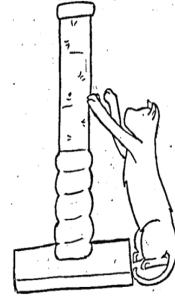




# The Scratching Post

Thursday, December 12, 2019



## What Happened to Be The Change?

By: Thailund Larsen & Heber Adams

Many students who attended West Hills Middle School last year, or the year before remember "Be The Change." Those that didn't may have heard of it as an anti-bullying program. Our previous vice principal, Michael Hughes, promoted this movement. However, this year West Hills school has new vice principals, and we haven't heard much about Be The Change. Does West Hills Middle School have something in place of Be The Change? Is it gone for good? Is it still around, but fading?

Bryton Quinn is a 9th grade student that attends Fort Herriman Middle School. West Hills' previous vice principal Michael Hughes now works at Fort Herriman Middle School. Bryton says, "Mr. Hughes still talks about it, but I wouldn't call it a "movement" if I was talking about it." When asked if Be The Change was effective he said, "There's a lot of bullying at Fort Herriman so it brought a lot of positive vibes to my school, Fort Herriman school. It made me personally feel really good to be at school, and just overall happier."



Principal Cynthia Vandermeiden was also interviewed on this topic. She stated, "We kind of just lost motivation for Be The Change with administration change and our remodeling, we kind of just lost focus in it. But, I do have a teacher who is looking into other programs that do something similar. Ms. Maylett has attended some meetings in order to find something we can bring to our school. We want to get it back and going in a way that it kind of becomes apart of the school where even if administration leaves, it's still up and going."

When asked if she liked *Be The Change* she said, "Yes, I liked *Be The Change*. Because most of the time we focus on anti bullying programs, but Be The Change was not an anti bullying program. I like that we talked about the resilience. About connecting with one another, and

make our school a more positive place."

Principal Vandermeiden also said, "We're so stuck behind a screen all the time that it's too hard for us to make connections. And so Be The Change motivated and encouraged students to make those positive connections. She also mentioned, "We do have something else coming in place or similar to the Be The Change program. If anyone has suggestions, we'd love to take them."

Javier Marin is a 9th grade student at West Hills Middle School, and has attended West Hills since 7th grade. He said, "I enjoyed *Be The Change* and think that it made a really good big impact in our school. I think Mr. Hughes was awesome and did good things for our school. I would like to see something like it again."

To conclude, *Be The Change* isn't necessarily gone for good. West Hills Middle School is going to most likely start up something similar to *Be The Change*. A new program is yet to come. However, it should show up at West Hills soon.

## Corrections & Updates about the WHMS Musical:

By: Braxton Sailor



This year's school musical will be different than in years past because only 90 students will be allowed to participate. Why was there a limit put on the amount of students in the school musical this year? Well one reason for the limit according to Ms. Birns and Principal Vander Meiden is for student safety. The auditorium can only have so many people in it at a time, according to fire marshal rules. If they didn't limit the number of performers the play could be shut down.

While some students were disappointed about this necessary change the school and the directors did what they could to open up more spots for students who wished to participate. There was a wish list that the play directors put up to allow students to be in the play, and when 14 students didn't show up, 14 students on the wish list students got in.

This limit is one that will continue in future plays. This year, to let everyone know about the limit, an email was sent to every parent. The limit was also posted in the hall and announced at the after school reveal.

The reveal meeting was announced during announcements, but many kids missed it. Talon McDonald said, "Well the meeting wasn't a secret; they announced it, but people in my class are so loud that I didn't hear it." This is something that can be frustrating for students, and why it's important to be quiet during announcements. You might miss important information, or cause someone else to miss it.

# Why do students fail school?

By: Joshua, Matthew, Braylon

CZ2	Q2	CZ3
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According to "do something.org" 40% of all students are failing in at least one of their classes." This percentage has nearly doubled in the past 40 years. Failing a class can lead to dropping out. So why are so many kids failing?

The top reasons students fail school because are: Boredom, Personal problems, Poor communication, Poverty, Lack of effort, and lack of preparation.

Every year schools and teachers try to help with the problem, but "Irrespective of the change in the educational system, some have seen that many of the students fail to succeed."

Camron Johnson said that he is failing because he is addicted to playing video games." However, when his

parents saw that his grades were going down they . his took all his electronics until he changed his grades. He said that in the last few months his grades went up from D's to B's.

What do people think about students who are failing? One belief is that these kids hate school, or are lazy and don't try. Others believe that failing depends on the subject and that kids usually fail their least favorite subjects or the subjects that they don't like, like "gym , Language arts, or math" The teacher is also a factor that could make or break a student's grade. If one teacher grades really hard it's easier to fail.

How much help a student needs and gets also affects if they pass or fail. Some children are able to work independently, while others depend heavily on parent's or teacher's assistance to accomplish the smallest tasks. Teaching a child to become an independent learner, or how to get help when they need it, is an often bumpy road. Some students who need adult help have difficult home lives that make staying after extra hard.

Not paying attention or getting distracted also affects if a student passes or fails. According to Mr. Phinney, "Some of the students were failing 8th grade math because they were always on games on their Chromebooks, like Snake and Cool Math Games". And he said that students are failing because they are not in

focus and have a lack of attention.

Motivation is also important to not failing. Most students do not want to fail school because grades are important to them personally or because they want their parents to be happy with their grades; but some students just don't have the drive or push from their family to get good grades.

Change is another reason students fail. According to Parker Bower, a 7th grader from West Hills middle school "Students are failing because a lot of the students at West Hills Middle School have just came from Sunset Ridge and are not used to the new school environment and all the 7th graders are not used to the work of middle school".

Not studying or not being able to study also affect kid's grades. "Students fail school because they do not feel the need to work and that they might have a bad home life and can not work at home," Says WHMS student Beniah Nordgren.

There are many reasons why a kid might fail, but there are also ways to improve and get help. While students can't always change what's going on in their lives, they can always keep trying to get better . Many WHMS students overcome really hard trials everyday and are making huge improvements. For those who are still failing, figuring out why you are failing is the first step to fixing the problem.

More announcements about the play will be made in the future so be listening for them. While the school has already done Aladdin Jr. in 2013, this year's production is going to be newer, with a more fun script and score. It has been updated to match the Broadway version. The costumes and scenery are going to be all new for this play.

Many students wonder how the directors decide on which play to do? Mrs. Binns said, "In the past we have been limited to doing "Jr." plays because of our budget restrictions. The rights to put on full musicals cost around \$3,000 dollars, but Jr. versions usually cost \$900 dollars." West Hills does not charge for tickets, therefore the budget is limited. ( People can donate money at the play to help fund the next year's production)

The practices for the play are already going and the students who made the play are under a lot of pressure to make them as they can only miss so many practices. They also have to work to keep their grades up as they can NOT have any F's.

Here are a few more interesting things that you should know:

- Rehearsal starts: Nov. 11th-dec. 19th from 3pm-5 pm in the auditorium (Monday-Thursday)
- -Dress rehearsal: Feb. 24, 25, 26 - **All cast must be present**.
- -Cast photo day: Feb 25th,cast will be released at 7:00pm
- **-SHOW DATES:** Feb 27, 28, 29 and March 2. Doors open at 6pm, Show starts at 6:30pm
- -Ticket also sell very fast so run, get them while you can, first come, first serve just like the sign up sheets

This year's show is sure to be amazing. As Mrs., Binns says "We have a great cast it is going to be an awesome show!

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# Is Before Thanksgiving too Early to Set Up Christmas?

By: Miranda Duncan

It's a question people ask all over. Why do some people get into the Christmas spirit in early/mid November? In a poll by confused.com, 85% of people say November is too early to put up Christmas decorations. In the US people start getting into the Christmas spirit in late November around Thanksgiving. In a Shutterfly article, it says that Christmas decorations should be put up around the Thanksgiving weekend. And if Christmas decorations are put up anytime before Halloween, it's too early.

Whatsyourgrief.com says it's okay to skip holidays, as long as it's for the right reasons. They say you shouldn't skip holidays because of avoidance. Skipping the holidays can be a good thing for people, it can help them refresh themselves. If someone has had a



some people skip the Thanksgiving season, they don't have to worry about preparing food for families or cleaning their house to be presentable. They'll skip Thanksgiving so they can spend time with their spouse and kids. People will also skip Thanksgiving to take care of their child if they are sick.

In an interview with 9th grader Kalel Hernando he

## How Have Screens Changed Learning For Students At West Hills

By: Karli Sadler

Over the years technology has been changing. It has helped improve learning, but it has also become a big distraction to students. Phones have been a huge problem in the U.S. but, have actually been less of a problem at West Hills. This may be because of the class ban of all phones this year unless a teacher gives specific approval for a school task. While many students dislike the phone rule, and others try to get around it, most teachers and a lot of students can see why the rule is needed.

Because of new things on social media, staying in contact with friends and family, and how helpful phones are, a lot of kids have phones they bring to school. Sixty-six percent of middle schoolers have phones in the US.



So are phones and technology helping or hurting students? Carmel Sandstedt says, "It all depends on what you're doing, if you're doing something educational, it is okay."

Some screens and technological devices have been very helpful to teachers, counselors, attendance officers, and students. Teachers can assign tests on the computer and put grades in skyward faster.

The attendance office can look up student information in less than a minute. Students can now do their work on computers and Chromebooks instead of using lots of paper.

says, "No, I don't like Thanksgiving because Christmas is better, and you can be thankful on any day." He continues to say "You can also eat a lot of food on any day."

Decorating for Christmas early isn't a bad thing, but there is a popular and socially acceptable time to decorate for Christmas. Most people will set up for Christmas in late November to early December. If some people want to set up for Christmas early, they can and if others don't then nothing will be held against them. In some states, depending on what city you live in, you can get a letter from the HOA (homeowners association) telling you to take down your Christmas decorations because it's "too early."

In conclusion, when you're decorating for Christmas, you want to make sure you don't decorate too early and skip over the Thanksgiving season.

But with all the pros that technology offers, there are some cons. More often than not, kids will play games and mess around on the electronics instead of working. Some kids are found at their locker playing games or texting.

35% of teens have admitted to using their phones for cheating. Most schools are banning phones to prevent cyberbullying, googling test answers, taking pictures of quiz answers, and looking at Instagram and other social media during class.

Some students think phones and technology should be allowed more since there are so many jobs that need it. In the words of Dylan Dodge, "I want to be a filmmaker so I enjoy working with technology and learning about it." Many students like and want to learn to use technology in new ways.

Technology is only getting to be more and more available, capable and able. Students, Teachers and schools are going to have to find a balance in how best to use it.

# People are Donating Millions of Dollars for #TeamTrees, but is it Necessary?

By Freddy H.

One of the biggest things on the internet right now is the #TeamTrees movement, started by Jimmy Donaldson (more commonly known by his online alias, Mr. Beast). To contribute to the movement, people on the internet are donating money, with a goal of 20 million dollars.

All the money donated will go to the Arbor Day Foundation, that pledges to plant one tree for every dollar donated. So 20 million dollars is equal to 20 million trees planted. This is a very large number of trees, but will it make that much of a difference?

According to tentree.com, there are approximately 3.04 trillion trees on Earth right now. This is about 400 trees per human. With this large amount of trees will planting 20 million more actually do anything?

"Donating to things like that makes your feel better. It doesn't necessarily work, like when you hug a tree, the tree doesn't really know what you're doing, but it makes you feel good." Says Mr. Larson, a 7th grade language arts teacher. "There could be a lot of better things we could be spending that 20 million dollars on."

Sabrina Hylemon, an 8th grade student, says, "20 million trees can make a lot of oxygen. If I had money to donate, I would donate about 30 dollars, that's 30 trees to make more oxygen."

Oxygen is definitely important, without it, life would be different (with a high chance of being nonexistent). But it may not

be the biggest problem. According to sciencefocus.com, 7-8 trees can produce enough oxygen for one person for their whole life. This means we currently have far more trees than necessary, with 400 trees per person, right?



That is correct. But that's only thinking about humans. But what about animals? There are far more animals than humans, and wildlife relies on trees for support. 20 million may not do too much for humans, but it may have a positive effect for animals.

Humans need land for homes, but animals need that land too. As stated in a YouTube video by The Infographics Show, "Planting a tree is like building a house... Donating 20 dollars to plant 20 trees is like building an entire animal city."

So #TeamTrees may not be just for human benefit, and could be used to make up for human-caused deforestation.

Currently, the movement is slowly getting closer to its goal, with about 16.5 million dollars already donated. Whether or not the goal of 20 million is reached, that amount is definitely enough to make a difference. Trees will be planted all around the world in areas that need them the most, and the type of tree will depend on what grows naturally in that area.

## Tardies: How often kids get them and ways to avoid them

By : Kloie Reynolds

This year the school has made some hard rules against tardies. The rules are strict but can also be a motivation to help students hurry to their next class. Like all rules, the tardy policy is there to help, and these tardy rules are there to help the school in making sure the students get to class on time.

What can also be seen is posters around the school reminding students of the tardy rules. Even one of the schools goals was to get to classes on time. Another time was to remind a friend to be on time. Is all this reminding and goal setting really working? Or do the kids not care about the consequences?

"I would say one of the things that takes up the most time is tardies. We believe you need to be to class on time." Doctor Davis from our school says. She says, "The school is working hard to reduce the number of tardies." There are hall monitors every time during passing time urging students to get to class on time.

The hall monitors can be seen telling the kids to hurry to their classes in the hallways when passing time is about to end. Sometimes the monitors are just watching the halls to make sure it's safe and the students are following rules.

Though there are still tardies it doesn't mean the hall monitors aren't doing their jobs right. Kids still end up tardy, and that could



be for different specific reasons. Maybe they got out of their previous class late, or stopped at their locker and ended up late.

Alyssa Reynolds, a 9th grader going to our school said, "If I were tardy again and again it would affect me a lot." She said this after saying that the tardy rules are unnecessarily strict. "After the second tardy you're already in a lot of trouble."

Though they have made the rules stricter are they unnecessarily strict as said by Alyssa? "I don't think it's too strict and I don't think it needs to be more strict." Says Mr. Dixon, a college and career awareness teacher at West Hills Middle School. He says that it's really great that they need to be in their seats when the bell rings because it allows the teachers to start teaching right away.

What can cause tardies? Well majority of people interviewed think it's because people stop at their lockers and end up late. 7th grader Mia Zambrano thinks that first period has the most tardies. "They either dilly-dally, don't wake up early enough or don't care." She says.

Is there enough time between classes? Alyssa answers saying, "I personally think that when they give us 5 minutes between class it's too much time. It's only nice when you're in a portable or in seminary, but still, you're released early."

When the students were asked what could prevent tardies these two students answered very differently. Charlie Taylor, a 7th grader, said, "You could run to your next period or don't stall when the bell rings." While 9th grader Alyssa Reynolds said, "I just think there needs to be motivation. Some kids don't really want to be at school so they sometimes don't care."

No matter what a school does there will always be tardies whether some schools have more or less than others. What do you think? Do the more strict and harsh rules work? Are kids more motivated or care more to get to class on time?

# Different Thanksgiving Traditions at WHMS!

By: Karsen Mery, Ezmeralda Calderon

Do you like Thanksgiving, or have any traditions? Some people don't have Thanksgiving traditions, since Thanksgiving is an American thing, but a lot of people travel to America to celebrate the holidays. There's many different Thanksgiving traditions, but which ones are the most common and which are uncommon?

Most peoples Thanksgiving traditions are to eat cooked turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, green beans, yams, and stuffing, and watch football that seems to be the most common tradition for thanksgiving.

Maddie Rindlisbacher in 9th said that she does a simple tradition. "She cooks in the kitchen with her family, has a big dinner, then watches football."

Valerie Earl in the attendants office does a "big pie night the Sunday before Thanksgiving." While pie eating is common, doing it before Thanksgiving is not that common of a tradition.

Belinda Brooks also in the attendants office said that "her big family does a skit night where every family has to come up with a skit and perform it in front of the entire family!"



About 51 million people travel to somewhere in America for Thanksgiving. Although there are a lot of people around the world that don't even celebrate Thanksgiving or have Thanksgiving traditions at all, a lot of people still travel to America.

So those are some of the common and uncommon Thanksgiving traditions that people around our school like to do. There are common traditions like the turkey, football, and more food. And uncommon traditions like when you play football with a frozen turkey! Take a second and think, what are your thanksgiving traditions, do you plan on making more!

## Should animal cruelty charges be harsher?

By: Acacia Heath and Kaylie Trujillo

Most people love their pets and treat them right but some people don't. Some people starve, hurt, or even kill their pets. In Utah most animal cruelty is considered to be a misdemeanor which is defined as a minor wrong doing. The punishment for a misdemeanor is usually a fine or up to 1 year sentence in a county jail. To get charged upped to a felony you must kill or beat an animal in an inhumane way. Felonies get harsher punishments, but are rarely charged on behalf of animals. How do West Hill students feel about this? Do they think it's fair or do the students think more cases of animal cruelty should be considered felonies and get harsher punishments.

Officer McDonald stated, "Utah's pretty good at fair punishments. I

think we're good where we are at, they take animal cruelty pretty seriously so I think we're out of the game here in Utah."

Other police officers in Utah seem to agree. According to Detective Justice, a police officer who used to work in animal control, "You are allowed to kill

your animal if you deem it necessary but if you do kill your animal you must do it in a humane way meaning you are not allowed to go in your backyard and shoot it".

She also stated, "If you are caught abusing an animal you could be facing jail time or a large fine."



Who deals with animal abuse cases? According to Officer McDonald, "If animal control is working, they usually deal with those types of situations, but if there's no animal control available or if they need assistance because people are freaking out (since animals are like children to some people) then police do get involved."

Utah might be doing okay on severe cases, but what about the everyday little animal cruelties, abuse and neglect. Sixty seven percent of Americans have pets. How often do people unintentionally abuse their pets. Should people be punished if they accidentally neglecting or abusing their dog or animal. For example, if you accidentally leave your dog outside in the cold or forget to feed

your dog is that abuse? According to Mikayla Ruff a student of West Hills stated "No, not really." Should they be punished? Mikayla stated, "No they should not be punished." A person's intentions do matter when a crime is being punished. Forgetting or making a mistake is different than intentionally hurting or starving an animal.

Whether you agree or not that people should be punished harsher for animal cruelty, the laws in the US have changed about this. President Trump signed the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture act into law in the Oval Office on Monday, November 26, 2019. The bill, Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act, makes intentional acts of cruelty to animals federal crimes carrying penalties of up to seven years in prison. For those who thought that the punishment for torturing or being intentionally cruel to animals, this is good news.

## Can girls and boys just be friends?

By Satia Theroux, Megan Holliday

Can boys or girls just be friends without their female friend or male friends wanting more? Dave Matthews a American singer, songwriter, claims that boys and girls can just be friends but at one point one will fall for one another. Modern media seems to agree. The TV show Friends has all the characters start out as just friends and then each boy ends up with one of the girls (except Phoebe and joey.) But do WHMS students think boys and girls can JUST be friends?

Sandra a hall monitor says, "absolutely." She also stated that students can just be friends because they can share experiences and have similar likes and dislikes.

8th grader Dallan Wilde says, "Boys and girls can just be friends; however if they do date and then break up it might ruin the friendship."

Vickie in the Counseling center says, "Boys and girls can just be friends without the other one catching feelings." She added, "we aren't attracted to everything that has legs." She also says that it could happen if you spend a lot of time together. Almost all of the answers were pretty much the same: yes, but there is a chance you could end up liking one another.

In a humorous YouTube video called, Why



## What kinds of music do people like the most

By: Braxton Sailor

Do you really know what music students and teachers are actually listening to?

A survey was sent out to 48 students here at WHMS to get this information. Here are the results:

- Hip-hop: 67.5%
- Rock: 12.5%
- Tech: 10%
- RNB: 7.5%
- Country: 2.5%
- Reggae: 2.5%
- Classical: 2.5%
- Loud screeching noises: 2.5%

The least favorite types of music were: jazz and blues.

Pop, rock and oldies were the top three favorite **genres** from across the globe, while hip-hop/rap, dance/electronic and indie/alternative also preceded K-pop in the rankings. Metal, R&B and classical **music** followed. According to the report, hip-hop is **popular** particularly among those



aged 16-24.

I have interviewed some teachers and here is what they said and they said:

Mrs. Horlocher: "I am a person that loves to listen to music so this is a hard question probably my favorite is alternative rock."

Mrs. Schultz: "I had a hard time and I thought about this for awhile but my favorite music would have to be pop."

Different music genres change throughout your ages, what kind of music do you think you will be listening to in 2 years?

And some students that I interviewed: Matthew another journalist said:

Rap but the new ones are weird so I like the older versions of rap.

Thank you all who got a survey for helping me out with writing this article. The most liked music from all grades 7th, 8th, and 9th, was Hip-hop, Rap, and Pop.

The reason is: People find that hip-hop, rap, and pop are all basically the same thing and people get uplifted by the sound of the music.

## The Most Forgotten Holiday?

By: Keegan Wilkinson, Maverick Bowles



What is the most forgotten holiday? This question should be asked more but its not. What is your favorite holiday? A very often asked question. There are a lot of holidays so it is very easy to forget one, do you ever lose track of one or forget it. Which one do you forget the most?

The 7 major holidays in America are New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Easter, Independence Day (The Fourth of July), Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. According to the web page FactTank nine in every ten people celebrate Christmas (90%). This year eight out of ten people celebrate Easter (80%). In America, (95%) of people celebrate Thanksgiving which adds up to 43.6 millions people. Out



of all holidays, New Years Eve is the most celebrated holiday in the world with 175 million (41%) people celebrating. The least celebrated major holiday in America is Labor day.

People spend the most money every year on the winter holidays, people spend approximately 626.1 billion dollars on the winter holidays! People also spend the least money on St. Patrick's Day, they only spend 4.4 billion dollars. The difference between these spendings are huge. People spend more money on holidays like Christmas or Halloween because there are things you need to buy including presents or candy.

When asked a seventh grader, Gus Price stated "Christmas is my favorite holiday" "What holiday do you forget the most?" "Easter" "Why?" "Because it isn't as looked forward to and you don't think about it until a day before"

We interviewed a seventh grader, Ryan Juarez. "What is your favorite holiday?" "Probably Christmas" "What is holiday do you forget the most?" "Easter" "Why?" "Because my family doesn't really ever do anything to celebrate Easter."

In conclusion there are many holidays, some you love and some you may forget. But in the end there are holidays celebrating many, many different things for many different reasons.

# Public School VS. Homeschool

By: Alani J., Summer R.



Most students know what it is like to be in public school but have they ever thought what it would be like to be homeschooled? What do people think about homeschooling? Some people think that it is where students just play around and don't have to do any work. That is not true. You still have to do work, just like in public school, but it is different. Let me give you a little insight on how it would be if you were in homeschool:

## **How it works:**

In the U.S. 3.4% of students are homeschooled. To be homeschooled a guardian has to pull their kids out of



*Hello again friends! Abby here, thank you to all who submitted your letters! If you want to submit a letter, come to Ms. Fawcett's room, 203. Have a wonderful day!*



## **Dear Abby,**

I have a problem. I have a reading class, but the hard thing about it is that I actually need to read, plus it's on a computer. My sister has the only computer to do it on. My grade in that class is already bad. I have a D, so what can I do to help my grade? I hope you can help me.

Sincerely, Anonymous

school and fill out a paper. The guardian/parent is then responsible for their student's schooling and learning. Every student must be enrolled in school from age six until eighteen. However, parents don't have to send their kids to a public school. They can hire any teacher they want or be the teacher themselves. If they don't want this responsibility then the government has a public school where the students are guaranteed a spot.

In public school there are 50.8 million kids. These kids are usually randomly put in different classes. Some schools are strict and stubborn. Some teachers are also not a good fit for the student. That sometimes makes it so students don't listen and understand.

## **The Work:**

If you are homeschooled, students do school work just like in public school. The difference is the speed and the schedule. Homeschool students can take school work slow or fast; you're parents can decide that. Homework, just like in public school, is up to the teacher, in this case your parents. (I never had homework.)

In Utah, to be homeschooled, you don't have to take a test before you can start. However, it is required to do the same amount of time/days of school as a public school.

How much do you learn? One homeschooled student said, "I felt like I learned a lot more than I do at regular school, because we took it slow, took our time, so I actually understood the material."

At home, your parents can help you individually and make sure you understand. This is harder in public school. The way students learn can be different for every teacher's teaching style and curriculum. What the student learns is up to the teacher. When you are homeschooled you have more of a say in what you are learning and studying.

Just like public school, students still have a teacher

and work, but it's a different way to learn. It is not required to have a certain curriculum; there is more freedom, though many homeschool parents do follow a state curriculum. There are also online homeschool programs that you can do on the computer too.

## **The Atmosphere:**

Another difference between public and homeschool is the atmosphere and rules. With home school students can use the bathroom whenever they need to because it's your home, but in public school you have to ask and you might get a no!! Students also get longer breaks in between classes, but you can only have enough time to get to your classes in public school. At home, no one needs a locker to put all of your stuff in. The lunch break would be up to the teacher/parent. There were never any fights unless it was normal sibling fights. Students never are tardy.

## **Common Myths about homeschool:**

Some people say that the downside of homeschool is that you don't have other people your age to interact with. This is not true because you can play with the kids in your neighborhood.

The Second myth: Parents don't know how to teach. This is not true either, some parents might not know how to teach, but many do. My mom, the person who taught me everything, was a great teacher. Even if she didn't know the lesson all that well. She learned with us.

The last myth is that if a parent homeschools their kids, they won't be able to get into college. This is not true either. In fact, some homeschoolers can start college early!

To sum it all up, homeschool is a great fun way to learn. Maybe you should try it sometime to test it. There are different perspectives for each person. My experience was very good way to learn and I loved it.

# Dear Abby

## **Dear Abby,**

I have a problem. At home, I never feel like I do anything productive. I come home, I have a snack, and then I watch YouTube. Then when I get tired of watching that, I get up and wonder what I should do, but I can't think of anything. Sadly, most of the time, I go back on my iPod or something else that's not productive. Can you help me? What productive and good things can I do that make me feel good?

From, Unproductive

Dear Anonymous,

I'm sorry to hear that you're having a hard time with your class. It's not always easy finding the time to do everything you need to do, but there are some options you have.

One thing you could do is use your WIN time to go to that class and read. Another thing you could do is stay after school to use a computer. There's also the option of going to your local library to use a computer there as well.

However, families should be kind, understanding, and helpful to one another. You could let your sister know your struggles and kindly ask her if she would allow you to borrow her computer.

When you're having a hard time in school, it's always good to let others know how you're feeling and maybe even get some help. It's also a good idea to reach out to your teachers and ask them for assistance when you need it.

Get rid of distractions and try your hardest to stay on task to get more work done. Try to plan things out and set some goals for yourself. Things can get stressful, but you're not alone.

Thank you for submitting your letter!

Your friend, Abby

Dear Abby,

Middle school sucks! Everything is ten times harder. I don't know how to balance much. Elementary school was so much easier. I thought middle school would be easy breezy, but I was 100% wrong. There is way too much homework, especially in math. I don't understand why we go to school for seven hours and extend school time for at least one hour because of homework! We have lives at home too. I'm on a basketball team, and I have practice at least two times a week. I try to get all my work done, but I don't always have time. Overall, I hate homework.

Please help,  
Orange Flamingo

Dear Orange Flamingo,

I'm very sorry to hear that your experience with middle school isn't what you expected it to be. The change from elementary school is very big, but with time it gets better. There is a lot more challenges, but that's just part of growing up.

Life isn't always going to be easy, but we still make it through each day. Not everyone is going to wake up every day looking forward to going to school, but it's simply just what we have to do. There are bad days and good days. You have to keep pushing through no matter what. Things will get better in the end.

Instead of looking at all the negative things, try looking at the positives. Don't let all the homework you may be getting get you down. Teachers give us homework to boost our knowledge on concepts we learn in class. We all have to work hard even when we don't want to sometimes.

Surround yourself with people you love and the things you love to do. You can do anything you set your mind to.

Thank you for submitting your letter!

Your friend, Abby

Dear Unproductive,

There are so many different things that you can do to be productive. If you have any homework to do, I'll start with that. However, there are rare occasions where you won't have any school work, so I suggest you do some chores.

Too much time on technology isn't only bad for you, but it leads you to boredom and gets in the way of doing other useful things. Ask your parents if they need help with anything. Not only will you be doing something productive, but you'll also be making them happy.

You could even read, meditate, or perhaps exercise. It's always a good thing to clear your mind and let yourself rest. Maybe ask a friend if they'd enjoy hanging out.

Another great idea would be to go around your neighborhood and pick up trash, with your parents permission and maybe even an adult with you. Helping your community plays a great role in this world. If all else fails, you can always do some fun crafts at home.

The list goes on and on, but the important thing to remember is that you should make the most of your day. You can do anything you enjoy. I hope this gave you some inspiration to do things so that you no longer feel as though you're unproductive.

Thank you for submitting your letter!

Your Friend, Abby

Dear Abby,

I've got a Huge problem. I am physically incapable of doing any schoolwork or homework because of my mental condition, because I am depressed. If you could help, that would be great.

Sincerely,  
George, the skeleton

Dear George, the skeleton,

Doing your schoolwork is important, and depression is hard. I can understand why you're struggling.

Try talking to people you know; they can help you with homework. They can help you be motivated and help you understand. Don't try to fix everything on your own.

Go see a school counselor and they will help you with other ways to get through depression.

For school, you can even get a tutor or ask your friends to help you with schoolwork. I hope this helps.

Thank you for submitting your letter!

Your friend, Abby

# Is the Dress Code Unfair to Students?

By: Noah Duncan, and Jaxton Harrison

Here at West Hills, some people think that the dress code is unfair.



Students get punished for wearing belly shirts, short shorts/ ripped pants above the thigh, hats, hoodies, tank tops and spaghetti straps. A lot of people think it's unfair, but how unfair?

"Usually most of the dress code regulations are enforced toward girls, girls think this is unfair." A news article from a newspaper in Massachusetts said this. Should they fix it so it's even?

Almost all schools have a dress code. Some private schools have the kids wear the same shirts and pants so no one is left out.

Some are pretty chill about it. But where do students in our

school rank where our school is at for strictness? Kaylie, a student here at West Hills, thinks it's very unfair." Yes, it's unfair, boys get more privileges than girls. They get away with more stuff."

"Do you think the dress code should be changed?" We asked.

"Yes, it is very stupid," said Kaylie Trujillo

If something should be changed, what should be changed?

"They should dress code everyone. They dress code the seventh graders way more than any other grades, they still dress code other grades but not as much."

A gym teacher here at West Hills, Mrs. V, had some things to say as well. We, first of all, asked if she ever dress codes people. "For P.E, yeah I do, there is a bigger limit in P.E though."

"What do you look for to dress code someone?"

"I usually dress code too much cleavage or tank tops that aren't sports attire."

We asked a hall monitor here at WHMS, Sandra, the same question.

"I'm looking for sloppy dress, people that don't care, and people that are showing inappropriate skin." Sandra, a hall monitor said, "The dress code isn't unfair to students at all, and she thinks that it should be more strict on the stu-

dents."

"Should they fix the dress code so there is an even amount of regulations for each gender?"

"No they shouldn't because girls have more inappropriate skin than boys," said Sandra.

Should anything be changed with the dress code? "Yes, students should be reminded more of the dress code."

What are people wearing the most when you dress code them? "I usually dress code short skirts, Levis with holes to high, and midriff hanger."

Is the dress code more strict than elementary school? "It should be, you guys are growing up, it's time to grow up."

The teachers and the hall monitors think it should be more strict, but what about the students? Lexie, a student in 7th grade has gotten dress coded and here's what she thinks. "I think it's very unfair. I was wearing ripped jeans that were just above my knees, and I got dress coded."

What do you think should be changed? "Ripped jeans should be changed, if they are a little above your knees, but showing nothing inappropriate, I don't get why it should be dress coded."

So what's your opinion? Is it fair? Is it too strict? Should it be changed? Teachers and hall monitors think it is not strict enough. Most students think is stupid, and they think they should make it less strict. What do you think?

## The best and the worst hip-hop songs



by: Isaiah

There's a lot of amazing rappers, singers, and musicians out in the world and a lot of good songs. Let's talk about which rappers and their songs are the best and what it is about the music that people like.

According to the site The best songs of 2019 so far is in first is Travis Scott - 'Highest In The Room', in second is Lil Tecca - 'Ransom', third is Da Baby - 'Suge', fourth is A\$AP

ROCKY - 'Babushka Boi', fifth is Drake feat. Rick Ross - 'Money In The Grave', sixth is Young Thug Feat. J. Cole & Travis Scott - 'The London', seventh is J. Cole - 'Middle Child'

According to the site *Top 10 Most Annoying Songs Ever*, the worst songs are #1 is Baby by Justin Bieber. 2nd is Friday- Rebecca Black, 3rd #Selfies- Chain-smokers, 4th is Call Me Maybe - Carly Rae Jepsen, 5th is Gangnam Style - PSY, 6th is Who Let The Dogs - Baha Men, 7th is Stupid Hoe - Nicki Minaj,

My favorite song is Mind On My Murder YNW and I like the song because of the beats. My favorite rappers is Juic WRLD because he has some good songs I think the worst and most annoying song that came out is Gucci Gang by Lil Pump.

In an interview with the school counselor Mr. Knight, I asked him if he like hip-hop music he said: " I don't like hip-hop music because it's just not my type of music." The other question I asked is if he thinks hip-hop music and rap are the same things he said there are different because rap is more about the poetry of words and word styles while hip hop is more about the music beats.

In another interview with an 8th grader, Alex Castaneda's favorite song is old Town Road by Lil Nas X he likes it because it has a cool beat. His favorite singer is Post Malone because he has good music and a very good song artist. Alex said the worst/annoying song that came out was Baby by Justin Bieber which came out in 2009. The reason he likes hip-hop music is that it gives them an identity, a new way to express their identity, and new grounds in which to explore.

I interviewed Braxton Poli an 8th grader, His favorite song is Ransom by Lil Tecca he likes it because it has a good vibe. His favorite singer is Chance The Rapper because he has a good voice and he broke into the mainstream . Braxton said the most annoying song that came out was Gucci Gang by Lil Pump which came out in 2017. The reason he like hip-hop music is because it has good beats and there is some good singers.

That's about it.  
There are a lot of great songs out there. Go find your favorite.



## Thanksgiving

Find all of the words, and circle them, from the word bank in the word search

ZOZHEORMAXVMKIA YQAJPPARADEV  
KG AQZDDOYB UVFBFLUEYUHZAMLI  
ZEDGPPZNICZQPMXLVVNAOXVOFND  
HSNOVEMBER RABGUTKMPYEKRUTP  
EJQOVXBYAPUBCPZXGQRVIMCAUDZ  
TFEIPNRNIKPMUPEPXISOMAHTPPAI  
FXZPRGPJNJEYALINBTSCVOXSILNN  
FSIBYURZIYACEQOSEZEJBJRKFUEUG  
PECRQPQTJRWZWHRDLYXTFPGVWZ  
EUBAWZWXEYOTHHHBIZBCZFAYAO  
QT BOWHPASL S L J Y B F F R L U L S N N E A B  
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C N L U M P I E R G J K B F K U I B F A I G Z D L I E F  
C D S F C U K J L F S O M C S M R L W F Y W U H L  
T J R M R Q I S P J F D Y B G F L O F Y O

NOVEMBER	TURKEY	STUFFING
HAM	PUMPKIN PIE	APPLE PIE
CRANBERRIES	POTATOES	PECAN PIE
PILGRIMS	THANKFUL	MAYFLOWER
CORN	DINNER	PARADE
FAMILY	FOOTBALL	FEAST

## Thanksgiving Spot the Difference!

Can you find 10 differences between the two pictures?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 1st Period Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thanksgiving Turkey coloring contest!**  
Please submit your colored page at Ms. Fawcett's room, 203

