



Aeries, 5-Star, and password systems changes cause differing opinions

New software introduced this year to improve quality of life, students and staff respond

Aditya Padinjarel | Staff Writer

FUSD transitioned to three new digital systems this year: Aeries for grading and attendance, 5-Star for FLEX, and a new password authentication system.

Mr. Benn, a physics teacher for over 30 years and former FUDTA representative, commented on one possible reason for the switch based on his experience, “Most of the time you’ve got a couple of different factors running: you’ve got what’s out there software wise, what the district can afford, and which ones hit most of the bells and whistles you want.”

“You have server problems, plus 5-Star, plus Aeries, and it’s a lot of change,” said Mr. Benn, “and ultimately the roll-out was not as good as it could have been.” Although many teachers face issues with the new systems, students also face difficulties.

Mr. Elam, the teacher of the new Gaming Concepts course, spoke about technical issues faced in class, “We had students as late as three or four weeks in that still weren’t able to access the curriculum, so they had

to do everything on paper, take photos, and email me from a personal email.”

Sally Giang (12), who faced initial issues with the password system switch, spoke about the student experience with the recent changes. “It felt like an inconvenience,” Giang said. “There’s not really someone there to help you step-by-step.”

Ultimately, staff on campus is left mostly untrained in the new systems, leaving students trying to figure out issues on their own.

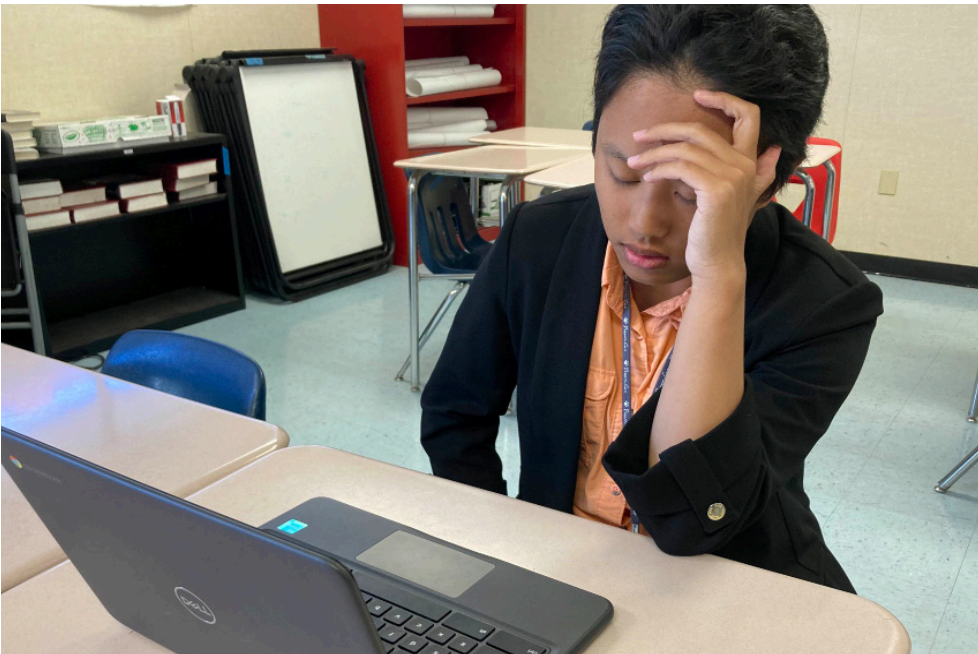
In an email interview with Mr. Maverick, the school’s new library media technician, he commented on steps taken by the library and IT to improve

student technical experience. “I think the steps for us as the library and the IT to provide a better technical experience is to just help students out when needed.” This solution can be a slow process, as it takes time to resolve individual issues rather than resolve problems before roll-out.

“I think honestly, it’s a logistical issue,” Mr. Elam said, “We have an incredibly mismanaged district. If they started three months earlier, everything would be fine. If they started a month earlier, most things would be fine.” The district’s mismanagement, and the IT department’s time management, only led to further difficulty for students.

As inconvenient as the systems have been for students, some students and teachers are willing to give it a chance. “If you were to ask me in 6 months, I think I’d prefer Teachmore and Aeries as the combo,” Mr. Elam said.

“Would I prefer something better? Sure. Is the system we have good? Absolutely,” Mr. Benn said, “But they’re not perfect.”



Nate Tseng (12) struggling to access transcript on Aeries as the feature has not been implemented (PC: Aditya Padinjarel (12)).

New Ethnic Studies requirement

Exploring student opinions about the new required class

Aruna Harpalani | Staff Writer

Starting with the class of 2028, freshmen at AHS are required to take Ethnic Studies, a one-semester course paired with Health.

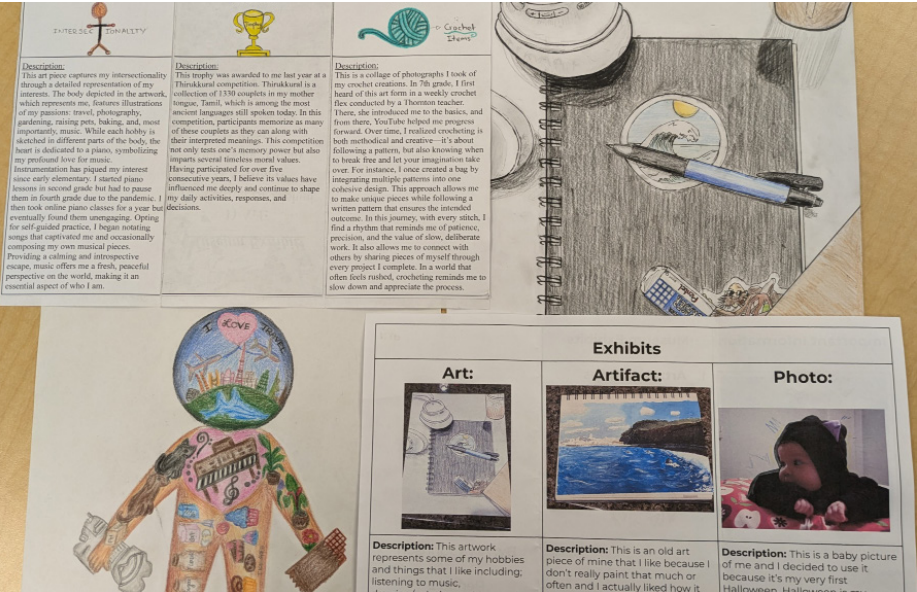
Ms. Veizades, one teacher of this course, described what the class entails. She said, “Ethnic Studies is focused on the experiences of different ethnic groups and racial groups in the United States—topics like immigration and the Civil Rights movement, and, more generally, where our identities come from.” Regarding class structure, she added, “Usually, it’s a project-based class with thematic units for most teachers. Some also teach it by different groups.”

Ocean Joshi (9), a cur-

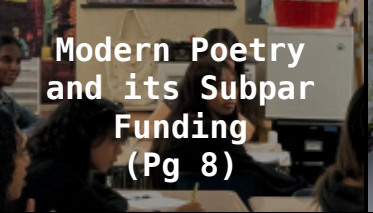
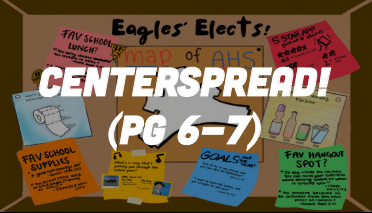
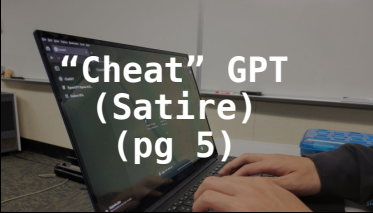
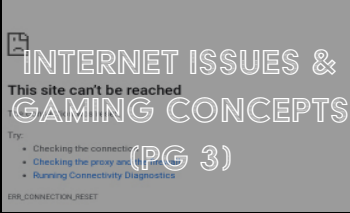
rent Ethnic Studies student, described a recent day in class. “Today, we learned about the Underground Railroad and slavery,” he said. “So right now we’re on slavery and African Americans in general.”

Rice described her favorite project in Ms. Veizades’s class. “I really like the Museum of You project. We made a pamphlet about ourselves and we talked about different aspects of our identity there. And we got to share photos, art, and an artifact, and I really enjoyed that,” she said.

While the new requirement will go into effect for the class of 2029, American High is introducing it a year early. Ms. Veizades explained, “We’re start (continued on pg. 3)



A “Museum of You” project by one of Ms. Veizades’s students. Rice explained, “We made a pamphlet about ourselves and we talked about different aspects of our identity there. And we got to share photos, art, and an artifact.” This project is not Rice’s, but of an anonymous student. (PC: Aruna Harpalani (12))



i-Ready diagnostic testing continues, students share their concerns

Students and staff share opposing perspectives on the i-Ready diagnostic

Tegbir Kaur | Staff Writer

After the ice-breakers, admin presentations, and syllabus introductions have been rolled out, students can expect one last thing on the routine back-to-school agenda: diagnostic testing. Students dedicate a lot of time to these tests over their high school career, taking the i-Ready diagnostic twice each year. This raises the question of whether they are really worth it.

“My friends and I don’t take benchmark testing that seriously, partially because it feels like a waste of time,” said Sage Gebrekidan, a junior in AP Lang. She said, “Although teachers probably factor it a little into classes, from a student perspective, it just feels useless.”

On the other hand, Mrs. Smith, American’s English Department chair who teaches AP Lang and ELD 3, provided insight on how she uses her student’s scores. “For the majority of students at the 11 AP level, the diagnostic is intended to confirm that they will

be able to handle the heavy reading load in the course. For students who are below level, it is an opportunity for us to make sure that during FLEX, we are providing opportunities to strengthen that reading comprehension.” She added, “For my ELD students, the diagnostic results allow me to create reading groups in class, to have both homogeneous groups where students are reading at similar levels, and mixed reading groups where [there is] a stronger reader and potentially a struggling reader who can help to balance any reading activities.”

Another of Gebrekidan’s main concerns was the repetitive nature of the test. She said, “Most of the readings I get are the same every year, which is kind of pointless, because it makes it boring, and it’s already something I don’t want to be doing.”

Mrs. Martin, English 9H and AP Lit teacher, also echoed this sentiment. “You’re going to lose student engagement if they have seen the same material again and again.

That’s just a part of good teaching. You don’t just keep drilling the same thing. If we want accurate scores, and we want it to be a more authentic assessment, I think we have to vary the questions and passages,” she said.

“The other deficiency that frustrates many students is that the test has an ideal speed at which it thinks they should be reading,” added Mrs. Smith. “So those of us who are more fluent readers, who read and comprehend more quickly, end up being punished by being forced to slow down and take ‘brain breaks’ as we’re reading, because the computer model doesn’t think that we’re taking the test seriously,” she said.

“There is also the fact that in English classes, we have to do admin presentations every year and counselor presentations at the freshman level. So English teachers lose two block days, like a week of instruction, to this mandatory stuff. The i-Ready is just another thing that we have to do when we should be laying the foundations for our course,” Mrs. Martin said.

Even with its flaws, Mrs.



Sage Gebrekidan (11) finishes her i-Ready diagnostic test in Ms. Wilkinson’s FLEX because she was not present in class when it was originally administered. (PC: Tegbir Kaur (11))

Smith detailed another purpose that the i-Ready serves to students, particularly to her English learners. “The test is used as a reclassification determination for them,” she said. “If they have passed [the ELPAC state test] in the spring and if they are scoring grade level on the district measure for the benchmark, they move out of the EL designation and are considered, reclassified fluent English proficient, or RFEP.”

Even with certain benefits, many which could be true of different forms of diagnostic testing, the flaws that students and staff have pointed out may warrant the district to con-

Our statement on the Apalachee High School shooting

Following yet another school shooting in a troubling trend, how do we move forward? - Editorial Team

To the Students, Staff, and Parents of American High School:

It would—almost—be easier if we could call the event in Winder, Georgia, on September 4th unprecedented.

Except it’s not. And that’s worrisome.

Every year, we receive oddly brief and ambiguous safety presentations with brief mentions of “an intruder” on campus. While we see tributes to the students and staff slaughtered—every single school month so far in 2024, in fact—we do not and cannot imagine our own peers in the same position. It’s easy in cases like these to believe it won’t affect us, whether due to conscious ignorance or plain disbelief.

Still, time and time again, we are proven wildly incorrect. As students, our first reaction to this news presents a troubling reality: we are saddened, but not shocked. In times like these, it doesn’t seem far-fetched that the next school to flash across news tickers is one familiar to us—or worse, our own. That, fundamentally, places a lasting taint both on the lives of students and the lives of young adults in America. Students’ ambitions and dreams are relegated to the back burner, and the threat of

gun violence at school becomes a focal point of our academic experiences.

This also raises an alarming concern: our school, like too many others, is miserably underprepared in face of this reality. No student should have to accept the dire need for an active shooter drill at school. But this repeated violence suggests otherwise—and we must confront that. As an editorial team, we call upon the FUSD Board of Education and American High School’s administration to take transparent steps towards bolsteing school site security and safety protocols; this includes significantly stronger steps than a fleeting mention of protocol in an annual school policy FLEX presentation, to be certain. We owe ourselves that much.

But when this existential threat is dismissed as “a fact of life” or something that we need to “get over,” we are empowered to choose a different path. We hope that, one day, the next generation of AHS students can hear a banging sound in the 500-wing hallway and know it’s simply a slamming door and not the sound of gunfire. We must work together as students, as a campus community—and as Americans—to create this reality.

To the voting members of our community, this November, imagine the reassurance of sending your children to school free from the threat of an entirely preventable disaster. With equal parts concern and hope, The Eagle Era Editorial Team

Library eases restrictions

Student and staff observations of library changes this year

Sampan Mehta

Staff Writer

During the 2023-2023 school year, the library was one of the most restrictive and unwelcoming spaces for students according to several student sources.

“I visited the library practically every single day and sometimes I would have to wait in line for two to ten minutes,” said Allison Mao (12). She added, “I heard library staff and volunteers yell at students to get out of the library because it was full.”

Amrit Mann (12), a frequent visitor, mentioned that the staff would close the library at around 1:05, right after lunch starts. “I obviously heard a lot of people get yelled at by staff to get away from the door. Everyone looked over in shock [at] the library staff.”

Additionally, the changing capacity was affecting students’ accessibility to print or use computers for work. “I went to the library twice a day and used the printer occasionally,” said Alice Fan (12). “I barely had time to print anything. It takes forever for the computer to turn on, and I only had 10 seconds to print. I got yelled [at] by them once or twice and I have heard them yell at other people a lot.”

Mrs. Do provided her perspective on the capacity issues. “Teachers are trained and credentialed to handle large numbers. I am a teacher-credentialed librarian,

but my partner [from last year] does not have a credential,” she explained. “There is such a thing as a fire code, per square footage. We would be violating the fire code if we were to exceed a certain number.

When asked for a specific max capacity, she responded: “The number we are comfortable with: around 70 to 80 people. The LMT was very petite, whoever thinks [her policies] were harsh must understand that she was outnumbered.”

When asked about the use of raised voices and other restrictions, Mrs. Do stated, “I don’t deny it at all.”

This year, Mao pointed out, “I noticed that the doors are open the entirety of lunch and that there are many more people inside the library.” Mann corroborated this statement.

Fan noticed that “there is no long line anymore” and she has not heard any more yelling.

Mrs. Do added: “[The] new LMT is 6 ‘4, [and] just by his appearances, his stature, and his height, it yields authority.” Mr. Maverick, the new library media technician said, “It is a hazard if there are too many kids, and there is a maximum occupancy that has to be followed. As long as everybody is well behaved, I will let them stay. As soon as it becomes rowdy, I will start removing kids.”

New Ethnic Studies requirement (cont'd)

ing students this year just to make sure we have our curriculum down and that we get the UC A-G approval, which is in the works and should be done this winter. That means that everything will be perfect, ready to go, for the freshmen who actually need it as a graduation requirement next year.”

Students have different opinions about whether Ethnic Studies is worth requiring, with some being unsure. Another current student, Jaylynn Rice (9), said, “We’ve only had about a month of school, so I can’t be certain yet. It’s a good class to take if you want to, but I’m not sure if I think it should be a requirement because a lot of these things covered have also been covered in past history classes.”

Joshi, is more certain in his support for the class. He said, “Especially in California, we’ve always been pretty liberal, so I think it is good for students, especially entering high school, to take this class so they can get prepared for life in general. It informs you on the struggles of certain ethnic groups in America and helps you learn what to say and what not to say in certain situations.”

Sahana Reka (10), who already took the course last year with a different teacher, shared mixed but mostly positive opinions toward the course. She said, “Although I don’t agree with everything taught in Ethnic Studies, I feel like a lot of the information is still valuable to take into account and to help you form opinions about the world, foster empathy, and realize the world we’re living in is really unfair and we shouldn’t take our privileges for granted.”

Ms. Veizades said, “I do think it’s a step in the right direction. It is also a step in a more polarized direction. Teachers in other states are having laws banning teachers from talking about controversial political topics. So even if you don’t necessarily think an entire semester should be devoted to Ethnic Studies, you should be excited about the fact that you’re going to be exposed to many different ideas and have open debate around difficult topics.”

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Website restrictions and internet issues have hindered the learning ability of students taking Gaming Concepts

Gaming Concepts students face various challenges trying to access the internet and visit necessary websites

Caleb Truneh | Staff Writer

Error message many students are faced with when trying to access district-blocked websites. (PC: Caleb Truneh).

Students taking Gaming Concepts have found it increasingly challenging to access required coursework and visit websites or download software relevant to the class due to internet connectivity issues and district restrictions this school year.

Computer issues at American this year have left students taking gaming concepts unable to access important coursework and sometimes even their entire school email. These problems were met with prolonged, sometimes insufficient solutions, “The last student to get access to their account took almost a month before he was actually able to get things submitted online” Mr. Elam said. As for students’ ability to access material, Mr. Elam is increasingly hindered by the district’s restrictions, requiring him to take excessive steps for his students to simply have an assignment to do that day. “When the entire class is 100% computer-based with no paper alternatives and you have a sizable number of people who can’t participate, it becomes incredibly difficult for them to stay up to date with the curriculum” said Mr. Elam.

Providing further insight into these issues, but from the perspective of a student,

Gaming Concepts student Jeremiah Tan (12) shared many of the same concerns and frustrations as his teacher. “A lot of the time the internet does malfunction. Usually the solution is to just open our data on our phones and connect our computer on to it, but other times we just wait and hope the internet wizards do it’s thing” said Tan. “Some changes we could see is changes to the gaming restrictions in general because a lot of the time we can’t access Steam, a video game platform, on school computers and Mr. Elam has tried to work as hard as he can to get that to work,” said Tan.

An FUSD public information officer explains some of the reasoning behind restrictions on school-provided chromebooks. “We did a hardening of our security environment with google extensions, and that blocked many extensions that students had used in the past. This was different from previous years, and there are no plans to relax this hardening at this time” Laura Forrest says. However, for websites paramount to adequate learning, there are ways teachers can allow access to them. “For websites that teachers are using for instruction that are blocked, there is a pathway to get access to them, and that is for the teacher to put in a technology ticket” Forrest adds. Students taking Gaming Concepts or computer-related classes often need to access websites that are typically blocked on school computers. “For a website that has important information and is related to instruction, teachers just need to submit that ticket and if there’s questions about it, we can have a conversation with our IT department and if needed our critical instruction department for them to whitelist the website” Forrest responds.

Mr. Elam, however, expresses his frustrations with these restrictions and their hindering of his ability to teach the class. “I have to submit a request to the district IT department and then that has to get approved by the principal, for example I wanted the students this week to look at a website for the game developer Riot Games and even though you can’t play any games on the website, it’s blocked because it has the word game in it.” Mr. Elam states.

Bottom of the ballot

How Fremont youth are too far removed from local politics

Saanvi Deshini
Staff Writer

“Brat” Harris and Bryce Hall’s endorsement for Trump are all over social media. He’s got “concepts of a plan,” and she needs you to know, “you exist in the context.” This national election, as every other which has preceded it, is covered extensively, and those first few names on the ballot are familiar. But as your eyes wander down just enough, you recognize those names just as the ones on the lawn sign you passed this morning. The importance of voting locally is undercut by a culture of ignorance of what goes on politically, here in Fremont.

Unlike national elections where the sheer magnitude of content is propelled by constant coverage from multiple sources and distributed en masse through social media, local elections demand more active attention from the average resident. That being said, just actively researching gives you a chance to understand and voice concerns that directly impact you. As students, it means being able to have a voice even as non-voters; think of all that student-led clubs or nonprofits accomplish whether through organizing community events, getting in touch with district representatives, or independent surveying.

Young voters and youth in general deserve to lead political discussions as people who are affected by them. Our voices are valuable, and politicians crave that input to better revise policies for particular voting demographics; in the current Fremont mayoral race, for example, leading candidates Raj Salwan and Vinnie Bacon both have student internships that reflect a desire to platform youth voices on their respective campaigns.

Student intern for Raj Salwan, Tanishka Nath (11), describes the impact being politically active has had on her. She said, “When I help with and lead other students, I feel like I can educate a lot of people on what [Salwan] stands for, our policies, and how we can change Fremont for the better. We help the community learn more

“WE HELP THE COMMUNITY LEARN MORE ABOUT FREMONT AND HOW THEY CAN HELP AS WELL. I FEEL LIKE THERE’S A LOT OF DIRECT CHANGE WE’RE DOING.”

about Fremont and how they can help as well. I feel like there’s a lot of direct change we’re doing.” She describes how her actions seem to have a direct impact on getting people thinking about what they want to see reflected in the city’s politics, and she mentions, “Having that voice makes me feel more interested in the politics of the world and what’s happening.”

In other work with BASTA and with helping committee members run for Congress, Nath has immersed herself in the political sphere. Establishing her role in various campaigns and programs amplified her voice as an individual, and she secured the ability to directly work with and impact her representatives and their policies.

Similarly, Jade Ocampo (10), a student intern for Vinnie Bacon, shares how she had often felt her voice as a young person had been dismissed and how affirming it was to have been represented by the campaign. “In my area, there isn’t really a place for young people to have a voice in politics,” she said. “I tried to get internships at other places, but they didn’t really want me there because I was younger. I liked that the Vinnie Bacon campaign allowed younger people to have their voice heard by the community.”

Ocampo’s experiences on the campaign illuminate how often youth voices are suppressed or overlooked due to a lack of voting power. She asserts, “I think youth are the future of politics, and I feel that we should have a voice in it especially because Fremont is so progressive,” also alluding to how early political involvement encourages more productive civic engagement, later as voting adults.

Former city council member, Jenny Kassar shares a similar sentiment, that youth are overlooked but that the demographic has the potential to incite meaningful political discussion.

“I don’t think it’s ever too early to concern

“I THINK YOUTH ARE THE FUTURE OF POLITICS, AND I FEEL THAT WE SHOULD HAVE A VOICE IN IT, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE FREMONT IS SO PROGRESSIVE.”

yourself with politics,” she says, “I think the more you can start to understand what’s going on, at any of the many different levels of government, the better. I think that there is this belief among politicians that they shouldn’t really worry too much about what young people think because they aren’t involved, don’t know what’s going on, or aren’t voting. If youth got engaged more, there would be this big impact because all of a sudden, politicians would have to pay attention to what youth were saying.”

Youth engagement proves a powerful, driving force in bringing about change, even if not always politically. Co-president of Fremont Youth Commission, Ashwika Jani (12) shared, “Students want to get involved and give back to their community in some way. [Fremont Youth Commission] has volunteers that work at the city library, over at Alameda County, and some organizations that start robotics programs.”

Whether through engaging in student groups or with independent activism, the youth voice is crucial to challenging and improving our current political landscape. Politics at the national and local levels affect you, and so much is happening right here, even if it goes undiscussed. Read all the way through that ballot, and learn those names because you deserve representation; you deserve to have a voice in your community.



While national elections garner media spotlight, local elections also pose an important decision to voters (PC: Kingston Lo (12))

Extracurriculars are overrated

Why the most common high school advice is wrong

Aruna Harpalani
Staff Writer

A commonly given piece of high school advice is to fill up one’s resume with lots of outside commitments. Granted, extracurriculars help with college admissions, meeting new friends, and making memories. But they also are time sinks, stressors adding to the obligations of school itself. At the high school level, school already takes seven hours every week-day, and that excludes homework and studying afterward. Students are already short on time, and extracur-

riculars make this worse. The end result is that students lack time to relax. It might seem unproductive or wasteful to merely scroll social media, watch videos, hang out with friends and family, or stare at the wall and do nothing; however, free time is beneficial to mental health, especially when we recognize these benefits. A study published in Rutgers Today states that people who do not find enjoyment in leisurely activities tend to experience more depression, stress, and anxiety. The culture making us feel obligated to be active outside of school often gives the impression that free time is useless, diminishing its benefits and the happiness it can provide. Moreover, adolescents need sleep, and most don’t get enough. According to the CDC, about seven in ten high school students do not sleep for the full eight hours they need to. Sleep is crucial to both physical and mental health. It helps with academics, too; per the CDC, lack of sleep not only causes a myriad of physical and mental issues, but also increases the risk of attention issues, hurting students’ ability to focus at school. High extracurricular commitments



A crowded rotunda during Club Rush, an event when students eagerly find clubs to join. (PC: Aruna Harpalani (11))

can take up afternoons and evenings meant for homework and free time, pushing these activities later into the night when we should be asleep. With all this in mind, it makes sense that, per a University of Georgia study, overscheduled students have increased stress and anxiety. The same study indicates that, in fact, the academic benefits of extracurricular activities decrease the more a student takes on. These trends are most prominent for high school students due to their already high academic workload and the added pressure of planning for the future. Weirdly enough, this busy time is when we are most pressured to engage outside of school rather than buckling down and focusing on the most critical demands of this time. There are only so many hours in a day. It is easier to maintain a healthy sleep schedule when not working past midnight because the day was filled with other commitments. It is easier to chill out with friends or engage in hobbies just for yourself when there is time. And yes, it is easier to succeed academically when there is more time to spend on schoolwork. The burnout often caused by overcommitment can weaken academic motivation and ultimately hurt grades. This is our childhood, the last moments with which we can truly choose how our time is spent. In a few years, we will work jobs that eat away at our time seven days a week, most days of the year. If free time feels scarce now, it only gets worse. Therefore, it is up to us to preserve our limited time and save it for ourselves rather than giving it away. Time is so important, so we must feel free to waste it.

Cheat GPT: the successor to plagiarism

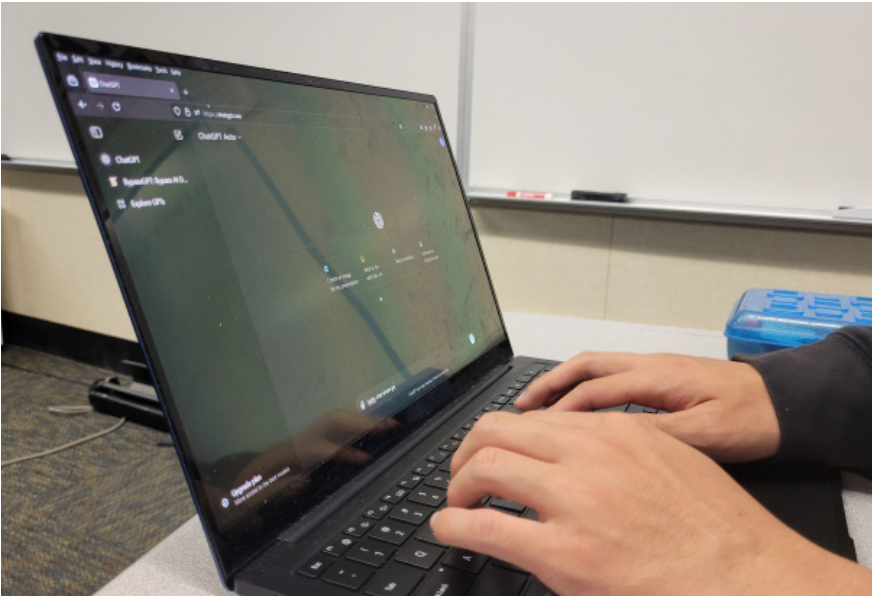
A humorous analysis of how has AI use influenced classrooms

Lance Wang
Staff Writer

EagleGPT: Please generate an article on AI use at American High School. Sure thing. Here’s an article on AI use at American High School.

Ever since its release to the general public in 2022, ChatGPT has been public enemy number one to schools and teachers. This magical tool makes the student that normally scrolls Instagram on their phone the entire class period into an essay writing prodigy with a few clicks. As such, an “arms race” of sorts has started to develop between students and staff, with both sides employing various strategies to keep the other in check. The first line of defense—the no AI writing allowed sign, a staple in every classroom. This invaluable document is a great deterrent to any troublemakers looking to quickly finish an assignment. It really causes students to question what they’re doing. If they cheat on this assignment, how are they going to build character? Even so, there are still desperate students that are willing to risk their academic career on the line for an assignment worth five points. For example, take Fresh Man (9), who spent all week grinding Brawl Stars in order to earn those sweet, sweet trophies. He did it in order to gain clout with all his other friends, who applauded him for spending 18 hours a day on his phone. However, when he realized his month-long essay was due the next morning, he whipped up the perfect essay, painstakingly picking out complex words and replacing them with ones fit for a ninth grader. Unfortunately for Mr. Man, he was caught and apprehended by

his English teacher for cheating shortly later for AI use. According to Man, “I fogor to remove the part where GPT said ‘As an AI language model.’” Next up, the AI and plagiarism detector, commonly known as Turnitin. A tool so renowned for its effectiveness that it has been used by teachers all over AHS. Against plagiarism, it proves a formidable ally for English teachers trying to fend off the masses of cheating students. Against AI, it completely misses the mark. Instead of flagging the students that write the equivalent of a PhD thesis, it instead zeroes in on the singular sophomore that wrote something that wasn’t a jumbled incomprehensible mess for once. Some more deluded students, such as Seen Yor (12), have claimed that their use of AI is justified. Instead of outright copying and pasting essays from GPT, Seen generated ideas and based his essay off of them. “I still basically did all of the work, so it shouldn’t really be considered cheating.” When his teacher questioned him on why his argumentative skill was on par with that of a lawyer, he replied “I binge-watched Suits before writing this.” Another group of students consisting of about 7 students ranging from sophomores to seniors seem to have discovered a foolproof way to bypass any AI detection method. Chea Turr (10) says, “We’ve been using this for a straight month now. I don’t even know what to do with all this free time. If anyone else wants to replicate this process, the steps are to first—.” Your trial of EagleGPT has expired. If you want to keep generating, upgrade to EagleGPT+.



Student using unnamed AI generation tool. (PC: Lance Wang (12))

Eagles'


map



FAV SCHOOL LUNCH?

"The spicy chicken sandwich. The texture is okay."
-Amelia Jones (10)

"I think they're all bad because I'm vegetarian."
-Amelia Aggarwal (10)



What's your favorite bathroom toilet paper?




FAV SCHOOL SUPPLIES


"A good non-smudge pen."
-Daniel Chen (10)

"The sticky notes used as bind pages in books or notes."
-Vanessa Allen (10)

What's a song that's getting you through the school year?



Shut, Don't Stop
My Way
-Kanye West (10)



My Way
-Kanye West (10)

Elects!

f AHS



5 STAR APP
(out of 5 stars)

★★★★★
4.5 - Amanda Lee (11)

★★★★
3 - Julia Lee (11)

★★★★★
5 - [unclear] (12)

★★★
2 - [unclear] (12)

Favorite Vending Machine


300


600


500


300

GOALS FOR THE YEAR!

"Get all As in my classes and get into ACS for Biochem!"
- Julia Lee (11)

"I want to learn the guitar, and be straight in this year!"
- David Lee (12)

FAV HANGOUT SPOT?

"I'd say inside the rec room. You can mind your business while staying aware of what is around you."
- Chase Hsu (12)

"The theatre because it's so different from any other place on campus."
- Devani Patel (12)

Staff Writers

Kingston Lo

Catherine Hebel

Carolyn Baskar John

How Prop. 28 failed Modern Poetry

Government funding for the arts fails to recognize poetry

Saanvi Deshini
Staff Writer

Proposition 28 was passed during the 2022 state elections to increase art and music funding for California public schools, promising \$800 million to \$1 billion annually for art programs. That funding began rolling out during the 2023-2024 school year, but Ms. Luong's Modern Poetry elective was ineligible to receive funding, having been denied the art distinction entirely.

The bill's terms extend to "dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts including folk art, painting, sculpture, photography, craft arts, graphic arts and design, computer coding, animation, music composition, ensembles, script writing, costume design, film, and video," according to the California Department of Education's Arts and Music in Schools FAQ page. Because poetry is not explicitly defined within the bill, its status as an art was dismissed by higher-ups tasked with interpreting what the bill would fund.

Ms. Luong, who established the elective, recounts how Proposition 28 funding had initially been presented to her before her class had been denied an art. "I had been offered Prop. 28 money to hold sessions after school to give students a taste of what Modern Poetry would be like, but because Prop. 28 didn't fund me, my class wasn't considered an art, and they weren't going to

pay me to try and spread this class." Other staff have been campaigning to remedy the treatment of the elective, a pursuit not exclusive to the financial issues, but also the greater effect the decision has on art electives. Ms. Luong adds, "I asked Principal Sharma why my class got denied funding, and she went to advocate. She believes in the value of the class, but higher-ups were hung up on the fact that poetry is not creative expression or performing arts, which, you either read the thing, which is visual or perform the thing. I have units for spoken word poetry and verbal performance poetry, and district higher-ups said they looked through that when they decided my class wasn't worthy of funding. So who decided that it's not an art?"

The decision that poetry is not an art



Modern Poetry students during a lecture (PC: Saanvi Deshini (10))

threatens both the future of the elective and the quality of education provided. This year, students were unable to receive textbooks. Ms. Luong said, "Because no one put my textbook order in, we just didn't get them; we don't have the money for them. Principal Sharma is trying to amend this, but we're the only class who doesn't have textbooks because we didn't matter enough for a follow up with the textbook committee. Mind you, Prop. 28 funding was from the government. It's not our district's money." Alameda County Youth Poet Laureate and Modern Poetry student, Jovina Zion Pradeep (11) explains how the lack of funding was reflected in class. "Because the class explores the methods to write poetry, a textbook would

have been helpful because we would have physical resources throughout the year, save time on group lectures, and spend more time writing because of independent reading."

The decision to deny Modern Poetry funding impaired student accessibility to certain resources, hurting students in spite of the bill's proposed uplifting of the arts. Its exempting poetry as an art form also sets the precedents that only certain arts deserve formal recognition, and that the decision can be made in spite of student input, even while disrupting their academic environment.

Parental misunderstanding in district politics

Parents misunderstand inner workings of the district, students and teachers affected

Aditya Padinjarel
Staff Writer

Parents are as much a part of the FUSD community as students and faculty members. They continually make efforts to change district or school policy in their favor. Parent involvement can range from public comment at school board meetings, to pressuring school and district officials into decisions.

Mr. Howard, a teacher's union (FUDTA) representative, outlined a possible issue with parental involvement, "It's not uncommon for them to get involved, and not understand the systems that we have in place." A lack of understanding in district policy may cause unnecessary delay in the passing of policy that may be beneficial to students and staff.

At a recent school board meeting, a public comment was made by an anonymous FUSD parent, "Dear FUDTA President and Office Bearers, FUSD has put up a proposal for Article 30. Please step up and renegotiate it."

Article 30, according to the FUDTA website, has to do with fair public complaint procedures against teachers. Public comments like these only continue to extend the decision making process in realizing a fair solution

for teachers. Sriya Neti (12), the current chairperson for SURFBoardE (a student liaison group with the school board), commented on the power parents hold. "Parents and their comments can cause district policy to change." Comments from groups like these can cause inefficiencies in improvement of student life. There is often a student bias that parents operate on when intervening. "Instead of addressing the systemic problem of class size being too high, parents are instead focusing on the individual problem of, their kid didn't get X class," said Mr. Howard regarding how parent pressure can distract from larger issues. There is, however, a possible road to improvement. "There are many people who are ill-informed," Mr. Howard said, "and the solution to that is not necessarily less democracy but more education so people know how to utilize the levers of power." Better education of parents may not only assist in making district policymaking more efficient, but may also help the student body. "Parents are members of the FUSD community," Neti said. "I can't even imagine a situation where parents don't have a voice."

Measure E and Measure M: What are they and how can they help us?

Measure E and Measure M are two FUSD general obligation bonds that have and can continue to help FUSD schools

Sanika Yadav
Staff Writer

Updating technology, fixing and replacing leaky roofs, and upgrading electrical wiring to measure up to current safety codes have all been possible with Measure E. Measure E is a general obligation bond that allows the Fremont Unified School District to fund various projects like the renovations of classrooms and schools. The bond was approved by Fremont voters on June 3, 2014, with a 61.8% "Yes" vote, and has allowed FUSD to update some of its schools that are in desperate need of repair, modernization, and expansion. Additionally, the bond's funds have also been used to build new facilities and classrooms that would be necessary, especially for the middle school transition project.

According to the Facilities page on FUSD's website, the district "identified \$2.6 billion of facility improvement and construction" through a comprehensive facilities needs assessment in

2024. This resulted in a new general obligation bond initiative, Measure M, which has been placed on the November 2024 ballot.

For a bond measure to pass in California, including Measure M, at least 55% of voters who cast a vote on this measure need to vote "Yes." Furthermore, even though there is \$2.6 billion of facility improvement and construction needed, Measure M will only provide \$919 million as stated on the Facilities page on FUSD's website.

If this bond is approved by voters on November 5, the \$919 million can be used for solar panel installations, new kitchen and child nutrition facilities, and to replace and improve buildings in all six high schools in FUSD. According to the law, these funds cannot also be used to pay teacher or administrator salaries.

As Measure E continues to stand, voters have the opportunity to also determine the future of Measure M and whether it will be used to upgrade aging facilities, accommodate more students, or construct new buildings.



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Cooking up creativity: AHS Food Science Club

New AHS club combines cooking, science, and creativity and discusses their plan for the year ahead

Kaya Misra | Staff Writer

The beginning of the school year entails many things. New friends, new teachers, and new classes, to name a few. But perhaps the most exciting part of it all are the events and activities that kick-off the year, giving students an opportunity to explore their passions. We have already seen many new clubs begin to foster a sense of community and aspiration within themselves. One such organization has been the Food Science Club, which is a new student group that aims to take a scientific approach to the culinary arts.

Hetanshi Vakharia (12), the president of the new club, said, “I love food because it brings so many people together. It’s so rewarding and therapeutic to see how my baking makes others happy.” Her passion for food science began when she started consuming food content such as Bon Appetit and Tasty during the pandemic, which encouraged her to start developing her own recipes. She started to learn about the science behind baking and cooking as she observed techniques for specific dishes. “Popping boba is one of my favorite examples of food science. If you combine sodium alginate and calcium lactate, it creates that spherical shape.”

She even took an entrepreneurial approach to her passion by applying what she learned. “I had all this knowledge at my fingertips and had the power to just make things,” Vakharia said. “After two years of perfecting my cookie recipes, I started selling them.” She made over \$800 by selling her cookies to friends and family.

The club treasurer, Ikjot Kaur Bali (10), expressed what sparked her interest in becoming



Officers of the Food Science Club pose for a BeReal at a meeting. (Photo Credit: Khushbakht Aleem (12))

involved in the club as an officer. “I have an aunt who’s a baker and I feel like food and baking in general has been such an important part of my family. It really brings us together,” Kaur said. She commented on her specific goals for the club, “At American, people are mostly interested in STEM fields, so I want to create a club where people can try something new. I want it to be a really nice environment, one where members can have fun.”

She also provided her insight about specific events. “I’m really interested in holding food competitions. Members can come with a group of their friends and bake something, like in Food Network.” For a more scientific approach, Kaur hopes to hold events discussing the chemistry behind popular foods. “We could even explain why a cookie bakes the way it does or the science of making boba.”

Sabzar Kaur (11), a member of the club, is excited to learn how to independently curate recipes that suit her vegetarian diet. “Food science is an art. I want to learn how to make more eggless recipes and use my love for food to gain more exposure to chemistry.” She is also looking forward to seeing the growth of the club in the years to come.

The Food Science club has a place for everyone and takes a unique approach to teaching students about cooking and baking. “Baking can be so personalized,” Vakharia explained. “People are so reliant on external recipes and by joining the club, I really want members to realize that they can make anything as long as they know the building blocks.”

Selective clubs and their processes

Some clubs at American High require difficult auditions and tryouts to select their members

Caleb Trunch | Staff Writer

With Club Rush recently coming to a close, many students are getting ready for their Science Olympiad or Mock Trial auditions. Officers of both clubs have given descriptive guidelines in order to help students succeed in their auditions and therefore be chosen for the club.

American High’s Legal Eagles of the Mock Trial team compete at a high level against other schools and due to the many students who audition and the limited spots on the team, require rigorous examinations to build a team with the most fit members. In Mock Trial, there are various different roles people can try out for. “The five different roles are attorney, witness, pretrial attorney, bailiff, and courtroom clerk, but we make all new members try out for attorney, witness, and pretrial attorney so we can properly assess their skill level,” Team Captain Ruhaan Joshi (11) explained.

Students are given material to use preceding their tryouts in order to simulate a normal competition. “We test candidates on the two major skills: preparation and improv. We need to test how well the candidate can work under immense pressure,” Joshi added. Of those who audition, more often than not there are many students who are highly qualified so

the team captains try their best to make sure all high-level students have a spot on the team. “We don’t have a ‘quota,’ per se; it all depends on the quality of the candidates. We aren’t going to recruit someone just to reach a certain number, and we also won’t reject a candidate we really like just because we have too many people,” said Joshi.

When asked if academic records are taken into account, Joshi explains that their skill is the only deciding component for acceptance onto the team. “Don’t be deterred from trying out if you aren’t above average in studies” Joshi reassures.

However, Mock Trial is not the only team who holds their applicants to such high standards, Science Olympiad must em-

ploy a rigorous series of tryouts to rank students in order of capability to perform at events and use those rankings to make difficult cuts. “We mainly look at tryout scores for the more theory heavy events. We do paper tryout tests for the build ones where we interview people and they present their ideas,” says Science Olympiad President Ishan Patel (12).

Due to the high-level capabilities of many applicants, tie-breakers, or distinctions need to be made in order to fit the right amount of students. “In the very rare chance where we

have two applicants that score very close or almost exact we do look at experience as sort of a tie-breaking factor,” said Patel. The relation between spots on the team and number of applicants is quite overwhelming which proves the extreme necessity for rigorous skill-based tryouts. “Science Olympiad has a total of two teams, so 30 people, but this year we are working to expand that to three teams, so a total of 45 students. And I would say an average of around 100 people tryout each year,” says Patel. However, those who put in the work to make the team receive unique experiences in return. “It’s a really rewarding experience, team members get really close with one another, and we often get to travel to cool places,” Patel enthusiastically said.



Mock Trial team members returning home on Bart after a competition (PC: Ruhaan Joshi (11))

Behind the Booths

How clubs attract students through their unique visuals

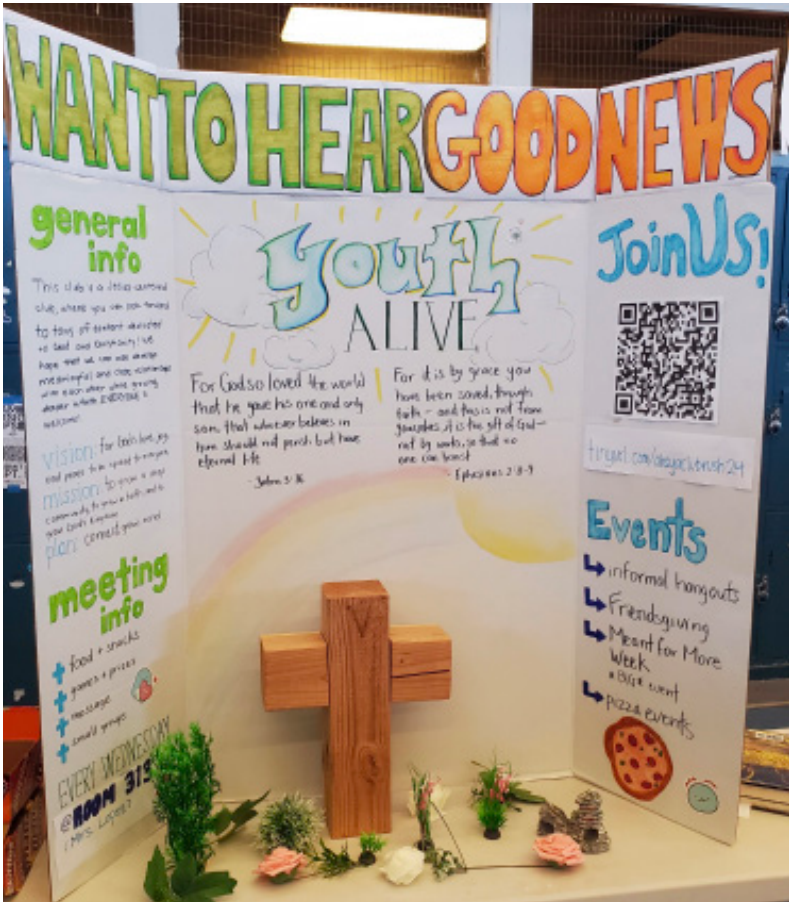
Carolyn Baskar John
Staff Writer

Every year during Club Rush, students gather in the rotunda of American High School and meet an array of posters, decorated tables, and creative displays—all designed to bring attention to different clubs. While Club Rush serves as an opportunity to recruit members, it's also a showcase of how clubs use visual creativity to spread their missions and identities.

For many clubs, their ability to attract people relies heavily on their use of visuals—creative displays with clever illustrations, striking colors, and engaging interactive elements. Food Science club's creative director, Erin Tahk (11), said, "We thought of using gray and blue because it reminds us of science, and it matches with our mascot, a gray rat named Franklin." Tahk also shared another unique approach to help the club be noticed, "We had people take pictures with Franklin, which helped attract people." This club successfully balanced creativity and engagement by harnessing an eye-catching color palette and mascot together to attract curious students.

This strategy proved to be effective, as demonstrated by Maya Oleynik (11). She remarked, "I joined the Food Science Club because when I read their poster, I noticed they have events making ice cream; it's free food, I liked it."

Similarly, Youth Alive, a Christian faith-based club, created a visual experience



Youth Alive Club's booth invites students with inspiring visuals (PC: Jeremiah Tan (12))

that connected students and reinforced their mission to explore Christianity and create a sense of community. President Jeremiah Tan (12) explained how they used meaningful symbols that represented the club to invite people in. "We used a wooden cross passed down from previous years and added vines to represent life." In addition to the cross, the club used large, attention-grabbing letters on their posters to stand out.

Worship leader in Youth Alive, Benita Arun (11), emphasized

another key element of their approach: music. "We thought it was a great way to spread the gospel because everyone will be there and can hear the song and be blessed." She noted how the music made their message more digestible and impactful. Arun also added, "People love music; it's more than just saying words or speaking a message. It will draw people in." This combination of visual and auditory worked together to help create a welcoming display that appealed to students exploring and expanding their faith.

In Fashion Club, publicist Faye Cheung (10) stated how she and another publicist of the club collaborated to create creative custom elements to show the club's passion for fashion. Cheung expressed, "We don't use templates. We make everything from scratch," highlighting the officers' commitment to putting effort into every detail.

Compared to the other clubs, the Asian and Pacific Islander Club used media to attract students. Grace Wagas (11), a publicist in the club, explained, "We made reels; we made them fun so we can seem more relatable." This helped show the club's friendly atmosphere, encouraging potential members to join.

Every club brought its own creative touch to Club Rush, using visuals to relate with students and exhibit their purpose. Through various color palettes, symbols, and setups, clubs not only focused on recruiting members—they made sure to leave a long-lasting impression through their boundless creativity.

10 years of Unity

Bruce Beasley's UNITY sculpture celebrates its 10th year anniversary

Daniel Davis
News/Sports Editor

Bruce Beasley's Sculpture, UNITY, celebrated its 10th year anniversary this summer. Ten years ago, in the summer of 2014, Beasley created this sculpture that has rested in front of the Fremont Main Library since May 21st, 2015.

Beasley, an accomplished sculptor with pieces displayed in the Guggenheim, the Musée National d'Art Moderne, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, said in a 2018 interview with the Santa Cruz Sentinel, "[UNITY] represents the synergy of Fremont—a combination of residents, elected government, city staff, businesses and physical environment."

Longtime Fremont resident Cory Call responded to Beasley's definition. "I was living here [when it was built]. It's nice to know a deeper understanding of its significance; I drive past it almost every day, so I appreciate it," said Call.

Beth Buchanan, an employee at Fremont Library who was present

during the sculpture's placing, said, "I've never really thought about his definition. Fremont is such a diverse community—I always think of [the] interlocking rings [as] unifying the different cultures."

"I remember people gathering there from different creeds [and] religions to support the structure, I noticed that that's a meeting place for a lot of political agendas and things of that nature," said Call.

"We've noticed that it's become a place where people do protests now. We don't have a lot of [those] kind[s] of places in Fremont. And it's all kinds of protests. People from other countries that are now living here are protesting," said Buchanan. "It's very visible, this is city property, park property, and it is an open space so it's a good place to meet. It's good that we have a place where people go to do that; that is unifying as well."

Buchanan, who was involved in Fremont's social media introduction of UNITY, said, "I felt a unity statue next to the library is," Buchanan

paused. "Dead on."

"Everybody should feel comfortable here. We have different programs around—different cultures—all the time. So I kind of feel like it matches the library. I don't know [if] that was ever the intention,[but] it matches our space," said Buchanan.



Bruce Beasley's UNITY lies in front of the Fremont Library on the corner of Stevenson Blvd and Paseo Padre Parkway. (PC: Daniel Davis (12))

Cherry Jubilee

A look into Jessica Yu's jewelry business

Ivan Chu
Staff Writer

Over the years local businesses have popped in and out of existence. Yet, a three-year business run by an American student still finds itself going strong. Cherry Jubilee, run by Jessica Yu (11), sells a variety of homemade jewelry.

Yu described her business as selling cute jewelry, both custom and pre-designed. "I offer a variety of styles, from more whimsical and silly pieces to elegant and more formal ones," she said. When asked about what specifically she sells, Yu excitedly replied, "I normally focus on earrings, but I've made bracelets, necklaces, and phone charms."

According to Yu, "I started in 8th grade, after picking up jewelry-making as a hobby during the pandemic." But, her business only began after friends started asking to buy custom jewelry from her. "I had a whole epiphany moment where I was like, 'Wow, they really like my jewelry'" she said.

She first kicked off sales through Instagram, where the algorithm did its magic. The chance to sell in-person didn't come until high school, where American's night markets allowed Yu to open pop-up shops. It has proved to be a great opportunity to market Cherry Jubilee to new customers. She said, "Now, I get the most outreach and engagement at school events, such as the Fine Arts Fair or Night Market."



Pink bell flower earrings that Yu has sold (Photo Credit: Jessica Yu (11))

As for other people's opinions on her jewelry, Anaya Pangarkar (10), bought pearl earrings from Cherry Jubilee at the night market last year. She said, "the designs are versatile and creative and the earrings are super comfortable and durable."


Alicia Liao (11), having been gifted a pair of earrings made by Yu, agreed, saying "Her quality is good, though I don't use them a lot since they're the dangling ones."

Yu has high hopes for the future and plans to expand her business further. "I want to get one thousand followers on Instagram," she said, with 741 followers currently on her Cherry Jubilee business account. "I've also been working on shipping and an online website. Hopefully, everything works out and it'll all be set up soon."

With her current goals and sales going strong in the wake of new school events, Yu said "I'm pretty happy with where I am right now. I actually have an order pending right now!"

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

AHS VS. WASHINGTON



The annual Battle of the Boulevard game is typically one of the highest attended games of the season. For the past several years, American students have participated in a "Black-Out."

The Eagles and Huskies shake hands at the conclusion of the matchup. American was outscored 34-10 in the second half after being shut out in the first half. Led by quarterback TreSean Johnson (RT), who completed 8 of 8 attempted passes and threw for 121 yards and 2 touchdowns, the Huskies improved to 2-2. American plays next on 10/4 against the currently 1-2 Kennedy Titans.



Senior Hudson Collins (25) since, after an incomplete pass in the first quarter. The Eagles struggle in the passing game, completing only 3 of 10 attempts, according to our data visible on Hudspeth. The Mustangs outscore the Eagles 7-0 in the first quarter.

Final Score

WASHINGTON, D.C. (UPI) —

52-12

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