurses, substitute teachers, teachers, and janitors all are needed areas, so it makes sense that security would be

Protests over 4x4 Schedule

Emily Urda
Reporter

On Wednesday, March 16th, outside of the Stamford Government Center, a group of students and teachers, both from AITE and Westhill, marched against the Hybrid 4x4 schedule.

Brightly colored signs with clever phrases like "No more 4x4," flooded the street corner of Washington Boulevard. Police cars, fire trucks, school buses, and members of the Stamford community honked in support of the marchers. Even a few members of the community and former students joined in and held up signs. The Hybrid 4x4 schedule has brought outcries from the students and teachers of Westhill High School. For those that may not know, the Hybrid 4x4 schedule is a new plan created by Stamford's Board of Education.

The new 4x4 plan follows a schedule in which each day, students take four classes. Each class should be approximately 90 minutes. Students would take four classes their first semester and another four classes their second semester. This is in an effort to allow students to take eight classes in order to gain more credit hours and increase the graduation rate. As you can imagine, this schedule

has brought up many questions, a few regarding AP classes, which require a summative test at the end

been different notions regarding the schedule floating around. No one knows what is going on

than six months for the new school year?

There was another plan that

4x4 schedule instead. The main difference is that in the original "A/B" plan, the classes would switch every day, while in the 4x4 plan, the classes would switch every semester.

A survey was taken at Westhill High School which found that 98% of the 170 members of staff do not want this new schedule. Instead, students and teachers would prefer the A/B schedule, in which students would have a different set of four classes every other day. This gives students a chance to see their teachers throughout the entire school year and eliminates problems with classes that require a full spaced out year.

"We can do better," Dr. Rebecca Hamman, a member of the Board of Education, said.

Dr. Hamman thinks the board should take their time. "They feel as if they have to do something," Dr. Hamman said.

The Board of Education's job is to "Interpret the needs of the Stamford community with regard to SPS, and keep the community informed of the goals, values, conditions, and requirements of the SPS." Instead of interpreting the needs of the SPS community, perhaps it's time they listen to what students and teachers have to say.



TAKING ACTION A dog wears a poster that reads "4x4 is for the DOGS" and a woman holds a poster arguing against the hybrid schedule. Photo by **Emily Urda**/ Reporter

of the year. Others wonder how teachers will teach for 90 minutes.

"I think it's a disaster waiting to happen," Dr. Jennifer Migiano, a chemistry teacher at Westhill High School, said.

One may agree, as there have

and what the school board will decide to do for the upcoming school year. Many students have been confused about how many classes they should pick for next year. How will teachers be able to create new teaching plans in less

was produced by Westhill staff prior to the pandemic. In this plan, students would take four classes one day, and another four classes the next. This plan was soon scrapped by the Board of Education, who eventually proposed the

Students Gather to Support Ukraine

Laasya Kasaru
Reporter

On Tuesday, April 5, 2022, Westhill High School held an assembly regarding the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia. This event was hosted in the auditorium during periods six and seven and included speeches, a performance by the Westhill High School band, and the song "It Could Have Been Me" by Holly Near. The band also played Ukraine's national anthem to show respect and acknowledgment of their situation.

The goal of the assembly was to bring more awareness to the violence affecting Ukraine, such as the civilian massacre in Bucha. Having songs and rap was a good way to bring awareness to this situation since it caught a lot of the students' attention.

"I think it was nice of them to bring awareness to the school about the situation happening in Ukraine. It's something we all need to know about and should

find ways to support them in a time like this. Apart from that, I enjoyed watching the band play and the rap done at the end of all the speeches. It was pretty good," Julia Montecarlo ('24) said.

The assembly also served to raise money for Ukraine. The Future Medical Professionals club sold ribbons to those in attendance, and the Yearbook Committee sold snacks, with all proceeds going to charity. Students who were concerned about Ukraine had the chance to help raise money and garner attention for such an important cause.

"I thought it was very powerful and educational for a lot of students who don't necessarily know what is going on. I liked hearing the different student voices with the spoken word poetry," Ms. Erica Brunner, an English teacher, said.

Even before the event, Westhill students had placed posters around the school asking students to support



ASSEMBLY PLAYERS The Westhill band plays Ukraine's National Anthem on stage at the assembly. Photo by **Laasya Kasaru**/ Reporter

Ukraine during this time.

Many members of the Westhill community already felt affected by the tragedy, and the assem-

bly helped people grieve. Overall, it was a good way to bring people together over a common cause, and mobilize students who were

already worried about the situation in Ukraine. Hopefully the assembly will inspire more events of a similar thread.

Good Month Bad Month

Column by
Alyssa Strezowki & Jeremy
Matloub



Good Month for...

Global Climate Agreement On the 2nd of March, 175 countries around the world came together in Nairobi, Kenya to sign a global treaty targeting plastic pollution. The treaty will create official laws regarding plastic, equalizing and standardizing the ways plastic will be dealt with. This was set up by the United Nations, and members will have until 2024 to come up with finalized laws, which will then be set for all countries involved.



Charity from Airbnb With Russia and Ukraine fighting, thousands of innocent people have been caught in the mix. These individuals are fleeing from their homes, trying to escape to safe countries. Airbnb has volunteered to help give these refugees a safe place to stay in the short term. Airbnb will help connect people with the government and make sure that people get individual needs properly cared for.



Solar Power Solar power is the future. South Korea has proved this with its successful project in the Hapcheon reservoir: 92,000 solar panels floating in the shape of plum blossoms. These panels are able to generate 41.5 megawatts of electricity, enough for 60,000 people. The solar panels have even become a tourist destination, with people curious to see the flower-shaped electricity generators.



Bad Month for...

Global Economy With rising international tensions surrounding the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the United States sent out a warning to China, discouraging Chinese involvement, either militarily or financially. International sanctions by nations around the world were placed in an effort to protest the invasion of Ukraine by impacting their wallet. If China were to aid Russia, the entire goal of implementing the sanctions in the first place would be largely redundant.



Covid-19 Legislation The Biden administration requested \$22.5 billion in supplemental Covid-19 relief funding to counteract the effects of the Omicron variant of the virus, through the massive government funding package, known as the omnibus. Covid is still a very real issue, with Congress requesting funding in order to be able to provide said funds as emergency resources, without requiring cuts elsewhere to offset them. This was customary for lawmakers on a bipartisan basis under the prior administration. Additional funds were deemed necessary, by White House Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response Jeffrey Zients, in the very near future to avoid disruptions to ongoing Covid response efforts. House Democrats have also introduced a standalone Covid relief bill, but it currently does not have the votes to pass both chambers.



Gas Prices President Biden has decided to cut off all oil and gas imports from Russia, causing an inflation in the gas prices across the country. Price per gallon was originally at around two to three dollars, whereas now it can be found anywhere from four dollars to even six in some western areas. People are scrambling to find gas stations nearby with the best prices, and are even still breaking the bank with the new supply change.



Images courtesy of GettyImages.

Mask Mandate to End After Two Years

Grace Tolla
Reporter

On Tuesday, March 1st, the Stamford Public Schools District voted to drop the city-wide mask mandate for all students. This came as a response to Governor Ned Lamont choosing to drop the state-wide mandate in schools, leaving it up to the superintendent and board of education to decide. On Wednesday, March 2nd, students across the district were finally permitted to remove their masks, after almost two years of fear and hesitation.

As time has passed, we have seen a slow increase in the number of students who feel comfortable removing their masks, as well as when and where they do so. On the first day, students reported seeing about 80% of students remaining masked, but since then, it has decreased to about 40 or 50%.

"When the mask mandate was lifted I stopped wearing masks in class and the Agriscience Building but kept it on while in the hallways. I mainly did that because there's a greater exposure due to the number of kids you see in the hallways between class periods. I also switched from a KN95 to a regular cloth or paper mask. From what I've seen around school, a lot of other kids are doing the same thing or have dropped the masks altogether, but there's also a large group of students who have chosen to keep their masks on," Meghan McLaughlin ('23) said.

Students have tried to observe patterns, looking for more or less mask-wearing in certain demographics of people, organized by gender, level of difficulty of the class, location, and more. This brings up an interesting argument about the thought processes people are using to make their personal choices.

For example, on the first day, it seemed as though more boys had chosen to remove their masks than girls. The girls who did choose to take them off chose to wear makeup, on the basis that many more people would see their faces than previously. This suggests that boys were more careless about their appearances, less focused on the idea that removing the masks reveals your face and more on achieving comfort. One student even pointed out that it seemed like more kids were wearing masks in his higher-level courses, such as honors and advanced placement. By location, masks are seen being worn in the hallways during passing time more than anywhere else, because of how close everyone is forced to stand due to the closed quarters.

The removal of the mask mandate brings up many questions about the psychological impacts of a global pandemic on high schoolers who are already prone to insecurity. Many students have chosen to remain respectful of others and not to let this

choice divide their friendships, as we were concerned it would. It is a powerful experience to see other students respecting personal choices, at least in public. Questions such as, "What made you decide to take it off?" or "Why are you keeping your mask on?" have remained largely unsaid, preventing potential debate and conflict.

"I'm not really paying attention to what other people are doing with their masks. I really see it as a personal choice, and it doesn't bother me at all. My mask-wearing depends mostly on what class I am in, and where I feel comfortable. I am not using other people to decide," Teo Boruchin ('23) said.

Positively, seeing people's faces and hearing voices more clearly seems to have increased social interaction. The lunchrooms are as rowdy as ever, and it has been great for maskless students not to repeat themselves so often, now that the barrier is gone. Classroom conversations are louder than teachers ever realized, even if students aren't speaking more than before. Clearer speech allows for more efficient classroom instruction, as teachers can be better heard when lecturing the class. At the elementary and pre-school levels, teachers and administrators have been seeing the negative effects of mask-wearing on students who are first learning important life skills, such as reading people's faces and pronunciation. Dropping the mandate will improve the social and emotional well-being of those students by increasing their communication skills and preventing further setbacks on their paths to becoming successful students and humans.

"I think the dropping of the mask mandate is very indicative of a much more positive time in our lives. All I can do is hope that we don't relapse into a time with a lot of COVID-19 cases. I am excited to see where this takes us and looking forward to a time where we can treat COVID-19 like the common cold," Austin Tovar ('22) said.

"I am currently fine with not wearing it at all, like in my classroom and in the hallways. I respect everyone who chooses to continue wearing it. I've been noticing about a 50/50 breakdown between people who are still wearing it and those who have chosen to take it off, but people mostly wear it during passing time. It's been really nice to see people's faces again," Mr. Matthew DiGiovanna, a digital art and photography teacher, said.

Overall, although a controversial choice, the mask mandate has resulted in a lot of change for the students and staff of Stamford Public Schools. As a community, we learn more about each other through seeing the results of this decision and begin to reform our relationships with one another. Hopefully, this remains the best decision for our health and safety and we can attempt to return to our pre-pandemic reality.



Image by Camila Miranda / Print Executive.

Wordle Takes Word Games Out Of This World

Hailey Baloutch
 Editor-in-Chief

In a matter of months, the phrase “Have you done the Wordle?” has become a common greeting among fans of the popular New York Times word game, which involves guessing a 5-letter word.

The game refreshes with a new word every day, making it hard to get tired of. It has also created a new social faux-pas: “spoiling” the Wordle for people who have not yet completed it that day. Wordle’s simple interface consists of six rows of five boxes as well as a keyboard. Each time a player guesses a five letter word, the game takes them to the next row.

The point of the game is to correctly guess the five letter word of the day. Every correctly guessed letter turns yellow, and if a letter is in the right spot as well, it turns green. All other letters become gray.

Through this, users can narrow down their choices and guess the word of the day. Perhaps the success of Wordle lies in its simple design and the fact that players have to wait for the next Wordle, giving them something to look forward to.

Wordle is the brainchild of Brooklynite Josh

Wardle, who created the game for his partner, who loves word puzzles. “Wordle” is a pun on his last name. Mr. Wardle has experience creating internet sensations, as he was one of the minds behind the Reddit hit “place,” wherein over a million users edited a digital canvas one pixel at a time.

“I think the Wordle is a very creative game to expand the mind and make people learn new vocab,” Vishal Nayak (‘24) said.

Certain words are common, such as “those,” while others require the user to recognize “natal,” “ulcer” or “caulk” in the five blank spaces. But for some, it’s the commonality of certain words that makes them so difficult to guess. For example, the word “watch” resulted in many players losing the game, because while they had “atch,” they spent the rest of the game guessing the first letter, which could create many words.

“Its brevity and scarcity, along with the real fear of failure make Wordle an elite classroom game. It’s a fun mental warmup during the school day, and I’m sure people will play it for school days to come,” David Jahaj (‘22) said.

Eventually, the New

York Times bought the rights to Wordle for over a million dollars, although the exact amount is not public. It functions as a sort of digital crossword for their online newspaper, which is a creative new take on traditional word games in static newspapers.

According to studies, Wordle has around two million users playing globally. Similar games have been created to tap into this success. In the “Worldle,” players guess a country based on its shape, and in the “Yearle,” they guess the year in which a series of events took place.

The mind-bending “Quordle” involves four Wordles which are played at once. Each guess counts towards all four of the Wordles, meaning that players have to find words which help them solve multiple puzzles simultaneously.

Regardless of their subject, there is one thing all these games have in common, and it is their relaxed style of gameplay. The entire appeal of Wordle-style games is that they have scarcity, meaning they can not take up too much of a player’s time. Whether the Wordle is a fad or not, it’s clear that the game has made an impact on casual gaming culture by showing that sometimes, less is more.



CLASS GAMES The traditional Wordle user interface is pictured above the Yearle interface. Images courtesy of GettyImages



The Voracious Vikings

Column by Laasya Kasaru, Mahathi Uppuluri, and Dania Pinto

Dairy Queen

Service: ★★★★★

Taste: ★★★★★

After countless days of pillaging, the voracious vikings needed to satisfy their ravenous appetites. They were in need of something cold and sugary to replenish their energy. They voyaged far and wide, scouring the seas in their longship, until they docked at the village of Stamford at last and were astonished by the bright, bold sign that read Dairy Queen.

Dairy Queen provides scrumdiddlyumptious soft-serve ice cream with a variety of flavors and toppings to satisfy your sweet tooth. Just what the Vikings needed! The Vikings considered the menu. It contained sweet treats such as sundaes, shakes, ice-cream cones, and more!

They decided to order three blizzards, which are creations of ice cream swirled with conventional toppings. The sleepy Viking ordered an oreo blizzard. It consisted

of crushed oreos mixed with creamy vanilla ice cream. This blizzard was so heavenly that it made her doze off until their next journey!

The Irritable Viking ordered a choco brownie extreme blizzard which includes chewy brownie pieces, Hershey choco chunks and cocoa fudge blended with chocolate soft-serve ice cream. The chocolate ice cream mixed with the various chocolate toppings made for the perfect chocolate-lover’s treat. This blizzard was so enjoyable that the now Pleasant Viking described it as being on Cloud 9!

Jealous of the other two vikings, the Bitter Viking ordered a chocolate chip cookie dough blizzard which combines chocolate chip cookie dough, rich, gooey fudge, and milky, vanilla soft serve ice cream. She felt on top of the world after eating such a sweet treat.

They took their blizzards to the red picnic tables set up outside of Dairy Queen to eat them. While the venue can be difficult to enjoy in rain or cold weather, it was perfect for this sunny day.

Overall, the vikings were thoroughly satisfied with their service and tasty treats. With having such a pleasant time, they decided to return for their next sweet cravings. Visit here while you can! Dairy Queen is only open from March to October, during the warm season. The vikings hope you have as much of a comforting and desirable experience as they did!



Exclusive Interview with Afghan Activist

By: Hailey Baloutch
Editor-in-Chief

On March 23, just three hours into the start of the Afghan school year, the Taliban reversed their decision to reopen girls' high schools. Classes were cut short as the decision reached administrators, who had to inform their female students that they were no longer allowed in the building. The decision left many girls sobbing outside of the high schools they had expected to learn in, according to Al Jazeera.

The reversal illustrates a growing conflict between the Taliban's conservative viewpoints and Afghanistan's role on the world stage. According to BBC News, opening girls' high schools would result in lifted sanctions and foreign aid for Afghanistan, as girls' secondary education is high on the international community's list of demands.

However, the Taliban's

regressive view of women's rights eclipsed these economic benefits, resulting in a hasty turnaround of their decision.

Indeed, the Taliban have put up a thinly-veiled progressive front since they took power in 2021. In December, they released a decree promoting women's rights to property and consent to marriage. And rather than outright denying women's right to education, they made unconvincing arguments to justify the delay of girls returning to school.

According to CNN, the Taliban first claimed that the absence of a safe transportation system was the reason that girls' schools remained closed. Now, the excuse is that girls' uniforms are inappropriate, and not in line with Sharia law.

In light of these recent developments, I interviewed Noorzia Kohistani, a senior official in the Ministry of Equality under president Ashraf Ghani, about the rise of the "new Taliban." Kohistani was

one of Afghanistan's most prominent women's rights activists in the government who was forced to flee the country after the Taliban seized power, according to Cgtn.com.

As someone who lived through the initial Taliban regime, the peace that came after, and their rise to power again in 2021, Kohistani has a unique perspective on the Taliban.

Thank you for accepting this interview. To start off, can you tell us about the journey your career took in Afghanistan?

I studied law in preparation to enter a career in the military. After I graduated, I decided to pursue civilian law instead. Over my career, I worked four different jobs, mostly pertaining to gender equality in Afghanistan, including the Advisor on Gender Affairs under President Karzai, until I became a senior official in the Ministry of Equality under President Ghani.

I was involved in Loya Jirga, and I represented women in the government.

Editor's note: Loya Jirga is an Afghan practice wherein respected elders travel to the capital from all areas of the country, including the most rural parts of Afghanistan, to advise the government and offer their blessings. Kohistani represented women and her Tajik people, Afghanistan's second largest ethnic group, in this Afghan tradition.

Did you ever think during this

time, while you worked in the Ministry of Equality, that the Taliban would come back?

Absolutely not. Absolutely not. The country had advanced so much- the offices, the clothes, the Internet, the education- I would never have believed it.

After the Taliban took over, how did you escape?

My son worked for NATO and speaks Spanish. Because of his job, and the fact that I would have been targeted, the Spaniards helped us evacuate. The airport was flooded. They told us where to be, what to wear, and how to look for them. It took multiple attempts before we could escape. Each time we had to leave and come back, we became more worried the Taliban would catch us and take our passports. Our flight left only hours before the suicide bombing.

Editor's note: On August 26, 2021, a suicide bombing claimed over 180 lives in the Kabul Airport, including 13 US servicemen and women. Hundreds of people had swarmed the airport in hopes of escaping the Taliban. It devastated an already frightened people. ISIS-K claimed credit for the attack, although some theorize that a Taliban affiliate may have been responsible.

What has become of the other women you worked with?

Practically all of them have left. They are spread all around the world in camps. They have no resources and no way to mobilize.

Some people have called the Taliban the "new Taliban." What do you think about these Taliban, and how they compare to the Taliban of the 1990s?

They are far worse. They are far more savvy, far more

shrewd, far more sophisticated. The old Taliban did not understand how to use a computer, let alone how to manipulate the media. They are far more dangerous now than they ever were before.

Do you have hope for the women of Afghanistan?

Yes. The Taliban are not the only ones who have changed since the 1990s. Back then, women were scared. But women have achieved masters degrees and PhDs in the past 20 years, and they're not scared anymore. They challenge them in the streets every day. They put makeup on, they go and face them. Social media also helps. Since they have access to social media, they record everything, and the Taliban know their actions will be seen. As an example, there was one girl named Paryani who was arrested by the Taliban for protesting. But because she videoed and posted her arrest, she was eventually freed.

What do you think of the Taliban's ability to remain in power?

I believe that the policy of holding out recognition of the regime can lead to the Taliban's collapse. They can't govern. Despite their killings and guns, they have no idea how to run a country. Every day they feel the distance between them and the people. They are desperate for international recognition, the only currency that matters to them.

Editor's note: This interview was conducted through an English-Farsi translator.

After escaping to Spain, Kohistani relocated to a remote suburb in Belgium, where she now lives with her family. She hopes to one day move to Brussels to be closer to women's rights establishments and resume her activities.



Noorzia Kohistani

Photo courtesy of FaceBook



Photos courtesy of Wikimedia and NPR.org.

SPECIAL REPORT

Ukraine-Russia Conflict

By Viharika Penmetsa
Reporter

Starting on Thursday, February 24, 2022, Russia's President Vladimir Putin launched a large-scale invasion into Ukraine. Putin claims that the Russian military seeks "demilitarization and denazification," but not occupation. However, many believe that the motive behind the attacks on Ukraine resonate in the fact that Russia does not want Ukraine to join NATO forces, as it will impose a threat to their country.

Due to former president Gorbachev, being promised by NATO that they would not move to the east of Europe. But European countries such as the Baltic Republics, Poland, Romania, and Lithuania, who used to be associated with the Soviet Union, joined NATO. Russia claims the treaty was broken and this was imposed as a security threat to their country. In addition to this they feel that Ukraine, a country that can exert its influence, will join NATO, which has not happened. Putin is trying to do everything in his power to make sure this does not happen.

Since the start of the attack at least 67 towns and cities

in Ukraine have been hit with fighting and bombings. They have yet to capture Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine or any other major cities. The Ukraine army is not holding back and has created a strong defense against Russia.

"It's amazing to see that Ukraine has held on for this long and has fought back for their country. It's empowering to see so many men and women not give hope for their country's future," Tanisha Panda ('23) said.

Many Ukrainians have decided to stay in the country and fight back. President Zelensky has also refused to evacuate from Kyiv to a safer location. Many people around the world are applauding his demonstration of bravery and courage. According to CNN, President Zelensky turned down offers to evacuate from Ukraine offered by the United States.

"The fight is here; I need

ammunition, not a ride," President Zelensky said.

"I think the people in Ukraine are showing immense bravery by not giving up and staying to fight in the war even though they aren't trained to do so. President Zelensky especially is showing courage by staying in his country and not

Russia and providing them with arms and military aid. Countries such as the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, Poland, and all the NATO countries have imposed harsh sanctions on Russia to try to cut them off economically.

According to the United

shot them. She had 12 bullet wounds to her legs and had begged nearby Russian officers to help her. She claims that the Russian army believe that everyone in Ukraine were Nazis.

"I'm sorry for doing this but we have an order to shoot everything that is moving, and you cannot imagine how many cars like this we have full of Nazis who are trying to bomb us," a Russian officer said to her.

Her husband and daughter were both shot in the legs also. Miraculously the entire family has survived this horrific incident and were taken to the hospital to recover. Many people trying to flee were killed on the streets in Ukraine. There are reports of dead bodies in the streets.

Everyone around the world is raising money to help people in Ukraine. Medical supplies and direct financial assistance are largely what the Ukrainian government is seeking.

"This is a horrific situation. I don't think anyone believed a war like this would actually happen. I pray and hope that this ends soon and the Ukraine people finally get the peace and independence they deserve," Kamila Brito ('23) said.



Nations, almost 3 million people have fled Ukraine. Refugees are crossing to neighboring countries such as Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, and Moldova.

Several gut-wrenching accounts of the invasion have been reported in the news. Tetyana Vlasenko and her family were trying to escape Ukraine to the border in their car when Russian troops stopped them and repeatedly

abandoning his people to fight, even though he knows he might be killed if they capture the country," Dharana Alilaikannan ('23) said.

Zelensky has asked NATO and other countries to aid Ukraine in this war by implementing harsh sanctions on

Sports Sanctions

By Vishal Nayak
and Aryan Pandalai
Reporters

With the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, a number of international sports organizations have said they will boycott matchups with Russian teams. Along with that, there have been growing calls to ban individuals from competitions.

Belarus, a Russian neighbor that has contributed to the Ukrainian invasion, has also faced calls to be banned.

The International Olympic Committee on Monday said Russia had breached the "Olympic Truce," and recommended that Russian and Belarusian athletes be barred from competitions.

"I think it is amazing the world is coming together to denounce Putin's aggression against Ukraine, to see it expanding into society shows how unified people are across the world, even within Russia," Dr. Forbes, an economics teacher, said.

The organization also called to move or cancel any sporting events in the two countries.

FIFA, the global soccer governing body, and FIBA, which oversees international basketball, have said Russia will be banned from competing. FIFA's move disqualifies the 2018 World Cup host from the 2022 World Cup.

"Football is fully united here and in full solidarity with all the people affected in Ukraine. Both Presidents hope that the situation in Ukraine will improve significantly and rapidly so that football can again be a vector for unity and peace amongst people," FIFA said.

The Union of European Football Associations announced it would move its scheduled Champions League final from Russia.

Besides FIFA and the IOC, some organizations have allowed Russian athletes to compete under a few circumstances.

"What's different about

these sporting organizations versus FINA, the international swimming organization, is that they allow Russian athletes to compete, but they do not get to represent their flag," Hudson Jang ('24) said.

Essentially, these organizations are making sure that Russia gets no glory from the efforts of their athletes due to the recent aggression towards Ukraine.

"I think that allowing these athletes to compete, but not allowing them to represent Russia is fair. These organizations have to understand that all these players are not in support of Putin's actions, and they simply cannot denounce his actions because that would be putting these athletes at a great risk," Sam Sherman ('23) said.

With the ongoing and increasing tensions between Russia and Ukraine, we can only observe how this tragic conflict will affect other sporting events of note around the world.



Outrage Over Lauren Smith-Fields's Death

Hailey Baloutch
Editor in Chief

Outrage has sparked over the Bridgeport Police Department's mishandling of the investigation into 23-year old Lauren Smith-Fields's death.

Smith-Fields, who was studying to become a physical therapist at Norwalk Community College, was reported dead by a 37-year old white man she had met on the popular dating app Bumble, as reported by the Stamford Advocate.

Upon arriving at the scene, the Bridgeport Police Department allegedly did not collect vital evidence, detain the man for questioning, or even notify her family of her death. Smith-Fields's family has filed a lawsuit against the city of Bridgeport for failing to investigate suspicious circumstances and collect evidence that would be vital in determining foul play.

When the Bridgeport Police Department initially arrived at Smith-Fields's apartment, they immediately ruled out the older man as a suspect in her death. They claimed that he was "a really nice guy," as justification for the lack of investigation into his involvement, according to the New York Times. The detective who made this statement, Kevin Cronin, has since been placed on leave.

Neglecting to detain the last man to see her alive for questioning was the first misstep in the investigation, and they then failed to collect forensic evidence from the apartment,

including a sedative pill, a used condom, and blood-stained sheets, which were eventually found by Smith-Fields's family while they were cleaning.

The family had to call the police department and request that they take these items as evidence. Although they were collected, the forensic lab never received these suspicious items from the police department, rendering them

report with Bumble to intercept messages between Smith-Fields and her date, which could have offered crucial information about the nature of the relationship between them.

When the police left her apartment, they made minimal efforts to contact her family, as they found a passport which identified her, according to Rolling Stone Magazine. This left her family in the dark.

zine and hydroxyzine are both antihistamines meant to alleviate allergic reactions. It is not advised to take both of them together. "Using promethazine together with hydroxyzine may increase side effects such as drowsiness, blurred vision... confusion, and memory problems," according to Drugs.com. Further, the United States Drug Administration cites that sedation, drowsiness,

rible to think that anyone could be put in a situation where they're informed that a family member has died while they're outside the door of their apartment, waiting for them to answer. You have to question the procedure the police go through when they investigate these kinds of cases," Marissa Crevecoeur ('22) said.

"They didn't do the bare minimum of investigating the man who should have been the primary suspect, and they did not even contact her family. The fact that so many drugs were found in her system, and they still did not go back to collect evidence, leaving it for the family to find, is an egregious miscarriage of justice. It makes you wonder how often this happens, that crucial evidence is disregarded by the police and a case is swept under the rug."

The many failures of the Bridgeport Police Department have not only damaged the Smith-Fields's chances of finding out what happened to their daughter, but illuminated a disturbing trend in the justice system. While missing white women receive nationwide coverage for weeks on end, black women are often dismissed by the police and not represented in the mainstream news.

In Stamford, it is likely that more people can recognize the name Gabby Petito than Lauren Smith-Fields, despite the fact that Lauren Smith-Fields was our neighbor and a member of our community. We must do better to demand justice for black women.



unable to be used as crucial forensic evidence, according to Darnell Crossland, the Smith-Fields' family attorney.

The police department's failure to collect these items as well as to submit them for testing in an appropriate period of time are enormous missteps that irreversibly harmed the investigation. Additionally, the police department failed to file a

Smith-Fields's mother was informed of her daughter's death from outside the door of her apartment, where she had gone to make sure she was okay after she stopped responding to her phone.

A medical examiner ruled Smith-Fields's cause of death to be "acute intoxication due to the combined effects of fentanyl, promethazine, hydroxyzine, and alcohol," according to CNN. Prometha-

and confusion are common effects of the opiate drug Fentanyl. Understanding the effect these drugs have is crucial to piecing together what may have happened to Smith-Fields. It is unknown whether Smith-Fields took these drugs willingly, because the police did not test any of the drinks in the apartment for contamination.

"As a sibling, daughter, family member, it's hor-



School Wifi: Barriers and Speed Bumps

Andrew Choi
Reporter

As schools like Westhill High School try to become more technologically advanced, the Wifi service provided by the school is not up to date. Although the school now offers to borrow laptops, the wifi still hinders how much work can be done. The Wifi is notoriously frustrating for students.

"It's slow. Some internet websites are blocked. It's very slow," Jason Busch ('22) said.

Some students believe that the work teachers post on Google Classroom simply cannot be done effectively in school because of how slow the wifi is. Sometimes it blocks websites that need to be accessed in order to do classwork. These restrictions affect students' ability to

do work in school.

"The new school computers have limited my ability to take tests, access educational materials, and finish schoolwork. While trying to take a secure test from AP Classroom on the Lockdown Browser, many of my classmates and I were unable to access the test," Gavin Stops ('22) said.

"Our school computers were unable to open the test due to the many security controls on the computer. Similarly,

while searching for information regarding computer science software, the school computers would not let me access websites needed to install said software."

Censorship of certain

websites may be a good thing considering access to inappropriate websites or games may be distracting for students. According to



GoGaurdian, web filtering prevents students from accessing graphic content, distracting entertainment, and

even potential cyberbullying. On the other hand, web filtering may discourage student autonomy and decision making, prevent students from learn-

ing how to use the internet efficiently, and limit access to educational websites. While internet filtering and bad service in the school system may limit students from using social media in

order to prevent issues such as cyberbullying, the pros of having access to more educational resources outweighs the potential misuse of wifi.

However, internet fil-

tering may be useless anyways, as students figure out how to bypass such features with proxies and the poor security of the wifi.

"The fact that some websites are blocked is annoying, but every student has access to a VPN to bypass these blocks, so why not just unblock every site? It's the teachers job to make sure their students are on task anyway," Navin Ponnusamy ('22) said.

Since the school's web filtering is ineffective and therefore a useless feature, it would be more productive to simply give access to more educational resources to all students. Based on the information gathered, the web filtering and poor connection Wifi should be improved because it is both ineffective and too slow to handle school assignments.

No Midterms and Finals

Mahathi Uppuluri
Reporter

There is no doubt that the COVID pandemic has changed daily life drastically, especially for students. One change brought by this pandemic was the cancellation of midterms and finals.

Midterms were summative assessments that students took halfway through the school year. They were used to measure how much a student has learned up until this point and to figure out the areas where they excel and the areas they need to improve academically.

Finals were taken at the end of the school term and showed students' overall performance in different subjects throughout the year. These tests helped determine what type of classes the student should be taking in the next school year or semester based on their educational performance.

"I do think that mid-

terms and finals are beneficial because they help teachers know where students are at and where students can improve. But, I also think that they are a pain in the neck and I wouldn't want them," Danielle Pareja ('24) said.

Now that these exams are gone, many students, teachers, and parents alike have contrary opinions on whether this change is advantageous or detrimental to students' intellectual abilities.

"I don't think that finals and midterms help students improve their academic abilities because they cause a lot of unnecessary stress in addition to the everyday worries of high school students, especially in the covid affected world," Sammy Sendersky ('24) said.

Many students agree that the lack of midterms and finals is a positive contribution to students. This is primarily because of the negative impact these tests have on stu-

dents' mental health, such as increased anxiety and stress. Students already have a tough time balancing schoolwork, extracurriculars, social lives, and time for their families. Adding these assessments does not help at all, especially because it is difficult to remember all the information learned throughout different semesters in such a short period of time.

"Midterms create mental strain. All the topics learned in a semester can be stressful to study by letting a letter grade determine whether you fail or succeed," Rebecca Calvillo ('24) said.

On the contrary, some parents and teachers believe that midterms and finals are needed as a means to measure student performance and accountability.

"I feel conflicted about high-stakes testing, but I believe student midterms are necessary measures of student achievement and help in terms of student accountability. I recog-

nize that my opinion is unpopular with students and even some staff, but we just went through a time where students were learning completely online or in a hybrid setting. Throughout this time, I saw lots of copying of work, some cheating, and noticed that at least a quarter of my students seemed apathetic about their education. Students did not have to worry about taking midterms or finals," Len Lavalley, a Spanish teacher at Westhill, said.

"Without these tests, students who did not master enough Spanish/French/Italian from the previous year were able to move on and are now in higher levels of Spanish/French/Italian without the foundations that they need to be at the appropriate levels of our world language courses. I love teaching, I love Westhill, and I am all about student achievement, but I wish we had midterms and finals to support students, academic integrity, and pride in learn-

ing," Lavelle said.

Some have concerns that students are lazier in school now and do not care about their work as much as they used to because they don't need to. They are able to pass and move on to higher levels without mastering the skills and concepts they are being taught, which is especially frustrating for teachers who expect students to be prepared for higher level courses. Parents also become disappointed when they see low academic performance since students no longer have an incentive to learn.

Midterms and finals have their own advantages and disadvantages. Overall, it seems that parents and teachers are more likely to support these tests to evaluate student performance, while students are more likely to voice concerns over mental health.

Questions still remain about the future of midterms and finals for coming years.

Photo courtesy of GettyImages

Show Review: Attack on Titan

Jairon Herrera
Reporter

Released on January 10th, the second part of the fourth season of *Shingeki No Kyojin*, popularly known as *Attack on Titan*, has once again captivated and pleased viewers with its riveting episodes.

"An absolutely magnificent series, with amazing animation and even better writing that has the watcher/reader in a consistent trance yearning for more," Joseph Kravar ('22) said.

The show did not waste any time jumping right into the scenes that viewers had previously been teased with at the end of the previous season. Attracting an average rating of 9.5/10 on IMDb, audience members have been exceedingly impressed with both the animation provided by the studio Mappa and the impressive storyline Hajime Isayama has spent roughly a decade working on. *Attack on Titan* is without a doubt one of the best

shows that the Anime category has to offer, and it leaves its viewers exhilarated and impatient for the next episode.

Following the story's main protagonist Eren Jaeger, the anime was first released almost nine years ago in 2013. Fans of what was a unique and fresh show, unfortunately, had to wait 4 years for the second season to be released, answering the questions that were left lingering at the end of the first.

After seeing the success and desire of the adventures of Jaeger in the titan world, the anime studio Wit rushed to push more of the show to the public, releasing season 3, parts one and two in the following two years.

Wit had done an amazing job delivering dramatic and nail-biting animations with the previous seasons, so when news had hit that Wit no longer

was going to continue its animation in *Attack on Titan*, fans were left distraught.

"Everything changed as Eren showed viewers that all is not what we think, and this was mind-blowing," Brandon



Monies ('22) said.

When season four had finally aired in 2020, animated by Mappa Studios, fans carried mixed feelings about character designs and the new CGI they had implemented into the show.

Although at first it was greatly criticized, viewers soon warmed up to the new animation style, some even preferring it over the old Wit designs. Regardless of differing opinions, it was clear Mappa animators were working diligently for days on end to produce their best for the huge fanbase of *Attack on Titan*.

The new season, more specifically its most recent episodes, has brought answers to many questions viewers have as well as hinted towards possible new ones. The main questions of Eren's plan, his motives, and his reasoning have created curiosity in audience members. His philosophies and standings are slowly being revealed, and it will not be long until Isayama shows his followers what he had planned from the very beginning.

This will be the final continuation of the series, as the manga ended in April 2021. The ending of a decade-old story will finally come to a close, and as a follower of both the manga and animation, it will be a touching departure from the characters of *Attack on Titan*.

Isayama does not plan on having any future adaptations of the titan world and has chosen to lay the story at rest after all his laborious years.

On the final page of the last *Attack on Titan* volume, Isayama and his team left a touching message to its devoted readers. "Even so, we believe that nothing is more valuable than people being able to share in emotions that cannot be put into words through a story. It makes us happy that we were able to feel that way with readers by way of *Attack on Titan*. Though this series has come to an end, these memories are sure to always warm our hearts. Thank you for reading!!"

Show Review: Euphoria

Mahathi Uppuluri
Managing Editor

Euphoria follows a set of teenagers navigating their personal struggles with love, trauma, drugs, friendship, and individual identity. The show is narrated by Rue, who is played by Zendaya. Rue suffers from different mental illnesses that have led her into a crippling substance addiction. Despite being back from rehab, Rue has no intention of staying off drugs. Some other characters include Jules, Nate, Cal, Maddy, Cassie, Kat, Fezco, Lexi, and Elliot, who were introduced in the beginning of the newest season.

"I love *Euphoria* because it shows a realistic yet unrealistic look on a high schooler's life and things kids our age deal with. The cinematography and aesthetic of the show is also what everyone loves about it," Phoebe Jamieson ('25) said.

"I also love how inclusive it is, considering one of

the main characters, Jules, is a trans woman. I think that fact can inspire people and allow people to relate to a character who is often not represented," Jamieson said.

Season 2 starts off with a character backstory like other episodes. The audience learns about Fezco's upbringing, what life was like growing up with his dealing grandma, heading his own business and taking care of his little brother at a very young age.

It then cuts to a New Years Party where the audience sees many new connections between the different characters, as well as past

Overall, this season delves into the background of those who were previously side characters. Episode 2, my personal favorite so far, begins with Lexi's backstory and her struggles with confidence and fear of being outspoken after being constantly overshadowed by her older sister. This episode acted as a balance to get the viewers caught up to the plot and individual storylines after not watching for such a long time. This is what made it the most interesting.

In Episode 2, viewers see many more perspectives and characters in a single episode than we ever have before. In

character on the show besides his son Nate Jacobs. It was interesting to learn about the source of Cal's abusive tendencies towards his son.

We also learned Cal only married Marsha because she was pregnant with his child, and hid his sexuality from his family.

One major strong point of the show is definitely its videography. Each shot is set up differently from the previous one, and the use of glitter and lighting creates a dream-like aesthetic, further emphasizing the euphoric imagery.

One major criticism of the show is that it is unrealistic. The show is from the

ten say it is too extreme in the way, and that life is not like that for the average high-schooler.

"Well *Euphoria* is entertaining but not really a realistic show. I like the drama and suspense that's built throughout. I like how it talks about some problems a lot of people deal with in society, like body shaming and drug addiction and how hard it is for people to overcome such things," Daniella Pareja ('24) said.

Personally, I find *Euphoria* entertaining, and it shows an extreme version of high school. I like how it doesn't try too hard to resonate with teens because the dialogue seems more authentic and not forced. The visual aspect of the show is beautiful, with dreamy cinematography that captivates the audience. I also love how the narrator is a teenager which makes the show a lot more relatable, as they are the same age as the show's target audience.



conflicts. This is also the episode where Elliot, Rue's closest friend after Jules, is introduced.

In the most recent episode, we were exposed to Cal's past, who undoubtedly is the most extreme and psychopathic

point of view of a teenager, so there has been controversy over its hypersexual and exaggerated scenes. Critics of

Photo courtesy of IMDb.com

Ski Team Finishes a Successful Season

Grace Tolla
Reporter

Editor's note: Grace Tolla skis for the Stamford Alpine Ski Race Team.

On Tuesday, March 8th, the Westhill-Stamford High alpine ski racing team ended their season of amazing success, team building and high level competition against other schools in Connecticut. The team celebrated the season with senior night, a group trip to Catamount Ski Resort, and a banquet where a series of awards were presented to the hard-working athletes. Team captains are seniors Brandon Shapiro and Cassie Culhane for Westhill, and senior Matan Coll, as well as juniors Alex Butler and Lucia Kempton for Stamford High. All of the team leaders, including captains and coaches DiAngelo from Westhill and Kelley from Stamford High, did an amazing job of creating a supportive environment for all racers, despite varying experience, times, and scores.

"The program is an incredible opportunity and the skiing is super fun. The team itself is very supportive. Though we race alone, we train together. All in all, I am very proud to be a part of such an amazing program," Lucia Kempton ('23) said.

Alpine ski racing is a sport where athletes must ski between gates with tight turns, and make

it downhill as fast as possible, as they are ranked on their times. The best racers will complete the course in less than 25 seconds, while others may do the same course in 45 seconds at the most. For the Connecticut high school league, every racer receives a number that determines the order they will race in, and either begins with the junior varsity or varsity course, which do not vary in difficulty, only in start times. There is a JV and varsity course for both female and male racers. Each racer completes both courses, and the sum of their times determines their ranking against all other racers of the same gender from across the state. Races start around 4:30pm, meaning most racers compete in the dark, with only the course lights to assist them with spotting ice and inconsistent snow. The league that the Westhill-Stamford High team competes in uses Mount Southington as their course.

In terms of equipment, all racers wear "race suits", which are skin-tight spandex suits used to increase speeds and aerodynamics. Racers are required to wear helmets certified by FIS, Federation of International Skiing. These helmets have hard plastic over the ears, which can make it difficult to hear. Goggles are also required when racing, to prevent eye injury, even though many regular skiers choose not to

wear them because of the lack of visibility. All ski racers race with poles, as they are necessary to get up from a fall and are used to help yourself skate across the flattest parts of the course as fast as possible.

To prepare for the races, the team holds nearly daily workouts for all of December to get in the best shape possible, which, for ski racing, means flexibility, strong lower body and cardiovascular endurance. By January, we reserve spots at Mount Southington to practice by running drills chosen by the team captains, often divided into groups by gender and school.

Drills include activities like practicing turning every 3 seconds, going down without pulls to ensure a deeper tuck, and practicing hockey stops. Overall, free-skiing the most difficult parts of the mountain was the most common practice task. Additionally, right before the race, every team in the league participates in something called "slipping the course." This is when the racers line up, and slowly slip down the course in order to get a feel for how far apart the gates are, and where the biggest drops are, so you aren't going into it blind.

All racers meet at the top of the course about fifteen minutes before the first racers, the best in varsity and JV in both the male and female categories, are instructed

to start. The team cheers on their team mates from top edges of the course, and watches carefully for their turn, as other racers line up by number. Once you complete your first race, either varsity or JV, you immediately get back on the chair lift and return to the starting area. Times are available on a screen at the bottom of the course just a few minutes after finishing, but it is best to wait and check online to make sure you don't miss your second race.

In order for your score to remain in contention, you must descend the course without hitting or missing any of the gates, falling, or dropping any of your equipment. This year, the team learned this the hard way, with many falls and several occasions where ski poles got stuck in the snow and couldn't be removed fast enough.

Although many people in New England know how to ski, considering the environment, ski racing is an entirely different sport. The courses used for racing are black diamond level, and carved by the maintenance on the mountain to be steep and smooth. However, as hundreds of racers go down the course in the same pattern of turns, trenches are carved out in the snow, with tall walls of build-up on the edges, that make intentional movement varying from the pattern nearly impossible. Racers truly do have

to be fearless, as there is no room in your times for hesitation. The most dedicated racers tuck as low as possible to be more aerodynamic, even though this makes it difficult to see and control your speed.

"Ski team is so fun! I love how it mixes both of the schools in Stamford and how many new people you get to meet in the workouts, practices and races. I'm so excited for next season," Samantha Culhane ('24) said.

There were many notable fun events and adventures throughout our 2021-2022 season, including various silly injuries and what we call "yard sales" (dropping all your equipment during a fall). On more than one occasion, we almost left team members at the mountain when they weren't back on the bus in time to leave at night.

As the weeks of racing go on, most racers generally improve, celebrating together as they drop seconds off their times, securing a higher spot in the ranking for future competition. At our final race in early February, both Alex Butler and Lucia Kempton (SHS 2023) shattered the school record for female racing, completing the varsity course in just 23 seconds each. It was a great season, and we look forward to doing it again next year, and continuing to push ourselves to the best of our abilities.

Unified Basketball Team Ends a Great Season

Arleny Flores
Reporter

On Wednesday, March 30th, Westhill's Unified Sports team finished off their season with a basketball game against the school's staff members. The team is composed of students both with and without special needs. The games are a fun way to build community and get active for many Westhill students.

"I liked playing with the teachers. It was hard and I'm happy that we won," Fernanda Herrera said.

The team is coached by Phys Ed. teachers Mr. Kurtz and Mr. Mulvany. They play several times a season, and each game is a hit.

"A lot of these kids are in my class. We play three, four, five different events in the winter and the kids have a great time! Sometimes we even get kids who have graduated come back. It's been fun. It's great that the whole school community gets involved," Coach Kurtz said.

Their final game took place in the main gymnasium

at 11:45am, after school had finished for a half-day. Dozens of teachers, parents, and students gathered to eagerly watch the game, some holding

up signs to show their support for the players. The teams played well and displayed great sportsmanship. Many players reacted enthusiastically

after scoring points, some by jumping in the air and others by high-fiving their teammates. Clips of the game were posted on

Instagram by Mr. Rinaldi (@westhill_principal), all which do a great job of demonstrating the friendly-competition between the opposing teams.

In the end, the Unified Sports team won the game, and the gym was filled with smiling faces and the sound of the audience's cheers. Parents were seen tightly hugging their children and applauding their success. Before leaving, the Unified Sports team got together to take a group photo. They posed confidently, showing pride in the way that they played. The staff and coaches also felicitated the students prior to their departure. Overall, the Unified Sports team's season ended on a positive note, with both the audience and the players having enjoyed themselves.

"It was fun to pass the ball to my classmates," Ashley Parker said.

The game was the last of the season, but players look forward to participating again next year.



UNIFIED TEAM PLAYS A player dribbles the ball during the last game of the season.

Image by **Arleny Flores** /Reporter



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