







EAGLE ERA

September 2026 AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL 36300 FREMONT BLVD FREMONT, CA 94536 VOL. 54 ISSUE #1

Personal device policy incites mixed reactions

A conversation on the benefits and shortcomings of the policy

Katelee Ngo | *Staff Writer*

As students and teachers adapt to the newly implemented personal device policy at AHS, perspectives surrounding its benefits continue to vary, with some arguing it improves classroom activity and others saying it is unneccessary.

To some teachers, the policy is a comfort. "It is nice because I hate being the bad guy," said Mr. Baker, an AP Biology teacher. "I hate being the cell phone police. With AP Bio, I've played the cop out role of, 'It's an elective; you chose to be here, and if you wanna play on your phone the whole time and not know this stuff, that's up to you.' But now, I feel like I don't have to do that."

AP Government/Macroeconomics and AP US History teacher Mr. Peffer agreed, explaining his leniency towards phone use in his classroom prior to the formal policy's enactment. "It wasn't a battle that I was going to fight because there wasn't a background to it. It was more on a teacher to enforce the rule.



In her second period AP Economy class, Hannah Lee (12) handed her phone to Mr. Peffer. He continues to remind students to put their personal devices aside. "[Even] without the phone, kids may not be paying attention, but the likelihood of them not doing something has lessened," said Mr. Peffer (Photo credit: Katelee Ngo (12)).

When it became a state law, and it became a policy that was going to be backed up, that is when it started to be enforced."

About a month into the new school year, both teachers noted changes in student behavior. "My group of seniors that I have now seem to be more attentive," said Mr. Peffer. "But I don't know if it's the phone or not."

Mr. Baker said, "It does seem like they're a little more focused. I think seeing their peers not have it out helps."

Some students had concerns regarding the policy's long-term impacts on the development of today's youth. Sahana Reka (12) said, "Putting too many legal restrictions on stuff is, first of all, infringing on people's freedom. That's dangerous because you're making more ways that adolescents have to rely on adults for directions on what to do with their lives, and you're not letting them transform into independent human beings who can make their own decisions."

Continued on pg.3

FUDTA Contract Renewals

Contract negotiations loom large as AHS faces a possible teacher crisis

Krish Balaji | *Staff Writer*

With teacher contract renewals around the corner, AHS might be losing a sizable portion of its teacher base at the end of the 2026-2027 school year. Every 3 years, FUSD's teacher representatives negotiate with the district for new contract terms and conditions, and 2026-2027 marks the final year of this 3-year cycle. A large portion of teachers are new and do not have permanent status yet, so these negotiations are crucial if AHS hopes to keep these teachers for the foreseeable future.

The negotiation process is a lot more complicated than it seems. "The process of negotiating has not yet started," said Mr. Bonaccorsi, math teacher and long-term FUDTA member. "Getting those ideas to the district is called sunshining. We look at the proposals by teachers, and give our consent to the issues being bargained. Our bargaining team then presents them to the school district as an agenda item for sunshining." Only after sunshining can negotiations begin.

There are a myriad of topics discussed during sunshining, but a recurring one is how the new contract will help teachers manage their career and home life. "There is always a dispute on what benefits should be covered and what should not be covered," said Mr. Rojas, a veteran teacher with FUSD. "There is always the issue of childcare. For some of my colleagues, they really need to have childcare covered. And sometimes it's not that way." While it might not be as big of a factor for younger teachers, childcare is a huge factor for older teachers deciding whether or not to renew their contract.

Mr. Elam, a teacher heavily involved with the union, said, "One of our big things was class caps. There are no official class capacities in high school and middle school, so what we have asked is that there be an official capacity."
Class caps were a major factor in the 2024 negotiations, and as it was not addressed then, it remains to be seen if FUSD will address it in 2027.



Fremont Unified District Teachers Association's (FUDTA's) executive board (Photo Credit: fudta.org)

These questions contribute to larger concerns regarding teacher livelihood as a whole. Regarding salary, Mr. Elam said, "We have been taking a pay cut every year, since our alleged increase does not match the rate of inflation. I can't afford to live in Fremont; I have to commute 45 minutes and have to live in San Leandro."

As prices continue to rise, not meeting this inflation is a growing concern for many teachers, especially younger ones who might not be as financially stable. This is not for a lack of funds either. Mr. Elam said, "The district has somewhere around 100 million in excess funds that are not allocated, which we have pointed out over the last couple of years."

With increasing prices, FUSD's unwillingness to spend money on its teachers could be what ultimately causes friction and the loss of said teachers. Mr. Rojas said, "Many newer teachers are looking at the grass next door, and they see the grass is greener." Ultimately, if AHS wants its teachers to stay, FUSD has to be prepared to meet teachers in the middle and offer them the amenities to live a comfortable lifestyle.

A taste of Yemen in Fremont

New coffee shops bring traditional drinks and culture to Fremont

Chloe Chang | *Staff Writer*

Over the past two years, ethnic coffee shops have been popping up throughout Fremont. Cafes such as Qamaria Yemeni Coffee Co., Haraz Coffee House, and Shibam Coffee have introduced traditional drinks, pastries, and flavors to residents across the city.

For some Fremont students, these shops offer a chance to experience something unfamiliar. For others, Yemeni coffee remains something they have yet to discover.

When Kaylynn Lau (9) visited Qamaria, the experience stood out to her immediately. "The Yemeni coffee shop that I visited definitely made me feel like more and more culture is being brought into Fremont," Lau said. "I really enjoyed being able to experience different food and drinks, especially since it's something I've never tried before."

She appreciated the atmosphere that these shops created. "The subtle, lingering smell of spices that filled my nose when I entered the shop made me feel amazing," she said. "I really appreciated these places as a quick trip to a comfy spot to relax at."

Many have not come across Yemeni coffee shops due to their novelty. Aimee Jiang (9) was curious about what the experience entails beyond the standard cafe experience. "If they offer more than coffee, then yeah, I would definitely recommend it to my parents and other people who like coffee."

While these cafes do not introduce brand new concepts to the coffee shop trade, a brand new, unique environment helps curate third spaces and reinstates excitement surrounding coffee shops in general. "I think coffee shops are a great place to meet with your friends, as well as studying, getting to know new people, and trying new foods," said Lakshmi Eadara (9), someone who was newly introduced to Yemeni coffee shops. "It also brings people together too. It spreads a culture that I was not sure about and I hope to learn about soon."

At Haraz Coffee House, worker Yahya Obad said the shop's traditional elements are part of what distinguishes it from a typical coffee shop. Customers can still order familiar drinks such as espresso and shakes while experiencing a traditional touch.



An inside view of Qamaria Yemeni Coffee Co., displaying the varieties of pastries and many Yemeni delights (Photo Credit: Chloe Chang (9)).

He continued, "The shop attracts customers from different backgrounds, including South Asian customers and members of the Yemeni and Arab communities. I think we could say it's a very diverse cafe. I often see people of all cultures coming and trying out new things in our shop. It brings a lot of people together. Trying out new things that they have never seen before builds a certain bond between them."

As more of these coffee shops establish themselves throughout Fremont, their presence is introducing some students to foods and traditions they had never encountered before. For a city where students can encounter new foods and businesses within their own community, a coffee shop can become more than somewhere to grab a drink.

Senior cruise tickets sold out immediately

Members of the AHS community weigh in on the shortage of senior cruise tickets

Anson Wong

Staff Writer

The 692 students in the Class of 2027 awoke to an exclamation-marked message via StudentSquare on Sunday August 23rd—"Tickets for the Senior Cruise are officially sold out!" This was just 12 days from the first day of school, two days after a StudentSquare advertisement on August 17th that said, "Purchase tickets in person during lunch at the SAC every Friday, starting this Friday, August 21st," which happened to be the first, and only, day that tickets were sold physically during school hours.

The only other time that it was physically possible to buy a cruise ticket was on Maze Day. The August 23rd StudentSquare message said "Due to strict venue capacity limits, total attendance is capped, and we are unfortunately unable to offer additional tickets." The limitations on tickets led to controversy among AHS seniors about the dance's management and attendance.

The message that tickets had finally been sold out definitely did not please those who feel like they did not get a chance to buy a ticket. Tanvi Vinish (12), a senior who was frustrated that she missed out on a cruise ticket, complained about the in-person ticket line on the 21st. "There was only one chance in the entire school year to purchase tickets in person, and even then, the line was super long and terribly managed," Vinish said. "The line did not move at all, and there's no other chance ever for something like this. How do you not have enough space on a yacht for 700 people?"



Students lining up to board the cruise (Photo Credit: Adish Joshi (12))

It was not just students who were disappointed, but parents. According to AHS Activities Director, Ms. Leonarduzzi, "One parent said that they were upset we chose a boat that couldn't hold everybody."

Romir Swar (12), Class of 2027's student council president, was directly involved in managing ticket sales. He said, "Ideally, everyone should get to go, all 692 of us, but that's just not gonna happen, and that's just what it is."

Regarding the actual number of seniors attending, Ms. Leo, said, "It was a little more than a half to two-thirds of the senior class."

The cruise was an incredibly anticipated event for senior classes. Swar said, "You wait four years to be a senior. You gotta do all your senior activities, and the cruise is like one of the biggest ones. We get an extra social, and we get an extra dance."

The shock surrounding the limited number of tickets led to speculation about behind-the-scenes organization of the event. Ms. Leo said, "The majority of people bought tickets during Maze Day." That day was the earliest opportunity to buy tickets. She also mentioned complaints about the in-person ticket sales at lunch on Friday, August 21 because of how some people might have been cutting the line.

Though she understood the nature of the complaints on venue constraints, Ms. Leo said, "We have limitations as well." She revealed, "We go through an event company, and we use the boat that they provide. That's what sets the limit for this. We have a good relationship with them, and that's why we keep doing it."

For students who were able to get a ticket, the senior cruise is a celebratory event. But how much can the Class of 2027 cherish if some of their friends don't get the chance to be on board?

Personal device policy incites mixed reactions (cont'd)

Many are more divided over state interference. Mr. Baker said, "In a perfect world, people in the state legislature shouldn't be telling us how to do this. In this case, it worked out. In most cases, it doesn't often work out."

Reka agreed. "You don't need a whole law for the benefits. You can just make rules within the classroom. The law is overstepping."

Ritisha Datta (9), on the other hand, was simply happy for the opportunity to use her phone at all. "At first, I was a little bit like, 'Ugh, that's so lame.' But pretty quickly, I realized I should be grateful," she said. "Coming straight from Thornton, being able to use your phones at all in school is just so much of a blessing."

"Thornton's phone policy was no phones from the first bell all the way to the end of school, no exceptions to that," Datta continued. "That was a little bit unnecessary given how big of a part phones are in today's social culture. Using it at lunch and brunch seems pretty reasonable."

Mr. Baker also drew comparisons between the policy at AHS and the policy at other schools. "I kind of like that we didn't go super hardcore," he said. "Some schools have it [where] you have to put your phone when you walk into school that day into one of these bags. I was telling my students, 'Please don't make me use the phone pouches.' I don't want to feel like it's kindergarten."

Students feel as though such laws end up micromanaging their behavior. Reka said, "If we give students more freedom, they have to learn to take responsibility for their actions. And a lot of people are pretty responsible about it, a lot of people aren't responsible about it, but then they suffer the consequences."

"If we keep holding their hand throughout the high school process and say, 'Oh you can't use your phone because you're gonna get distracted,'" she continued, "then when are they gonna learn on their own what they should and should not do for their own good?"

New clubs, new rules

Changes to the club rule book enforce stricter guidelines

Maryam Shariff | *Staff Writer*

On August 27, the bell for lunch rang and soon after, all of the club officers assembled together to discuss club policy. The 2026-2027 school year began with a fresh set of clubs—and along with it, a fresh set of club rules.

There is one new rule in particular that is bringing a lot of change to the student body. Popular clubs that are eligible for competitions are now mandated to compete. "There was a new rule that competitive clubs should be more going towards different competitions and try to put themselves out there," said Samiah Siddiqua (10), the Muslim Student Association (MSA) club secretary, who had been to the club secretaries meeting.

By requiring that clubs participate in competitions to remain at AHS, this new rule helps students who are looking forward to gaining recognition through tournaments and.

"We thought it was problematic because students who wanted to join these clubs, and have them for college apps, and whose main goal was to compete didn't get to. It is really unfair, especially if it aligns with their major and they need the competition," the Club Committee Leader, Riddhi Charan (11), said.

However, the club rule is more controversial among leaders who now have to deal with arranging more events. "It's positive in ways that it's urging clubs to do an activity outside of school, and it gives students the chance to go on a national level and create a profile for themselves," said sophomore Anokhi Gajjar, a president of the Best Buddies club.

Clubs that do not participate in competitions, often because of coordination challenges or general school pressure, may find the new rule difficult to manage. "Clubs would have to fundraise to pay for these competitions and get everybody engaged, but I think it's a good way for clubs to get involved and give AHS representation and prestige," Siddiqua said. Nonetheless, it makes sense that club officers be willing to put in the work as it is what they have signed up for. "There might be certain budget issues, but again, they're leaders, so they would have to be ready to take on that stress," Gajjar added.

Although this could be negative for some club leaders, students should soon have more options in various clubs to participate in competitions. Gajjar said. "If you are creating a popular club, then you need to be able to do something to prove to students that it is worth joining."

Track construction limits sports department

Eagles eagerly await a new facility

Nityam Singh | *Staff Writer*

Currently, practice is looking a little different for all AHS sports teams that trained on our campus track. The ongoing construction of the track has students excited for the new modern facilities, and nervous about practice schedules in the meantime.

For cross-country members, the quality of AHS's track was especially felt when practicing at school versus outside of school. "The old track was just dirt and wasn't sufficient enough to be a real track," said Elyse Lovellette (10), varsity cross country runner. "When my team would run at an actual track, you could see the differences in speed. You could especially see how the track wasn't helping us in any way."

The actual hazard of the track was also felt by other athletes. "The old track was very sandy which made it easy for people to fall," explained Gabriella Iskandar (10), a tennis player. "I think the new track will prevent injuries. It would ensure that all athletes will perform the best they can because the track would be easier to run on."

To keep practicing, the cross country athletes had to relocate off-campus to Los Cerritos Park, but they remain hopeful for the finished facility. "I'm definitely really excited to see all eight lanes nicely paved out," added Lovellette. "I want to see American's new track and I want to be able to run on it really soon."



Fencing and orange netting went up along the perimeter of the construction to secure heavy vehicles on the site. The fencing keeps students at a safe distance while the construction crew clean debris from the grounds (Photo Credit: Nityam Singh (10)).

The construction also extends beyond athletic teams to students taking PE. With the field and track area sealed off, PE students have had to adapt. "The track building is making us run on the blacktop for the weekly run which is a little difficult," said Shreyan Ghosh (10), a PE student. "Our old track was not that great because it wasn't a real path. I think the new one being built is a great idea since it will help people that run a lot for their training."

While students adapt to temporary practice spaces, the school's administration is also preparing for the transformation."The old track had aged and was deteriorating," Principal Sharma said. "The track is a space that so many of our students use, whether it's for athletics, PE, or other school activities, so having a safe, high-quality facility is really important. AHS is one of the first FUSD schools to receive an upgraded track."

The project goes well beyond resurfacing the running lanes. Upgrades include a turf football, soccer, flag football, and lacrosse field, jumping pits, pole vault runways, high jump areas, throw zones, improved fencing, ADA accessibility, and asphalt bleacher pads. There is groundwork being laid for a better scoreboard and a new gymnasium. "Right now, we are watching all of the construction and preparation but I am excitedly waiting to see our athletes practicing and competing on it, our PE classes using it, and the whole space feeling new again," Principal Sharma said, "It is going to be such a great addition to our campus."

"The old track was just dirt and wasn't sufficient enough to be a real track. When my team would run at an actual track, you could see the differences in speed. You could especially see how the track wasn't helping us in any way."

Fifty years later

Alumni from the Class of 1976 returned to the campus they helped build from the ground up

Sachi Ladole
A&E and Features Editor

In 1976, AHS graduated its first class into a country celebrating its own 200th birthday. Fifty years later, roughly 120 alumni walked back through the halls of AHS, touring the campus they once knew that, in a lot of ways, no longer exists.

"It's crazy. It's so different," said Laura Evetts ('78). "It was a whole different world, I guess, when we were there." She remembered the wings of the school standing wide open and no doors separating one classroom from the next. Walking the halls decades later, she admitted the campus was almost too different to process. "My mind is having a hard time grasping how different it is."

Bill O'Donald ('76) pointed to the now towering trees along Fremont Blvd as a clear proof of how much time has actually passed. "Those big giant trees right there, they were this tall when I started here," he said, holding his hand low to the ground.

AHS opened its doors with no mascot, no rival history and nothing to inherit. For Helen Maynard ('79), that blank slate was the whole appeal. "We were just getting lifted off," she said. Unlike an established school like Washington HS, AHS was an empty canvas just waiting to be filled with color. "We were making it up as we were going along, and that was really exciting."

The timing sharpened that feeling. Because the school's first class graduated in 1976, the bicentennial became part of AHS's own identity before the school had built much of one of its own. "Everything in 1976 was about the 200th anniversary of the U.S." said Maria Marrese ('77). "American High was hopping with a lot of red, white and blue."

Beyond school spirit, Principal Mrs. Sharma pointed to something fundamental to AHS's early identity. "From the very beginning, American was a school that was willing to try things differently. There was this idea of not just doing things because that's how they had always been done, but really thinking about what might work best for students."

Watching them walk the halls, Sharma said what struck her most was how fast the memories came back. "They would walk past a classroom or certain part of campus and suddenly there was a story attached to it," she said. "The campus has changed a lot, but their memories were still so clear. It was a good reminder that a school isn't just the buildings. It is really the relationships and experiences people have while they are here."

Today's students have AP courses, a swimming pool, and science labs the Class of 1976 couldn't have imagined. But the alumni who walked back through AHS didn't come back for any of that.

For Marrese, it all went back to what high school is actually about, no matter the decade. "When you're a teenager, you're excited about being midway from a young person to an adult," she said. "High school is that midway." Fifty years later, the Class of 1976 came back to stand in it again.



Alumni walk through AHS's new buildings during their campus tour, taking in classrooms and facilities that were not part of the school when they attended (Photo Credit: Sergio Medina (12)).

Aisha Wahab wins special congressional seat

AHS students weigh in on the policies and implications of the election

Riya Shrivastav
Staff Writer

After winning the special election for California's 14th Congressional District on August 20th, Aisha Wahab became the first Afghan-American elected to Congress. Her victory has drawn reactions from local students, who have differing thoughts on what her representation and policies could mean.

For some students, Wahab's education policies stood out because of their potential to make higher education more accessible as she supports the cancellation of student debt. Aditi Venkatesh (12) recognized the difference Wahab's policies could make. "I feel like her goal is to give a lot of people access to education and alleviate burdens for people."

There are also students who could personally benefit from the causes Wahab highlighted during her election, like advocating for making community college tuition-free. Ash Cheng (12), who plans to attend community college, said this policy could directly benefit her and her family. "Having community college be more affordable would be easier for me to pay for my education and give my parents one less thing to worry about."

Lissa Lu (12) pointed to the financial pressure that also comes with wanting to pursue higher education. "Student debt is such a huge issue nowadays, especially because the cost of living is a lot more expensive, and student debt is another expense on top of that," Lu said.

Shon Khisti (11), as a volunteer, had a behind-the-scenes perspective on Wahab's campaign. He was a door-to-door canvasser and phone banker who became interested in her politics through SB 1316, a bill focused on pay equity for employees at the California School for the Deaf.

"Because my mom is a teacher at the California School for the Blind, the issue directly affected my family and made her work feel personal to me," Khisti said.

Khisti found his time volunteering to be a positive and insightful experience. "What surprised me most was how personal and local the campaign felt, even though Wahab was already an elected official with a significant public profile," Khisti said. "Volunteering with her in particular made me see how much of campaigning is built on ordinary conversations, relationships, and trust rather than just speech, advertisements, or endorsements."



State Sen. Aisha Wahab spoke with Fremont Resident Janice Gebhardt on June 2nd, 2026, while campaigning for California's 14th Congressional District (Photo Credit: Aric Crabb).

Aisha Wahab's victory as the first Afghan-American elected to Congress resonates deeply with Mr. Noori, the advisor for AHS's Afghan Association. "As a person who came from Afghanistan myself, her background: coming from foster care, having her father killed, it resonates with my community," Mr. Noori said.

Mr. Noori considers her background an advantage to her campaign. "She went to John F. Kennedy HS, she served on the city council, she served in the state senate. She's not out of the blue. She understands the working day people in our community probably better than her opponent," Mr. Noori said, "As someone who has experienced being in this area most of her life, and especially with her struggles, she has a better understanding of the people that live here."

Wahab's election and impactful win can inspire younger generations. "Her victory shows that despite the color of your skin, your voice matters," Venkatesh said. "Everyone has a place at the table."

Prop 3 and its effects on AHS

A proposed permanent tax on high-income earners and our education budget

Naysha Prasad
Staff Writer

Proposition 3 was first passed in 2012 as a temporary tax set to expire in 2031. Now it is back on the ballot, and it proposes a permanent tax on high-income earners. Targeted at single filers making at least $361,000 and joint-filers making $721,000, the tax would range from between 10.3% to 12.3%, with 89% of the funding allocated to public K-12 schools and 11% going to community colleges.

Fremont is already an underfunded county, according to CBS News, which said, "Per-student funding is already far below state and county averages, ranking in the bottom 4%." But the effects of Proposition 3 could help change this.

Many students agree that this funding could help better the school's facilities. Nushaba Zaman (11) said, "The bathrooms in the portables need an upgrade, the locks do not lock, there are barely any pads, and it would be better if every bathroom had paper towels."

But this funding could be imperative to students, improving learning materials. Art teacher Mrs. Olson said, "Our funding via the school is very, very low currently, I think we're getting probably a few hundred dollars, a ridiculously small amount, and we ask for student donations."

The proposed tax on high-income earners would subsidize these donations. Ballotpedia, a nonpartisan American digital encyclopedia, explains that should the bill be passed, " $5 billion to $15 billion of annual state income tax revenue would be earned by making a temporary tax increase on high-income earners permanent instead of letting it expire in 2031." If this bill were to not be passed, it would result in the loss of this money.

Mr. Kaeding, AP United States History and Word History teacher, described what this loss would entail. "Changes would occur if this doesn't get passed," said Mr. Kaeding. "This usually results in laying off staff and counselors." Such layoffs would further increase the existing 450-to-1 approximate ratio of students to counselors.

These effects are especially prevalent in elementary schools that combine two grades into one classroom, or a combo class. Shivani Peri (11) said, "Every single grade had a combo class at one point in Ardenwood. The teacher would spend more time with one grade over another."

These classes can cause an excessive workload for teachers and significantly impact the students' ability to learn; the issue of class size remains a pressing issue for FUDTA, complicated by Prop. 3. Without the passing of this bill, California will remain in a significant budget deficit.



The photo depicts the 700 wing girls bathroom, and the pad dispenser is empty during lunch. Many other items are frequently empty, as Hala Amer (11) states that, "The seat covers and soap is always out" (Photo Credit: Naysha Prasad (11)).

New year, new leadership

Ms. Leonarduzzi's transition into becoming the new leadership teacher and activities director at AHS

Nidhi Srivatsan | *Staff Writer*

As the new school year begins, many students have noticed changes in staffing. New openings in the assistant principal role have led to the promotion of Mr. Anderson from Leadership teacher to Assistant Principal. Ms. Leonarduzzi has been a teacher for 14 years, and has stepped into her new position as Leadership teacher and Activities Director after Mr. Anderson's departure.

Shivika Srivastava (12), a prior student in Ms. Leo's chemistry class said, "Ms. Leo is a really encouraging teacher. You could always go to her to ask her for help and she'll never make you feel like any questions you ask are wrong."

"She's really funny," says Deenath Balakrishnan (9), the freshman vice president. As a freshman, he has a new perspective on Leadership at AHS. "Everyone's really accepting towards me," he said. "I feel like things are good as they are."

Shobna Srijith (11) adds, "Everyone was really excited when Mr. Anderson got promoted to Assistant Principal, so with Ms. Leo stepping into the new Leadership role after he's gone, I think that everything should go great." She is also a former student of Ms. Leo, and she looks back on her experience in Chemistry Honors class fondly. "The classes were fun and pretty relaxed, which was nice," she recalls.

Students aren't the only ones excited about her new role, as Ms. Leo is extremely happy about her post too. "I love my new position," she says. "It's very challenging, and I love working with a new set of students in a new way."

Although she enjoys the change, Ms. Leo elaborates on the challenges of the job. "What makes it more challenging is you are planning and coordinating events, so you are talking to the Leadership students, you are talking to our event planners, you are talking to our admin team, and Ms. Phillips. There's lots of people that have to be in the loop for an event to happen."



Ms. Leo standing outside the newly decorated door of the SAC (Photo Credit: Nidhi Srivatsan (11)).

Her first Leadership class applauds her passion, and many students are excited about the upcoming year with her. Leadership student, Mumin Yousif (12) said, "You know her spirit is always there. Even before she was Activities Director, she dressed up for spirit week, and she showed up to events smiling. I know we have someone who matches the students energy, who is passionate about what she does, and who wants to try to understand things. She always wants to know where we're coming from, and she's learning along with us, and she's never rude to us. I'm glad we get to work with her."

Ms. Leo isn't planning on making any drastic changes to Leadership this year. "I'm more following what Mr Anderson did and seeing what the year looks like for Leadership," she explains. She encourages students to take part in activities that spark their interest. "Leadership is here to help make school fun and to help people get involved," she said. "See what Leadership has planned and out there, and if it looks interesting, give it a try."

Who's hungry?

The behind-the-scenes of the AHS kitchen

Katelee Ngo | *Staff Writer*

Before the sun rises, the kitchen lights make for the brightest hub at AHS. The school lunch ladies, essential staples to student school life, work tirelessly to ensure that children in AHS and beyond are fed.

The cooks have a variety of factors to consider before beginning meal preparation. Baker Maninder Kaur said, "We have to start prepping a day ahead because on the same day, we can't prep and cook. We can't serve one thing only because kids want different foods. We serve according to the previous numbers of the day, so if 500 is our count for breakfast, then at least 550 is our estimate for food we have to have there, but if more kids pop up, then we have to have something else at hand."

Their counts don't stop at AHS. Breakfast and lunch for multiple of the district's elementary schools are also prepared here, adding to the duties of the already busy cooks. "We have to serve six or seven elementaries along with the high school food, so if we have a thousand kids coming for high school, we have another 1500 for elementary," said Kaur.

Despite immense pressures to meet demand, the kitchen staff do their best to remain mindful of student preferences. Menus, though decided by the school district, are revised in summer meetings, where staff propose their suggestions based on their observations. "Whatever we don't want to keep in the menu, we let them know, according to the numbers of people who deny it. For sure it depends on the kids," said Kaur.

Some students appreciated the additional and growing food options over time. Elly He (12) said, "In recent years, they've revamped their menu. I remember in sophomore year, it would be the same three things, but junior year, they started improving their lunches. Each day, they would experiment with meals. Some of them were good, some of them were bad, but overall, I'd say I appreciate the effort they put into not giving us slop for lunch."

"Our efforts are only going to be fulfilled when you guys are full. Sometimes, you guys are in a hurry. In the morning you wake up late, and then you hurry to come to school, right? Sometimes you skip your breakfast, you didn't bring your lunch, then the whole day, you're all empty all day long. We don't want that."

Even as improvements are made, the menu is still a work in progress. Kanak Panigrahi (12) said, "There's not many vegetarian options inside, so we usually get pizza. But this year's pizza is really good."

To address such issues, Kaur described a solution. "I really want to do a survey. Ask the kids how much they like the food because from last year, we changed a lot. "

And Kaur's relationship with the students is what brings her the most fulfillment in her job. "I see them smile. We can easily observe them. We know who is who, so that's how we get connected."

Students, too, recognized the close attention and efforts of the kitchen staff. A regular in the lunch line, He said, "They do a pretty good job of crowd control and overall getting people their food on time."

Neha Balimidi (12) and Panigrahi also described their connection with one of the lunch ladies. "She knows my regular lunch order: veggie pizza," said Balimidi.

Panigrahi added, "She recognizes us because we're always together to get lunch, and she tells us which pizza she likes better. She's really friendly."

But when it comes to preparing the food itself, challenges occasionally arise. "Sometimes when new food comes, then it's hard. It needs more manpower. Last year, we had a lot of different kinds of foods, and it was like, 'Ah, how are we going to do it?' But kids started loving it, so now it's prominent in our menus. They ask for it. Then, it's not a difficulty; we're willing to do it because kids want it."

She continued, "Our efforts are only going to be fulfilled when you guys are full. Sometimes, you guys are in a hurry. In the morning you wake up late, and then you hurry to come to school, right? Sometimes you skip your breakfast, you didn't bring your lunch, then the whole day, you're all empty all day long. We don't want that."

Once students have gotten their fill and the kitchen lights are turned off, the lunch ladies leave until the next morning, when the entire process is repeated all over again.



Students line up at brunch in the main line. Prepared in the morning by the lunch ladies are fruit, pastries, cereal, yogurt, and the typical beverages offered. "We are like your second mothers, you know?" said Maninder Kaur (Photo Credit: Katelee Ngo (12)).

SUMMER FUN



"Seeing all the people that I loved gathered in one room to celebrate me was something I will never forget," Harini Sathiyaseelan (11) said. "[The party] made me feel so grateful for these people and the fact that I met all of them."



"I feel like just painting by itself was so relaxing," said Leonardo Estrella (11). "I never really had time to fully do a painting until this summer."

WHAT'S ON YOUR PLAYLIST?

STAFF WRITERS
EASON CHANG
IZABELLE PUENTE
LAVANYA SUBRAMANIAN
NIDHI SRIVATSAN



GUNEET CHAHAL (12)



FATIMA MANSOOR (12)



LARA (11)
KAMMAMPATI

BACK TO SCHOOL BE LIKE



MEET YOUR AP'S !

"I'm just learning the job and I hope to be the same person that I've been. I have a good connection with students so hopefully I can stay that way just in a different role," said Mr. Anderson. "I look forward to becoming better at the job and learning things so everything becomes a little easier."

Tony Anderson



Julio Navarrete



Dr. Ronaldo Fisher



Sonja Rodriguez



Petal, the controversial addition to the Ariana Grande's catalogue

A review of Ariana Grande's new hit album

Yunji Li
Staff Writer

Pop musician Ariana Grande has added yet another hit record to her growing discography. Released on July 31st, *Petal* debuted at the top of the charts and is her fastest selling album of the 2020s. However, reviews from listeners are polarizing, with much of the discussion focusing on Grande's new musical direction.

Petal, which follows up her 2024 release, *Eternal Sunshine*, came as a total surprise, as Grande was coming off starring in the movie *Wicked*. With over 90 million monthly listeners on Spotify, Grande has been praised for her singing abilities and soft songs.

As long time fan Wilson Wng (10) stated, "I first got into her music because I really liked her voice, and then I started listening to more of her songs and got more into her. I feel like her music has a really unique vibe, and her voice just sounds so good, especially when I'm listening with headphones."

Wng's appreciation of Grande's vocals captures one of the main expectations surrounding new releases from her, given how central her voice has been to her previous music.

Despite being widely adored, the release of Grande's latest album is clouded by a lot of baggage and controversy. In recent times, tons of ink has been spilt by fans and nonfans alike on Ariana Grande's personal life, specifically on her appearance and her health. "Petal," the album's namesake song with lyrics telling the listener that she does not need any support, reads as a direct message to the public by Grande. Grande previously used songs like the hit single "hate that I made you love me" to discuss her perception of public scrutiny.

Sonically speaking, the production on this album is a departure from earlier works, featuring an experimental lean into art-pop. Her singing is noticeably toned down in both volume as well as energy, and the production is heavily reliant on synths and atmospheric sounds. These production choices give the whole experience a darker and more personal feeling, complimenting the themes of the album well.

For some listeners, this sorrowful mood makes the album all the more appealing. "I really like *Petal*," said Wng. "I feel like it has a really chill and kinda emotional vibe, and I like how each song has its own feeling while the whole album still sounds connected. Some of the songs are more upbeat, while others are more calm and personal, so it's nice to listen to depending on my mood."

Due to these changes from her usual style, combined with the aggressive stance she takes against many of her scrutinizers, many fans are put off by the album. Even so, others do not believe that online backlash matters. Wng continued, "My favorite song is probably 'Petal,' because I really like the melody and the way her voice sounds in it. And the online things about it, I don't really notice. It's one of those songs that I can just put on and listen to without getting tired." Wng's enjoyment of the title track of the album is notable, as the music video for "Petal" focuses on the negative online discourse surrounding Ariana Grande. Wng's opinion shows that the controversy online isn't a determinant of album enjoyment for many long-time fans.

The quality of the actual music, when separated from fandoms and discourse, is mixed. Rohan Aswin (10) said, "The music itself is disappointing. A lot of the songs have a similar slow and quiet sound, so after a while, they start blending together. The album works better as quiet background music, I would not actively choose to listen to."

For Ariana Grande, the album comes from a place of anger for the recent scrutiny she recieved. Even though that's the case, many of the songs lack a certain edge, with lyrics that repeat that same sentiment without going deeper, creating a weird contrast between the intensity of what Grande is expressing and how restrained much of the album sounds. *Petal* is not a bad album, though it is certainly not a must-listen either, with the online discourse overshadowing most of the actual music: 6.5/10.



The album cover for Ariana Grande's new album, Petal *(Photo Credit: arianagrande.com).*

He shoots, he scores, he…retires?

Students on Messi's subsequent retirement after a divisive World Cup performance

Eason Chang
Staff Writer

World-renowned soccer extraordinaire Lionel Messi, the most decorated player in professional football history and celebrated for bringing the World Cup trophy to Argentina for the first time in 36 years in 2022, officially announced his retirement from the national team on August 31st. "I love, I loved, and I will always love being part of the national team. I gave everything I had, and I don't have anything more to give." He made the announcement through Instagram following his father's passing on the 8th, marking the end of an international career spanning more than two decades.

In his post, Messi said he drafted the announcement after Spain's victory but did not post it right away, finalizing it only after the death of his father. Even as Spain now holds the trophy, Messi's retirement still holds the spotlight in many discussions.

A long-time fan of the World Cup, Arun Saravanakumar (12) said, "He's probably the best player, in my opinion. I'm going to be sad to see him go."

What is lost is not forgotten, however. Messi's performance was outstanding to many AHS students, who zealously watched the World Cup happen from group stage to final. Felipe Lino Souza (11) said, "I enjoyed it. I think I watched over 40 games." As an avid fan, Souza went on to acknowledge Messi's outstanding performance in the World Cup. "Even though he got really old, he was supporting a lot; he was good for the team," said Souza.



In tears, Lionel Messi embraces Enzo Fernández after a narrow 3-2 victory over Egypt in the 2026 World Cup round of 16 (Photo Credit: Getty)

Similarly, Sahit Bahia (11), a member of the AHS girls' varsity soccer team, spoke positively about the effect of watching the World Cup. "It made me feel more, you know, patriotic about soccer. But I don't think it was that surprising. He's almost 40, and he played really well. I think it was kind of in due time."



Messi's international career comes to a sudden halt, shrouding his future in mystery (Photo Credit: Julian Finney).

Given the diverse range of fans for the World Cup, some people see Messi's retirement as a means to celebrate. "Spain is still better than Argentina any day. I'm ecstatic about it," said Isha Sumesh (12). "He's been there too long." Still, Sumesh recognizes Messi's strong skillset. "Argentina's team very clearly had a star player."

The opinion on Lionel Messi's performance and subsequent retirement remains divisive and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future. However, one thing can be said with certainty: even with the conclusion of Lionel Messi's international career, his name will remain a debated topic for years to come.

AHS on Olivia Rodrigo's Daisy Chain Fields festival

Daisy Chain Fields festival brought fans memorable moments and some disappointments

Riya Shrivastav
Staff Writer

Olivia Rodrigo's Daisy Chain Fields festival included artists like Olivia Rodrigo, Stevie Nicks, Bikini Kill, Chappell Roan, Doechii, Mitski, and Devon Again who performed without compensation–raising $20 million for women-focused nonprofit organizations.

Devon Again joined the lineup after KATSEYE canceled at the last minute, due to Megan Skiendiel's ankle injury. "I like the lineup, but KATSEYE cancelling last minute kind of feels like false advertisement," said Alyssa Lemus (12), a fan of KATSEYE. "I was contemplating going but I'm glad I didn't end up buying tickets. I hope Megan's ankle gets better though."

Despite the festival's success, some attendees disliked how organizers handled the extreme heat. The festival provided a medical tent, and five air-conditioned buses that contained water bottles and Liquid IV packs. "I ended up in the medical tent at 2:45pm because it was 98 degrees and I almost passed out," Maddie Jin (11) said. "They only had 5 buses. Mind you there were 45,000 people there. Once they found out how hot it was going to be, they should have brought in more medical personnel." Despite her concerns about the heat response, Jin said her experience was still worthwhile. "It was worth it, I would do it all over again."



Maddie Jin at the Daisy Chain Fields Festival (Photo Credit: Maddie Jin (Grade 11)).

Fans of the supporting acts had their own opinions on their favorite artists being involved in an all-female charitable music festival. Ranvir Thapar (12), a Chappell Roan fan, said, "The lineup was very diverse and interesting because it gave fans a wide variety of artists from different genres and eras."

Evangeline Blom (12) expressed excitement about how the lineup itself advocated for women's rights, "I love that Olivia is combining a lot of old artists and new artists. I think it's creating a great melting pot of feminism. It's showing that feminism is still alive and that we are going to continue to advocate for women's rights especially in politically turbulent times." For Blom, the inclusion of politically outspoken groups like Bikini Kill made the message of the festival stronger. "Bikini Kill are riot grrrls." Blom said. "They're very political. They're very anti-conformist. I'm not surprised they took part in a festival like this."

Other fans questioned whether the mission of Daisy Chain Fields was specific enough. "I don't know which specific nonprofits, because the festival was supporting so many," Anisha Aggrawal (12) said, "If there was a more direct cause, people would be more aware of how the money is being handled."

Daisy Chain Fields gave many fans more than just a collection of performances; they provided a memorable lineup and a strong political message concerning women's rights. If the festival returns, fans hope that the organizers can build on its success while improving some of the issues people faced.

Coyote vs. Acme marks another hit with Gen-Z filmgoers

How Coyote vs. Acme's box office success highlights a trend in younger audiences seeing films in theaters

Melina Rojas
Staff Writer

On the weekend of August 28th, *Coyote vs. Acme* debuted in theaters despite having been shelved by Warner Bros. studios for nearly three years. The comedy, based on Looney Tunes cartoon characters, follows Wile E. Coyote as he hires an attorney to sue the Acme company for repeatedly selling him malfunctioning products that prevent him from catching the Road Runner.

In spite of the film's original tax write-off, it has seen immense box office success and high levels of interest from Gen-Z moviegoers. According to *The Wrap*, the film surpassed the $100 million milestone at the worldwide box office as of September 22nd.

Coyote vs. Acme's success comes just months after the releases of *Obsession* and *Backrooms*, two other critical box office hits praised by Gen-Z audiences. Pranav Tammineni (12), has seen both films and spoke on how the making of *Obsession* was fundamentally different than most other box office hits., "*Obsession* is an indie film, so it's made for the arts and not just purely for commercial profit in comparison to every other major movie released right now."

Backrooms possessed a similar appeal to younger moviegoers. Taylor Qi (12) was skeptical of the movie at first, but still decided to watch it. "*Backrooms* just kind of seemed like online horror slop to me at first. But the director made it into something that was really interesting and thought-provoking."

Fans credit the originality behind such films for the recent trend in Gen-Z audiences preferring to see movies in theaters as opposed to streaming them. Tammineni explained, "I think Gen-Z is looking for a new place to find stuff that is thought-provoking or properly artistic, and less commercial. With *Backrooms* and *Obsession* being indie horror, it really felt like we were gonna see that rise in more of an artistic sense."



Wile E. Coyote plots his case against the Acme Co. in promotional artwork for Coyote vs. Acme *(Photo Credit: BlendFX).*

Qi agreed, "I think 2026 has just been a really great year for movies. I'm really happy that these films have found so much success because I think they deserve it, and they're just so fresh and new."

Filmgoers have also found that the experience of streaming movies from home still doesn't come close to a theater experience. Tammineni said, "Streaming isn't something that you can do with your friends. You can screen-share and watch a movie with your friends from home, but it's not exactly the same thing as going to a theater and seeing other people's reactions. You don't have that community vibe in the sense that you are all there to see that movie."

However, Qi points out that whether or not this trend will continue is difficult to determine. "It kind of depends on the movies that will come out," she said, "There's honestly a better trend in movies coming out now that I think a lot of directors are catching onto the fact that youth-nostalgia movies are making a comeback." She added, "The trend would continue past 2026 if we continue to have super successful movies."

The good, the Greek, and the badly animated

Students having awkward conversations with their whole family over the holiday

Natalie Tchao | *Staff Writer*

When summer comes, students and teachers are naturally left to their own devices. But even endless scrolling cannot stave off the boredom forever, so movies often add a little spice of life to the listless season. This past summer, there have been three standout blockbusters that everyone seems to be talking about: *Spider-Man: Brand New Day*, Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey*, and the film that somehow surpassed the first two in box office, *Niu Lai*.

Spider-Man: A Brand New Day offers the titular protagonist and the viewers a bit of a restart after the events of the previous movie in the series, *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, remembering that touch of emotional tenderness and vulnerability the series is best known for.



Despite contrasting heavily in terms of themes, company, and generally almost everything as these movie posters may portray, these films managed to carve themselves well into the minds of those who watched them (Photo Credit: Rotten Tomatoes, IMP Awards, and IMDb).

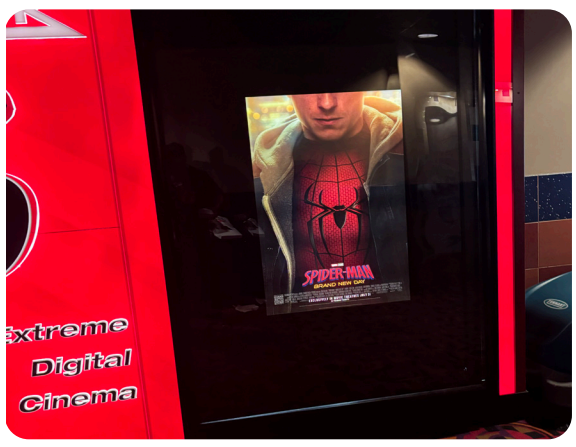
Sakthi Arunkumar (11) said, "I like how intimate and sensitive they [Peter and MJ] were able to be with each other even when MJ didn't necessarily remember him because it showcased their unbreakable bond through adversity and made the tension and the rejections more heartbreaking."

Among these films was the highly anticipated *The Odyssey*, which fans praise for its cinematography and skillful usage of practical effects, all contributing to a larger-than-life interpretation of Homer's epic.

Ms. Peterson of the English department in school said, "The scene where they travel to the underworld and the dead people from Odysseus's life come forward. I just thought that was really well done and really convincing. I feel like that was at least like the one moment where I felt like you saw the real story."

While these prior two films have had prior backing and a preexisting fanbase for the creators, *Niu Lai* was a breakout, making over 9 million in U.S. dollars even on its humble budget of $200.

This film received such massive popularity mainly as the result of its beginner level 3D animation combined with the fact that all of the characters' voices were performed by one person. Both of which contribute to making this film a comedic spectacle crafted by hard work. Although one film may have outclassed the other two in terms of earnings, that does not mean that any of them were particularly lacking in spirit, with each finding their strengths in unique ways.



"I feel like this summer is a turning point in films because movie theaters haven't been as popular recently, but now because of the success of these four movies, they are becoming more popular," said Film Club member Parthiv Sreejayan (10) (Photo Credit: Natalie Tchao (11)).

Why Flex is the key to student success

Schedule changes spark debate on the importance of flex

Krish Balaji
Staff Writer

Did someone tell AHS that schedule changes aren't mandatory? For each of the past 3 years, AHS has made slight alterations to its schedule, whether it's the 6-period block, minimum days, or rally day schedule.

Most of those changes were minor and relatively inconsequential. But this year, AHS made one of their biggest and most controversial schedule change yet: eight minutes were added to the block periods, and those eight minutes were taken away from Flex.

While eight minutes may not seem significant, its removal from one of the few periods students use independently makes the change one for the worse.



Seniors Adhiraj Mann and Adish Anand Singh Joshi catch up on missing work during flex (Photo Credit: Rohan Saravanan (12)).

Flex's importance lies in its utility as time for what each student needs, and this chance is unavailable for the rest of the school day. Rohan Saravanan (12), who has taken AP classes for three years while also managing robotics on the side, echoes this sentiment. "To do work at home and go to my commitments is just so much stress," said Saravanan. "Flex really helps take some of that load off." Flex allows students to get a lot of work done that simply cannot be done in class, and taking time from that is simply not conducive to better grades.

There are many misconceptions among teachers and staff about the value of Flex for students. "I get a lot of work done during Flex. I think teachers think we use Flex to relax, but I get most of my work done then," said Dominic Ventura (12), "and this is something that teachers should pay more attention to." Although Flex may appear to teachers as a time taken up entirely by socialization, students use it just as much for work, whether it be studying for upcoming tests, catching up on homework, or preparing for academic extracurriculars.

Just like Ventura, Vihaan Sanghvi (11) finds Flex a useful tool for productivity. "Flex helps me to collaborate and work with others," said Sanghvi. "It also gives me some undivided attention between me and my teacher."

Teachers should look at Flex as an opportunity to give students, especially struggling ones, more attention.

Even so, Flex goes beyond only benefitting student productivity. As Saravanan put it, "It's sort of a de-stress period after 6 hours of classes during the day and a 30 minute lunch. Flex helps give an added break."

If students feel fatigued at the end of the school day and use Flex as a time to recuperate, it stands to reason that AHS should look into adding some time to Flex and shortening class time.

Tired students are not productive students, and if students are given more time out of class to recuperate and reset, it would help in both lowering their stress levels and keeping them energized throughout the day. Sama Khoury (12) said, "I spend more hours at school than I do sleeping, which I would say is mainly due to the amount of work and responsibilities I have."

While it sounds alarming, it reflects the reality that a lot of students have to deal with. Shifting time from Flex to class only worsens this reality.

The logistics can be debated, but preserving Flex time should be a priority for the school. Its value to students cannot be underestimated, and given the stress students go through in their day-to-day lives, AHS should be looking for ways to assist its students and alleviate this stress.

"Flex helps me to collaborate and work with others. It also gives me some undivided attention between me and my teacher."

Foulest minimum day schedule of the century

Why the minimum day schedule doesn't make logical sense

Lavanya Subramanian
Staff Writer

Starting this school year, AHS adopted a new minimum-day schedule, with a lunch break at the end of the school day. This policy was inspired by American's neighbor, Washington HS, which has the same minimum day schedule. However, there is a difference between both of these high schools and their parallel policies: Washington HS has an open campus while AHS does not. This difference makes the current schedule for shortened days unsuitable.

AHS having a closed campus is one of the major issues surrounding school policy. "I don't like the schedule because we're done with class and we're all anticipating going home. Having lunch at the end and being forced to stay in school is really confining," said Rithika Hari (10). Due to the policy, many students feel that staying on school premises during the minimum-day lunch break is extremely restricting, especially with the wide assortment of alluring restaurants just a crosswalk away.

Anushree Kamble (10), a student who disagrees with the current policy, said, "I just want to eat lunch at Bing Bing. We don't even have classes after the break, so why can't we leave and enjoy our minimum day?"

This policy is a result of a democratic vote by AHS staff, yet many staff members believe this schedule is impractical and should be changed. Mr. Lim said, "I would prefer periods one or two, break, periods three or four, lunch, and five or six at the end of school, but it doesn't really make a difference for teachers because we can leave during lunch."

The new minimum-day schedule proposed by Mr. Lim is the same as every Monday schedule, but it still seems more productive because it gives students more motivation to stay in school. Even though teachers and students have vastly different levels of authority in schools, it's still quite disappointing for your teacher to be able to leave and for you to remain confined in school limits.

Sanika Balakrishnan (10) advocated for the new schedule instead and said, "I like it because it gives teachers a break, and it feels nice ending the day with your friends. It's like an early start to your weekend." Balakrishnan said that the schedule is an early start to your weekend, but wouldn't it be an even earlier start if students could just leave after 6th period?

Every day, students get to hang out with their friends during lunch and brunch; it's rare for students to hang out with their friends at a restaurant or cafe after school. A minimum day schedule that allocates half an hour just for rendezvous would allow for an extra 30 minutes to relax and decompress.

A minimum day schedule parallel to a Monday schedule would not only alleviate the pain of AHS not being an open campus but would also allow students to feel less confined, proving to be beneficial for the overall well-being of AHS students.

"I just want to eat lunch at Bing Bing. We don't even have classes after the break, so why can't we leave and enjoy our minimum day?"



During the minimum day, Rithika Hari (10) and Anusuya Mydur (10) leave the campus during the end of day lunch break. Starting in the 2025-2026 school year, American High was inspired by Washington High, deciding to implement the same minimum day schedule. "Having lunch at the end of the day is just prolonging our suffering," exclaimed Hari
This photo is staged
(Photo Credit: Lavanya Subramanian (10)).

Forget the sun, seniors wanted to see the clouds rise

Senior sunrise is obviously to view Fremont's spectacularly cloudy weather

Anson Wong | *Staff Writer*

A golden sunrise. Stock-photo levels of natural color coming from a nice warm star. Neither of these were offered to Class of 2027 when a flock of seniors from AHS gathered on August 28th at Lake Elizabeth. Yes, they drove themselves and their friends before 5 AM to gather under the cold clouds as their shade of gray changed slightly at 6:35.

To soothe his misery, one senior, Chanse O'Meade-Bal decided to chug two jugs of orange juice he didn't even like. He said, "You really gotta get your money's worth." The event was free. "I guess the feeling of being occupied by my own thoughts at 5 in the morning is more terrifying than my allergy to, oh, I feel like I'm gonna puke. This orange juice, man." O'Meade-Bal was unable to be reached for further comment.

It wasn't just orange juice that the class elects had to offer on the most hyped day since August 27th. Flint Lockwood, a senior who "vibes with anything my boi Romir is gonna pull up to, yo" said, "The croissant sh*t was artisanal as h*ll, vro. Queen Elizabeth was cookin' when she decided to butter my biscuits and serve such deluxe hors d'oeuvres."

Some seniors were not happy with the seniors at Lake Elizabeth. Conden Zacian, a grandpa who does tai chi every morning, had some choice words that would get *The Eagle Era* in pretty hot water.



As the clouds rise, Sahana Reka (12) captures the yellow light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us (Photo Credit: Sahana Reka (12)).

Although it was probably an Old-Man-Yells-at-Cloud situation, he voiced many parkgoers' concerns about the unusual 5 AM crowd. He said, "These unruly teens provided way too much sunshine to my morning zen." Subsequently contradicting himself, Zacian added, "The weather gods were not happy with their presence, you could see it in the dark clouds overhead. These teens made the weather so unhappy the wind almost knocked my hair off!" Conden Zacian is bald.

Concerning the seniors' thoughts on the clouds, there were conflicting opinions. Icarus Flyman (12), the student coordinator, said, "I was grateful that it was chill, broski. I hate the heat, it makes me wanna melt, bro." However, the weather did not only bring out the critics.

An overzealous senior named Tifa Lockhart was more than satisfied. "I just loooove Cloud so much. He's way better than the sun." When asked what her favorite part of Senior Cloudrise was, she said "Cloud." Lockhart doesn't know what plurals are, just like how the person in charge of the Fremont weather doesn't know what sunrises are.

A generational downgrade?

An investigation into the age war nobody asked for

Aadhitya Nagaraj | *Staff Writer*

For many years, scientists have been asking questions like, "Is Bigfoot real?," "What is the cure for the common cold?," and "Is a hotdog a sandwich?" But no mystery has been more elusive, more controversial, or more likely to break friendships than this: Where, exactly, does Gen Z end and Gen Alpha begin? I have decided to take initiative and track down six brave souls willing to speak on this, not only to find the cutoff, but to find out why Gen Z is a badge of honor, and Gen Alpha, a handicap.

Our first speaker, Janal Fuh (9), seemed blissfully unaware of the war over generations unfolding around him. "Gen Alpha? TS me for real for real," he said, shortly before requesting to end the interview so he could focus on "mogging" people on popular social media site Omoggle. When asked if he felt looked down on by his upperclassmen, he shrugged, "They act like they're so much better, when they grew up on iPads just like us, but with worse apps."

Our second guest, Reece Ent (12), seemed very much offended by the comparison. "There's a difference between growing up with an iPad and being raised by one," she said. "We had to work for our fun. We watched Youtubers that used full sentences. This inferior generation basically only communicates in sound effects."

This generational panic showed up everywhere I looked. Dee Nyle (10), a Gen Alpha sophomore who insists they are Gen Z, got visibly uncomfortable when asked what separates them from the freshmen. "I-I'm not like them I swear. I've only used 6-7 once this week, that's not that bad, right?" she pleaded as her phone lit up with a Steal-a-Brainrot notification from Roblox.

When further pressed, she admitted that the real issue for her wasn't the slang. "Honestly? I just don't want to be lumped into a generation with kids consisting of iPad fiends that cry when it dies. I don't want people thinking I grew up like them. I had a childhood. I went outside to play. Sometimes."

At the same time, Ms. Anitabrake, a 9th grade English teacher, offered the rare point of view of someone who was in neither generation witnessing this divide. "Every generation thinks the other ones are abnormal," she said, her knuckles turning white from gripping her coffee mug. "I have had seniors tell me that the freshmen have zero attention span, and then I witness these same seniors begin to scroll on their phone after getting through 3 minutes of a 7 minute long video. Nobody is better than the other. They are all the same, just some are a little older."



Janal Fuh proudly displays a photo of Tung Tung Sahur to the camera as Reece Ent looks at the camera with a specific blend of disgust and annoyance (Photo Credit: Julius Davis (9) and Gurnaksh Kaur (12)).

So where does the cutoff lie? 2010? 2012? After careful and expert examination (a heated lunch table debate), I have concluded that…the Gen Z-Gen Alpha separation was never really about finding the cutoff year. The year only matters because of what it entails—a sense of status and proof that the time when you were young was "cooler" compared to that of someone slightly younger than you. To me, the separation is more of a vibe, which is currently either "I remember having cable TV" and "6-7 is peak comedy." When asked for a final statement, Fuh simply said, "Gotta stay quiet on the creek man," and refused to elaborate further.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

INSTAGRAM
@ahs_eagleera
@humansofamerican

SPOTIFY
The Beak Speaks

VISIT US ONLINE:
eagleera.org

A strong start to the season

With a 2-0 start, this is the best start in years for varsity football!

Kalyan Angadala
Staff Writer

The football team has opened the season with a 2-0 record against Emerald and Fremont High School. After struggling to gain momentum in recent seasons, this lead has brought hope for a great 2026 season for the varsity football program.

The team's start comes with a 20-0 shutout against Emerald and a 36-7 win against Fremont, with the players highlighting that the team's chemistry, training, and improved confidence are the reason for their early triumph. With one of the best starts the varsity program has seen in years, the team is hoping to build on that momentum throughout the rest of the season.

One major change is the coaches' greater emphasis on film, where players study their opposing teams' strengths and weaknesses. Udayveer Bhangoo (11), an offensive lineman on varsity, stated: "We studied more film, especially individually, because last year that was a problem with people skipping over film." This increased focus on film allows the team to adjust their schemes accordingly before matches, and better predict their opponent's play call.

This season, coaches have implemented stricter punishments for skipping film and added more team review sessions. With these added changes, Coach Sass, the head coach and varsity coach, said, "Our players have done better at paying attention and taking preparation seriously."

Kainoa Murakami (12), middle linebacker and running back for varsity, said, "I think most people don't understand just how much work went into this season. We have been practicing since Spring, and we still have several weeks left." Beyond just after-school practices, the team's drive and months of preseason training have helped lay the framework for their 2-0 start.



The receiver runs the route to perfection, successfully executing the coach's play to dismantle their opponent's defense (Photo Credit: Jalen Garcia (11)).

Bhangoo, who has grown up with many of his teammates, highlights the tight knit, family-like dynamic within the team. "My teammates are always encouraging me through struggles or when I was injured." This stronger sense of unity and shared identity within players have brought them closer when walking out onto that field.

Following the team's recent wins, Murakami noted that confidence levels are high. "We all believe in this team and each other. These wins have just proven what we already knew we could do."

According to Adrian Montano (12), tight end and defensive end for varsity, this increased sense of confidence has carried over into their games. "[In the] second game after halftime, we flipped a switch and it made me realize we have something special this year."

Although discipline has improved, Bhangoo admits that some players still struggle with consistency. "There are still players missing practice and individual players who don't understand how to be there for their team and sacrifice." This lack of consistency can hamper the team's preparation and performance, making it especially difficult when competing against tougher opponents.

Another overt weakness is the team's size, which has been a problem for many years. Jonah Sunny (11), wide receiver on varsity, shows how this problem has impacted them in their games. "The team has a small roster, so it will be hard to compete against opponents with larger numbers of players," said Sunny. He specifically pointed out the Washington game because of their team's large roster.

Coach Sass highlights how crucial it is to stay focused and disciplined as the team works to develop a championship mindset. "It's easy to get complacent and think we don't have to get better, or to get distracted by selfish desires and focus on ourselves over the team. The team can't get caught up on records or rankings. It has to be what you are doing to be the best you can today," said Coach Sass.

The Eagles' early success has truly paved the way for the rest of the season, but maintaining that same preparation and off-the-scenes work will be essential.

For Montano, truly knowing whether this season is something different comes from "winning those close games we are known for losing, and winning games we know we should win."

This season is something special for the football program, and the next seven games will show if it was just a promising start or a building block for a lasting change in the school's football program.

Cheer students question how requirements should be enforced

Although requirements have not changed, students are frustrated with how they are enforced

Youssef Benqassmi | *Staff Writer*

For some cheerleaders at AHS, weeks of preparation and payments did not guarantee they could continue the season, even after being selected. A new cheer charter changed the enforcement of academic eligibility standards, leaving some unable to continue the season.

As the effects of the new charter become clearer, questions remain about how the standards were communicated with the students. Previously, students whose grades fell below the requirements could stay on the team while improving their grades, but this year, they are permanently removed. The enforcement rules were updated because some students failed to utilize the extra time given to improve their grades last year, prompting a sudden change to the charter documents.

Although the academic eligibility standards set by the Mission Valley Athletic League (MVAL), North Coast Section (NCS) and California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) have not been changed, the AHS cheer team has introduced a charter of its own. Athletic director Mr. Oviatt explained, "Any sporting body reserves the right to make their requirements more strict, but not less. Essentially, the Cheer teams had adopted a new charter this year."

Since eligibility is determined at specific points in the school year, students cannot immediately change their status after their determination is made. At the end of each quarter, schools will have a 10-day window, called the Dates of Determination, when students will either be classified as eligible or ineligible to represent their school teams. According to the Mission Valley Athletic League, a student's status will remain regardless of updated grades or progress reports. "Once the Date of Determination has passed for that grading period, each student's eligibility status is set in stone and will not change until the next Date of Determination."

For Irene Aung (11), the situation raised questions on how students were informed about their quick removal. Aung recalled that, "In the past 2 years, there was warning if [you were] about to be kicked off, so you could actually try to fix your grades. [Now if you are] off the team, you can't try out again."

For cheerleaders affected by the charter, they had already spent time and money preparing for the season. "We were already two to three months into practice, and most of the payments had already been done," Aung said.

Academic eligibility concerns, however, are not new to other AHS athletes. Ocean Joshi (11) recalled how students were previously notified about their academic status. "You would get a notice formally through your school email," said Joshi. "Basically if you had between a 1.5-2.0 GPA or an F at in any class you would be placed on a type academic probation. Then by the end of the next grading period, you had to get our grades up." His experience serves a point of comparison for how academic standards were conveyed to students in previous seasons as well as currently in other sports.

For cheerleaders who have contributed months of consistent hard work, discipline, and financial payments, the new charter has undoubtedly stirred up tensions within the team. With such a short notice alongside a lack of clear instruction, and no formal changes to the MVAL academic requirements, it remains uncertain how the school and impacted cheerleaders will respond moving forward.

EAGLE ERA

Editors-in-Chief
Saanvi Deshini
Royden Liang

Design Editor
Angella Li

Section Editors
Sachi Ladole
Kaitlyn Liu
Ryan Liu
Ananya Pangarkar
Lisa Shokoor

Staff Writers
Olivia Adeoye
Kalyan Angadala
Krish Balaji
Brandon Antolin Baltazar
Youssef Benqassmi
Chloe Chang
Eason Chang
Shaurya Chaudhary
Yunji Li
Aadhitya Nagaraj
Katelee Ngo
Naysha Prasad
Izabelle Puente
Kareem Qayum
Kshitij Rajmohan
Melina Rojas
Maryam Shariff
Riya Shrivastav
Nityam Singh
Nidhi Srivatsan
Lavanya Subramanian
Tristan Tabije
Natalie Tchao
Anson Wong
Benson Yan

Follow us on social media!
IG: @ahs_eagleera
@humansofamerican
Spotify: The Beak Speaks
Facebook: Eagle Era
X (Twitter): eagle_era