

the wingspan

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Cover photo by: Eliza Andrew



THE VAPING TRAP:

“It will most definitely ruin your life.”

Photo by: Delanie Tucker

“I think [vapes] are way too easy for teenagers to get. I think teenagers are uneducated on how dangerous [vaping] is. I think the flavors do cater to a younger crowd. And I think [teens] have a misnomer that it's safe,” said Marc Carneal, Centennial's Student Resource Officer.

In today's society, teen vaping has almost become normalized. Someone sees a high school student carrying around an e-cigarette, which will more often than not be a Juul, and they hardly bat an eye.

Centennial High School students do not stray from this pattern, leading to continuous administrative efforts to curb the issue of vaping in school.

Centennial's principal, Cynthia Dillon, sent out a newsletter last year on September 21, 2018, informing the Centennial community of her concerns and what they can do to help fix it.

“I am concerned about this growing epidemic of use and

abuse by kids in our community,” Dillon stated in the letter. “Juuling, which is essentially the same as vaping only with a different device, is on the rise nationally.”

Dillon is not the only Centennial administrator that has a strong opinion on the matter.

“I think [the vaping problem within Centennial] is very serious,” said Cameron Rahnama, Assistant Principal. “[Vapes] are a lot easier to conceal than cigarettes... so kids think they can get away with it easier.”

Most teenagers are convinced that vaping is a safe alternative to smoking. Some even start vaping because it is marketed as less harmful in comparison to smoking cigarettes, so they don't think it will hurt them.

These minors are under the impression that there is less nicotine and other harmful substances in a Juul than in a standard cigarette, but that's not true.

A single Juul pod contains

around 45mg of nicotine, while a cigarette contains only 12mg. Juuls have the highest nicotine levels when compared to other e-cigarettes. The National Center for Health Research stated that the e-liquid in a Juul pod is 5% nicotine, which is staggeringly high considering the liquid in a Blu e-cig, another type of e-cigarette, is only 2.4% nicotine.

A common argument in defense of e-cigarettes is that only water vapor is inhaled, but what is actually being breathed in is called an aerosol. An aerosol is a gas made up of liquid particles that contain many toxic chemicals, which are created when the e-juice is heated up.

“The aerosol produced by vaping or juuling is inhaled deep into the lungs,” according to The Vape Experiment, an article published by the Maryland Department of Health. “Studies have found that inhaling these chemicals can lead to asthma, inflammation, and even make it

permanently harder to breathe.”

The major chemicals found in the aerosol are propylene glycol, glycerol, lead, acetone, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, tin, nickel, nicotine, propenal, diacetyl, and triacetin, none of which belong in your lungs.

Teenagers' willingness to overlook all of these statistics, which are publicly displayed with the intent of keeping minors from vaping, is leading to serious lung infections and, in some cases, death. In the past year alone there have been six recorded deaths caused by vaping-induced lung infections in the United States.

Fortunately, not all cases have been fatal.

“We have... seen at least 15 cases in Maryland and 380 across the country where individuals have been hospitalized with lung diseases associated with vaping,” Robert R. Neall, the Health Secretary for the MDH, said in an e-mailed statement, referring to statistics that

“I think teenagers are uneducated on how dangerous [vaping] is.”

kill you. And it will most definitely ruin your life.”

As a result of all of the hospitalizations and deaths in America, the government has taken action to prevent the use of e-cigarettes by minors and young adults.

Locally, after adding e-cigarettes to the list of tobacco products, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan signed off on a bill that changed the legal age to buy tobacco from 18 to 21, which went into effect on October 1, 2019.

This bill was created in an effort to decrease the chances of minors getting a hold of the devices but there are, as always, people willing to sell to underage kids off the record.

Now, in an attempt to prevent any more minors from vaping, President Trump is moving to ban the sale of most flavored e-cigarettes and nicotine pods.

It has been speculated that the sale of those flavors, such as mint and mango, is done with the intent of making the products more appealing to younger buyers.

A potential problem with this proposed law is due to the high demand for flavored pods.

There is a chance that people might start making their own and selling them. This could lead to further, and potentially more dangerous, health hazards, as most people wouldn't know how to properly make one.

Officer Carneal does not believe that the new law will have any effect on underage vaping.

“I think no matter what, someone will buy it for them.”

- Delanie Tucker

were current as of September 10.

Those that vape like to push aside the idea of something like this occurring. Being put in the hospital because of vaping is not something people consider often because they don't think that it will happen to them, but that's not always true.

The possibility of falling ill should be a lot more obvious in Howard County now since, although we haven't seen any local deaths, there has been a serious vaping issue very close to home.

A Centennial student, 18-year-old junior Nafees Basharat, was hospitalized with a lung infection and pneumonia.

“[The doctors] had to send a camera down my throat and vacuum up all the liquid in my lungs,” stated Basharat on his time in the hospital.

The experience drastically changed his life, as the time spent in a hospital bed opened his eyes to the damage vaping was doing to his body.

“Vaping was the worst decision of my life and it was really hard to stop until I was hospitalized. Before that, I wasn't really aware of the problems and the health risks that came with [vaping],” Basharat explained. “[Vaping] can harm you. It can

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JUNIOR BRYSON BAKER CELEBRATES WITH TEAMMATES AFTER SCORING A GOAL AGAINST MT. HEBRON.

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Matthew Zou

Centennial Student Defeats the Odds



Zou competes at the 2019 World Deaf Swimming Championship. Photos contributed by: Matthew Zou

One of Centennial's finest student-athletes overcomes the struggles of impaired hearing every single day of his life. The pain and trials one must endure as they fight for something they love makes it that much more meaningful.

This past summer, Centennial senior Matthew Zou was selected to play for the USA national team at the 2019 World Deaf Swimming Championships, which took place in São Paulo, Brazil August 25-31.

Zou began swimming at the age of seven. Little did he know that his childhood interest would one day become his passion.

Zou was one of just six male swimmers selected to compete on Team USA. The 16-person roster participated in numerous events in the competition.

Throughout the five-day contest, Zou competed in the 50-meter freestyle, 200-meter backstroke, 4x200 freestyle relay, 100-meter freestyle, 100-meter backstroke, 4x100 medley relay, 200-meter freestyle, and 50-meter backstroke.

After a tremendous evening for Zou, he qualified for his first

individual final. On the fifth day, Zou placed eighth in the men's 200-meter backstroke with a time of 2:27.83.

A day prior to earning his solo final, Zou, along with three other teammates, finished fifth in the men's 4x200 freestyle relay with a time of 8:35.07.

On the fifth day alone, the United States National Deaf Swimming team was presented with a silver and bronze medal,



"Swimming is a sport with means of escape from the pressure and hardships growing up."



along with two US records.

The team was led by head coach Brad Robbins, and assisted by Chris Daly. Together, the men have over 40 years of experience coaching swimming and had a great impact on the team's success this past August.

The coaches led and trained the young athletes before attending the event, giving them the tools required to swim at the top of their game.

While the coaches aided in propelling the drive to win, the swimmers traveled and competed with their own unique goals and intentions.

"Representing USA means a lot to me and others like me," said Zou. "[It] shows that hearing impairment does not define us as lesser beings."

To prepare for the competition, he trained seven days a week, for three hours each day.

Despite the long hours and immense time commitment, Zou does not dread practice or the rigorous training.

"Swimming is a sport with means of escape from the pressure and hardships growing up," Zou explained. "The experience was life-changing because I was able to meet other teammates who are like me."

The USA national team finished in eighth place after competing against 28 other countries. The team earned six silver and three bronze medals.

-Shawn Kruhm



Walter Fletcher

Centennial Alum Reaches New Heights ::::::::::::::

Coming out of high school, 97.2 percent of student-athletes fail to reach the Division I level, but Centennial alum Walter Fletcher has defeated all odds and taken his own path to play on a Division I football team. Fletcher has not only made it onto the football roster at Ball State University, he is also excelling as a member of the team.

His journey to play Division I football was long and required dedication. It included several school changes and many hours of practice, but Fletcher remained committed to reaching his goal and motivated himself along his journey.

"Honestly, I wanted to do it for myself. I've always been self-motivated and had aspirations to play at the Division I level. I always knew that I was a Division I running back, and I wanted to prove to myself that I could compete at this level," said Fletcher.

Fletcher graduated from Centennial High School in 2014. Under former head coach Todd Kriner, Fletcher was a three-year Varsity starter. Setting multiple school records, including most rushing yards in a season and a single game, Fletcher has left a lasting legacy at Centennial as one of the best running backs ever to suit up in the Eagles uniform.

Fletcher credits the coaches at Centennial for preparing him to play at a level beyond high school football.

"My senior year, Coach Cook joined the staff," he described. "He was extremely influential

in evaluating my game from my junior to senior year of football. He showed me how to work hard, and I learned a lot about the game from him."

After high school, Fletcher attended East Coast Prep and Randolph Macon College for a short amount of time. In 2015, Fletcher transferred to Edinboro University where he saw his collegiate football career begin to take off.

Fletcher redshirted his freshman year at Edinboro, meaning he would sit out for the year to further develop his skills before playing in his first Division II game.

After redshirting, Fletcher played for Edinboro for three years. He set several program records and racked up many accolades over those three seasons. Both the single-season and single-game rushing records at the school belong to Fletcher. Also, in 2017 and 2018, he was selected for the first team all-conference as well as the Division II All-American second team.

Breaking the records at Edinboro was a high point in Fletcher's career.

"To accomplish that after not knowing if I would even play college football was a surreal feeling."

After graduating from Edinboro this past spring, Fletcher had one year of college eligibility left and decided to join Ball State University's football team as a graduate transfer. Fletcher had to adapt to the tougher competition in Division I, which was not an easy transi-



*Fletcher running the ball for the Eagles.
Photo contributed by: Eyrie*

tion.

"I knew there were expectations from me being a graduate transfer and from the things I accomplished at the Division II level. It definitely was an adjustment to learn the speed of the game and to learn a new system in a short amount of time."

Fletcher was ready by the time the season began. The team traveled to Indianapolis to take on Indiana University for their first game of the season.

"Playing at Lucas Oil Stadium for my first Division I game was an unforgettable experience; it felt like all the hard work [I] put in over the years finally paid off. It was a blessing to score my first Division I touchdown in this game as well."

As his final year of college football begins to wind down, Fletcher looks back on his journey and offers words of encouragement to others who want to compete at any sport at a higher level.

"Believe in yourself and your

abilities. It's okay to put yourself in uncomfortable situations that push you and make you better," he said. "Going to Ball State was a risk, but I knew it would elevate my game as well as [help] me off the field. Follow your dreams because you don't want to regret missing opportunities."

Since graduating from Centennial, Fletcher remains grateful that the school helped him along his journey.

"Centennial gave me an opportunity to showcase my talent for four years. Without Centennial, I wouldn't have been able to play college football. Centennial will always have a special place in my heart and I'm proud to have attended such a prestigious school."

-Joey Sedlacko

Greetings from Sarfraz Manzoor

An Exclusive Wingspan Interview

A young Pakistani boy around the age of sixteen is sitting in his room on a wooden chair in the dark. A party, bass thumping, can be heard from a few houses down, a party he can't attend. He's holding a cassette tape in his hand with the words "Bruce Springsteen" and "Born in the USA" written across the front. A friend from his class, whom everyone calls Roops, lent it to him. He's skeptical: what could this rock star know about his life, his struggles? He's in Luton, England, an ocean away from anything American. He's brown and Muslim. In his other hand he clutches a Walkman, ready for use. He slowly slides in the cassette, and presses play, fast-forwarding all the way to 'Dancing in the Dark'. The song begins—the Earth shifts.

Blinded by the Light, directed by Gurinder Chadha, tells the story of this boy, Javed Khan, who is rather detached from his predominantly white community in 1987 Britain. It details his writing, his life, and how Springsteen changed all of that.

Above all, what makes it appealing is that it's based on a true story. When writing his memoir, *Greetings from Bury Park*, journalist Sarfraz Manzoor reached out to Chadha and together they fleshed out a movie concept, and the project took off from there.

In an exclusive Wingspan interview I had the pleasure of interviewing Manzoor about his experiences with the creation of the film, Springsteen's music, and more.

WS: *How did music, specif-*

ically Bruce Springsteen, help you cope with your struggles and your life?

was a different way of life or a different route out of where my life was... I had no role models of anybody who could do anything different, and so I didn't really feel like anybody who came from my background

you saw the movie for the first time?

SM: To be honest, the first time I saw anything... it was the trailer... I just went absolutely ecstatic because this was even before the film. But having been on set, you see actors doing their scenes and stuff... I went 'Oh my God. This actually looks like a real film'.. when you suddenly realize this is no small deal here, we're not mucking about. The other part that was weird is that you've got all these people who didn't grow up in [Luton] who didn't live my life, who all suddenly feel like they've got a connection to it. They're like, 'Oh my God, this dad reminds me of my dad' and I'm like, 'Well, that's kind of not really possible, because it's my dad I'm talking about'... the fact that this film is showing all across America; it's actually just opening in France. I'm getting messages from Argentina and Israel [of] people saying they're watching the film... it's that moment where you realize the film is way bigger than just me.

WS: *Growing up, I saw very few examples of positive South Asian representation in cinema... what kind of impact do you think that *Blinded by the Light* will have in terms of Asian representation?*

SM: I think it's already had that. I've had loads of people from the Asian community,



*The cast and author of *Blinded by the Light* pose for a picture. Photos contributed by: Sarfraz Manzoor*

ically Bruce Springsteen, help you cope with your struggles and your life?

SM: Well, I guess it was just the fact that when I was growing up, there wasn't really anybody I could look to, who could give me hope that there

was anything interesting. And I guess when I listened to Springsteen I was like... his songs are about [working-class] people exactly like me, but he still has hope... I needed that at that time, you know?

WS: *How did you feel when*



The cast and author of *Blinded by the Light* pose for a picture.

saying, ‘Thank you for telling a story, I see myself in this film’... It was really important that the parents [in the film] were sympathetic, that they weren’t just simplistic monsters. Obviously, they see the world differently than Javed does, but you also see them struggle, you see them work, and you see them as decent people who in some ways are trying their best. [This film] shows that... you don’t have to necessarily make films that are niche just because you’ve got nonwhite faces in the film.

WS: *What has the experience of this movie being out been like for you?*

SM: It’s been an emotional rollercoaster, it’s been a dream, it’s been really, really emotionally powerful to share a story that’s very small and specific with the world. And it’s also been a dream come true— a

month ago today, I was in Asbury Park for the premiere, and Springsteen turned up. Who would’ve thought when I was sixteen that Springsteen would turn up for the premiere of my film? There are certain things which are so crazy and really hard for the brain to take in, and that is one of them.

WS: *What do you hope that people will take from this film?*

SM: I hope that if they’re not already Bruce Springsteen fans, [that] they’ll give him a chance. I hope [that] they realize all of us have got more in common than what divides us— that race and religion and nationality are just labels, but actually underneath it, we all want to make our parents proud, we all want to make our dreams come true. And I also hope that it might help the next time somebody— a politician— tries to exploit hatred of

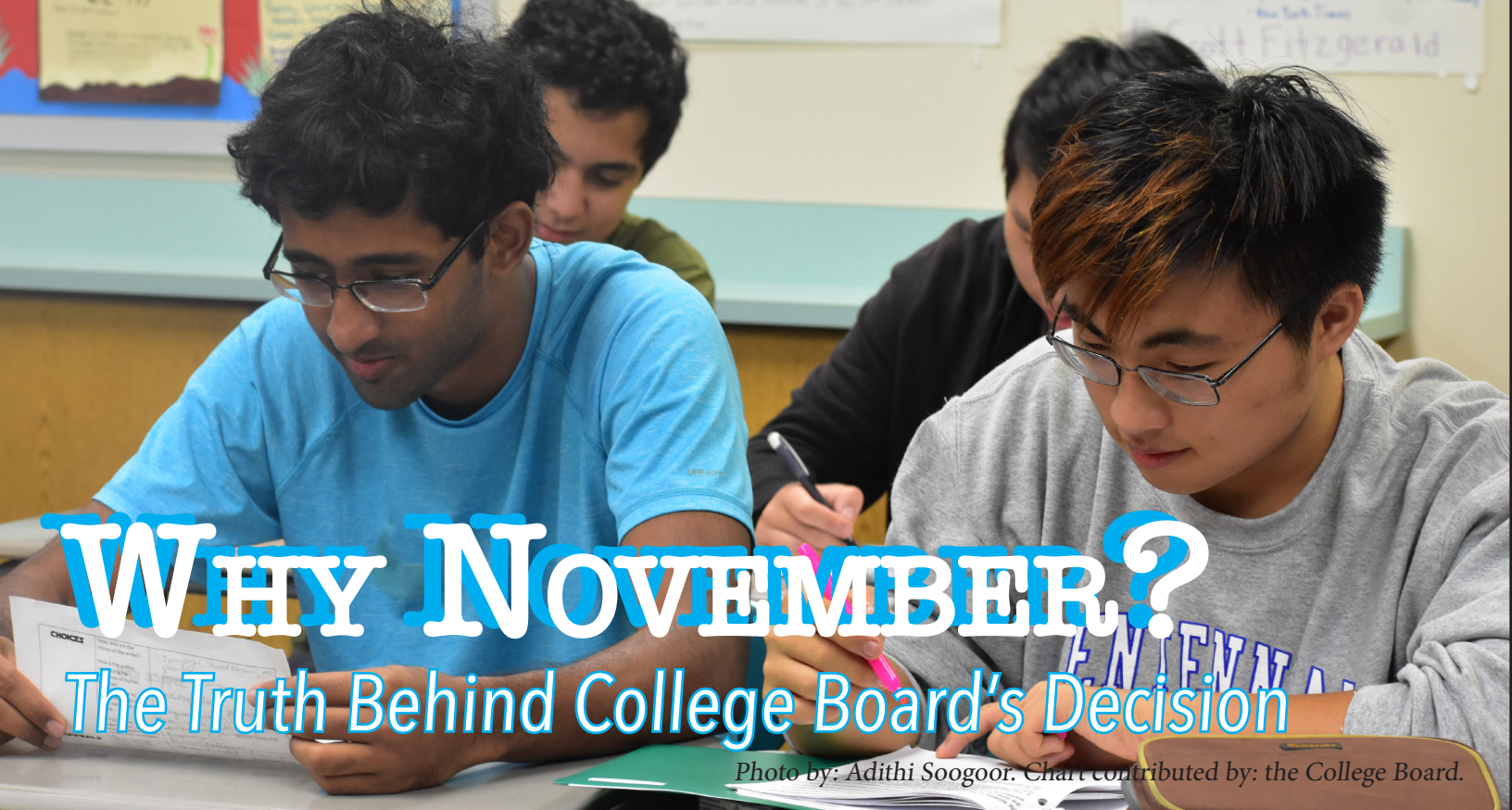
Muslims and tries to make that a political thing to try and get votes from, I hope somebody will say ‘You know what? I remember watching this film with some Muslim characters and they seemed really nice; I’m not gonna go along with this sort of witch hunt and hatred because the truth is not what these politicians are telling me.’

WS: *The whole movie focuses on the impact that music can have on an individual. What do you think makes people connect with music in such a way?*

SM: What Bruce does, and I think that it’s something that the best people do, [he writes] really specifically about [his] life [and his] experiences, but [he does] it in such a way that people feel they can see themselves in the story. If you think— he’s talking about Asbury Park, he’s talking about the specific facto-

ries, he talks about the New Jersey Turnpike— they’re not just generic roads or generic towns, they’re actually specific places. But he does it in such a way that you think, ‘Oh wow, that could be a bit like my town!’ So the trick is that he is very, very specific, and by being specific it becomes universal... he creates this world, and it’s really detailed, and in that world we see ourselves.

- Emily Hollwedel



WHY NOVEMBER?

The Truth Behind College Board's Decision

Photo by: Adithi Soogoor. Chart contributed by: the College Board.

For the world of secondary education, the College Board's seemingly innocent February 6 press release contained a bombshell. In it, the educational non-profit announced it would be making two major changes to the Advanced Placement (AP) program for the 2019-20 school year. The first, giving teachers access to new online resources designed to help them better prepare their students for the AP exams, elicited largely positive responses from educators. The second, however, instantly sparked nationwide criticism.

This second change involved moving exam registration from the spring to the fall. Students must now sign up for AP exams by November 15, instead of March, to only pay the base exam fee of \$94. Students who sign up for exams between November 16 and March 13 will have to pay a \$40 late fee on top of the base exam fee. If a student changes their mind and decides to cancel an exam after November 15, they will still have to pay

\$40 of the \$94 base exam fee.

According to the College Board, the decision to adopt fall registration was inspired by policies already in place in some AP schools. The College Board claims that some form of fall registration is already a "best practice" at over half of schools offering AP courses. However, it is unclear what specific policies the College Board considers fall registration or how strict these policies must be to be considered a "best practice."

As the College Board explains, they learned that students in the schools which already offered fall registration were "more engaged and less likely to give up." This increased commitment, the organization says, meant they were "more likely to earn a score that [would] translate to college credit."

During the 2017-18 school year, the College Board conducted a pilot program to study the effects of fall registration and its alleged benefits. The organization implemented fall regis-

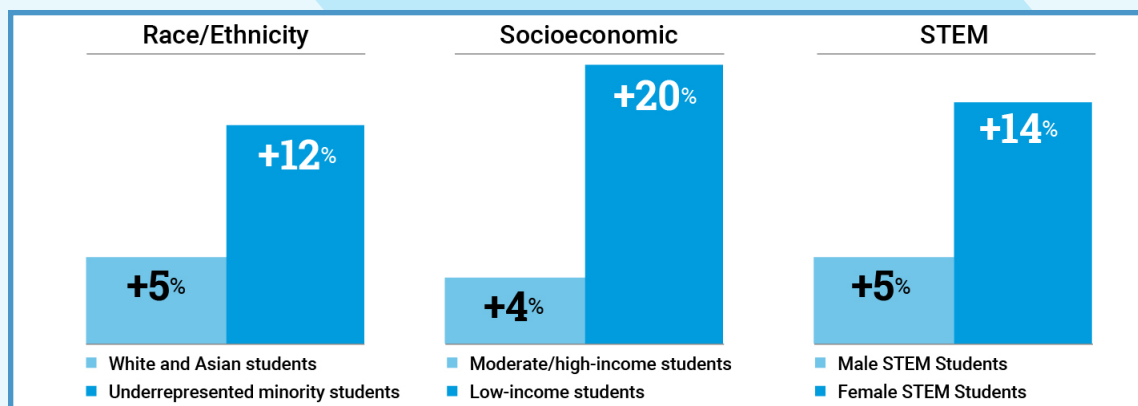
tration, among other changes, at 14 school districts across four different states. Combined, over 100 schools and 40,000 students participated in the pilot.

Although the College Board has provided minimal information on the nature of the pilot program or its results, it has relied heavily on anecdotes and highly limited data from the pilot program to support its claims. A video on the "2019-20 Changes to AP" page of the group's website, for instance, shows teachers and students from pilot schools describing how they were initially skeptical of fall registration but came to realize that, as one teacher put it, "[It] really makes a difference." Next to the video, the College Board explains that, "We've heard words like, 'engaged,' 'confident' and 'less likely to give up' when students register in the fall-and that commitment translates into more students taking the exam and earning college credit."

Beyond anecdotal evidence,

College Board boasts that, "Scores of 3+ increased across student groups" in their pilot program. A 3 is considered a passing score on the exams and is typically the minimum score required by colleges to earn credit. What College Board puts the greatest emphasis on, however, is the effect that fall registration had on groups it deems as traditionally underrepresented in the AP program. According to the College Board, underrepresented minorities (African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans), low-income students, and female STEM students fall under this category. The College Board claims that while fall registration "made a difference across the board," it "had the strongest effect" on these students. Accompanying this claim—often in graph form—is essentially the only data from the pilot program which the College Board has currently made readily available to the public.

The data, which shows the



percentage increases in scores of 3+ across different student groups, reveals that underrepresented groups saw significantly higher relative increases in passing scores than their counterparts. The total number of scores of 3 or higher increased by 12% for underrepresented minority students compared to 5% for White/Asian students. Likewise, passing scores increased by 20% for low-income students and only 4% for moderate/high-income students. The same trend occurred with female STEM students, who achieved a 14% increase compared to a 5% increase for their male counterparts.

These results indicate that fall registration will help these student groups, who have historically had lower participation and passing rates, move closer to equitable representation within the AP Program. In fact, the College Board touts that, during one year of fall registration, “schools sped up the work of AP Equity– the share of AP Exam registrations for students of color– by seven years.”

However, the minimal data which College Board is currently providing, and corresponding claims it makes, are meaningless when taken out of the context of the rest of the pilot program data. Earlier this year, the College Board itself released somewhat more detailed data from the pilot program on its website.

Although the College Board has taken down that web page since then, screenshots exist and the graphs which the College Board used on the page are still hosted on its website. These graphs displayed the raw number of total exam takers, underrepresented minority exam takers, low-income exam takers, and passing scores by low-income students within the pilot districts for the 2016, 2017, and 2018 AP exams.

This data, which the College Board has taken down for unknown reasons, is essential for putting the minimal data which they are currently trumpeting into context. This deleted data shows that while the total number of low-income exam takers increased by 33.5% from 2016-17 to 2017-18, the total number of moderate/high-income exam takers only increased by 3.9%. Given this fact, the graph showing a 20% increase in passing scores for low-income students compared to a 4% increase for moderate/high-income students is somewhat misleading. The number of low-income students taking exams simply increased at a much higher rate than did the number of moderate/high-income students taking exams. As a result, the number of exams passed by low-income students increased at a much higher rate as well. Relative to the increases in exam takers, low-income students did not see nearly as

significant of an increase in performance compared to moderate/high-income students as the 20%-4% comparison suggests at first glance. This pattern is repeated with underrepresented minorities and non-underrepresented minorities as well.

To gain a more complete understanding of the program’s results, The Wingspan tracked down five of the fourteen school districts who participated in the 2017-18 pilot. Through public information requests, The Wingspan obtained previously unpublished AP data from four of these districts: Klein ISD in Texas, San Antonio ISD in Texas, Amarillo ISD in Texas, and Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky. The Wingspan would like to note that, despite The Wingspan’s best efforts, the data obtained for San Antonio ISD is limited to 11th and 12th graders.

Overall, the total number of exams taken increased by 7.7% across these four districts in the pilot’s first year. Since the total number of passing scores increased by a nearly identical 8%, the overall passing rate only increased by a marginal 0.11%.

For the three districts which reported results by economic status, the number of exams taken by students considered economically disadvantaged/eligible for free or reduced lunches (Eco-Dis/FRL) increased by 12.2%. Meanwhile, the total

number of passing scores for these students increased by 17%. This translates to a 0.8% increase in pass rate. In comparison, the total number of exams taken, total number of exams passed, and pass rate for students not economically disadvantaged/not eligible for free or reduced lunches (Non-Eco Dis/FRL) increased by 2.2%, 6.2%, and 2.0%, respectively.

Across all four districts, the total number of exams taken by African American and Latino students increased by 10.36%. At the same time, the total number of exams passed increased by 15.6% and the pass rate increased by 0.99%. For all other students, the number of exams taken, number of exams passed, and pass rate increased by only 5.8%, 5.9%, and 0.05%, respectively.

In the aggregate, the detailed data obtained by The Wingspan appears to tell the same story as the College Board’s deleted data. It seems that the changes implemented by the pilot did increase equity with regards to access. Underrepresented groups saw a much higher percentage increase in exams taken than their overrepresented counterparts. However, the pilot appears to have done little to close the performance gap between underrepresented and overrepresented groups. In the three districts which reported results by economic status, the passing rate for Non-Eco Dis/FRL students was 30.8% higher than the passing rate for Eco Dis/FRL students in the 2016-17 school year. In the pilot’s first year, this gap actually increased to 32.0%.

It is important to note that the results of the pilot program varied significantly between districts. How the pilot affected

an individual district often differed from how the pilot affected the four districts as a whole. Although the number of exams taken by Eco Dis/FRL students increased by 12.2% overall, this number increased by a staggering 116% in Amarillo ISD and actually declined by 0.68% in Jefferson County. Furthermore, despite the gap in passing rates between African American/Latino students and other students decreasing by 0.94% overall, this gap increased in three of the four districts.

These differences in results shed light on a frustrating aspect of analyzing the pilot program data: there are simply so many variables at play. The previous AP registration policy, the cost paid for exams by low-income students, the quality of AP instruction, and any changes in enrollment all influenced how a district's AP results changed during the pilot program. Since these factors significantly vary by state and school district throughout the country, one should not expect the universal adoption of fall registration to have a universal effect.

Further complicating a true evaluation of the results of the pilot program is the nature of the pilot program itself. As it turns out, instituting a fall registration deadline was just one of many changes implemented by the College Board as part of their 2017-18 AP Pilot. Most notably, all participating school districts received access to a new support system of online resources. According to the "AP Full Year Model Implementation Plan" attached to the pilot participation agreement between the College Board and Jefferson County Public Schools, these resources were meant to enable, "yearlong, college-level

practice and instruction in AP classrooms." Highlighting these resources was an AP Question Bank available for all AP courses. The pilot agreement describes this as a "comprehensive repository of AP released and practice exam questions indexed to unit content and skills, including reports highlighting student knowledge and skill achievements and gaps." Teachers could use these questions to build custom quizzes for each unit, students could practice with them online or on paper, and administrators could access "year-round performance and usage data." Furthermore, AP Calculus and World History teachers received access to additional resources including scoring training, unit quizzes, and student-directed practice.

Although the pilot schools and their teachers were free to use these resources as they wished, the College Board provided them with intent and wanted them to be utilized. In fact, the aforementioned implementation plan, written by the College Board, states that, "The College Board encourages District's utilization of these resources." The plan explains that this will, "enable the College Board to learn about usage patterns."

While it is impossible to quantify the exact impact of these resources, it is highly likely that they increased student performance to some extent. Kevin Rasco, District Coordinator of Advanced Placement for San Antonio ISD, described these resources as being "very heavily used," especially for Calculus and World History. In Amarillo ISD, Director of Counseling/College and Career Readiness Tracy Morman said the resources were utilized to varying

extents by different teachers but on the whole were "very beneficial." Both Morman and Rasco emphasized how the resources allowed teachers and students to track students' progress throughout the year. This gave students added confidence and teachers the ability to assess the effectiveness of their instruction throughout the course.

Megan Shadid, an AP Economics and World History teacher from one of the pilot districts, echoed these sentiments in an interview with USA Today. "It's been a game changer for me in terms of how I teach," she explained.

If the College Board wanted to "further study the effects of moving exam registration to the fall," as their website says, why introduce another variable into the study in the form of these highly beneficial online resources? Even ignoring all of the other factors influencing a district's AP exam results, it is now impossible to say to what extent the results of the pilot are indicative of the effects of fall registration and to what extent they are indicative of the benefits of the online resources. Given that this uncertainty was created by the way the College Board designed the pilot, it is curious that they do not mention their inclusion of the online resources in practically any of the information they have released about the program.

Despite questions about College Board's representation of the pilot program and its results, there seems to be plenty of support for the fall registration deadline from those involved with the pilot.

Regarding the decision to implement fall registration nationwide, Rasco stated, "I'm behind it. I believe in it... For one

reason: you commit early to the full AP experience."

Rasco believes that kids thrive in structure and high expectations. By forcing students to register early, teachers know they have a classroom full of kids committed to taking the exams. According to Rasco, this causes a "dramatic change in the way a teacher conducts their class."

Like Rasco, Morman also thinks that the decision is a great move and called it "a win-win for everybody." She emphasized that the fall registration deadline and online resources were very beneficial for her district and believes that they are what's best for students in general.

As long as there are skeptics of the College Board, there will always be controversy surrounding the decisions it makes. The move to a fall registration deadline for AP exams is no different. The inconvenient truth, for both the College Board and its critics, is that no clear narrative appeared to emerge from The Wingspan's investigation of the 2017-18 AP Pilot Program. Although the changes implemented by the program seemed to increase equity with regards to access, their effect on equity with regards to performance seemed to be minimal. While some of those involved in the pilot like Rasco and Morman have expressed their support of fall registration, the College Board's limited and somewhat misleading representations of the pilot program's results and its nature raise questions. Unfortunately, there is and in all likelihood will be no final verdict, no definitive answers. The truth, much like the pilot program and the College Board itself, is complicated.

-Caleb McClatchey

Hats off to the Dress Code

Hats and hoods have been banned from school for as long as most people can remember. Whenever students asked about the reason why hats weren't allowed, they would get a different answer, all depending on the person they asked. Now Howard County has changed their policy on hats, as well as other parts of the dress code, in what seems to be an attempt to adjust the rules to cultural and societal changes.

The biggest change to the dress code was the addition of hats and hoods to the approved clothing, but other added items include ripped jeans, as long as undergarments are not exposed, and tank tops (including spaghetti straps, halter tops, and strapless tops). A list of requirements was also added detailing that students require a shirt, a bottom, and shoes.

"Certain body parts must be covered for all students," the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct states. "Clothes must be worn in a way such that the chest, midriff, pelvic/groin area, and the buttocks are covered with opaque material."

It's good that we still have rules about clothing, as provocative clothing can be inappropriate and even lead to class disruption, but it shouldn't have taken this long to realize that hats don't elicit the same reactions.

I've never personally understood the stigma that the school system associated with hats. They are harmless pieces of clothing that serve functional purposes, and all of the reasons I've heard for not allowing them

are either antiquated or ridiculous. I've even been told in the past that one reason they were banned was to prevent people from hiding things in them, because a baseball cap or a hood is much better for hiding contraband than pant pockets, right?

I interviewed Principal Dillon to get some insight into the background of the policy and the change. Dillon is not only an administrator here, but also the vice-president for the Howard County Administrators Associ-

ed as being acceptable for that reason in the previous policies," Dillon explained. "I think a lot of the previous policies had to do with making sure people were dressing respectfully."

I understand that historically it has been disrespectful to wear hats indoors, but I've never seen the reasoning behind that. I've never heard of someone wearing a hat to be disrespectful except for when someone is making a political statement, such as keeping a hat on during the

taking your test— class disrupted," Dillon explained.

I've had class disrupted plenty of times because of hats when they were banned; a student was wearing one and the teacher asked them to remove it because it was against the dress code, sparking an argument that could last several minutes. While the situation Dillon described is likely, these conflicts have more to do with the student than with county-wide policies, and the school system has realized and adapted to this.

There are concerns about the dangers of changing the dress code and not all of them are invalid. However, while there are legitimate issues that might arise, they stem from the individual's attitude and personality; they are the type of issues that would arise regardless of whether or not hats are allowed.

Previously, certain attire was restricted due to the matter of respect, but respect is a behavior, not an outfit. A belligerent person will be belligerent regardless of his or her headwear, just like how a kind and thoughtful person won't suddenly become a rude nuisance when they put a hat on. The old dress code was constructed upon flawed and decaying virtues and, like with any structure built on a faulty foundation, this change was not only wise but much needed.

- Xander Mauer



Senior William Qiu shows off his hat. Photo by: Noorie Kazmi

ation. Her position allowed me to learn more about the process of creating and changing policies. The committee for this policy change took two years to finalize the decision, while it normally takes one year. According to Dillon, Howard County lagged behind other counties across the nation due to the procedures necessary to change a policy here, such as observing the policies of other counties and the problems they may produce.

"Culturally, it has been disrespectful to wear headgear inside a place of business or a house of worship... so they were exclud-

ed as being acceptable for that reason in the previous policies," Dillon explained. "I think a lot of the previous policies had to do with making sure people were dressing respectfully." I understand that historically it has been disrespectful to wear hats indoors, but I've never seen the reasoning behind that. I've never heard of someone wearing a hat to be disrespectful except for when someone is making a political statement, such as keeping a hat on during the

"You tell a kid, 'I need you to take your hood off while we're doing this test,' then they fire off a response, 'I'm not cheating.' Next thing you know there's argument. [Now] you guys aren't

Opinion

A Flourishing Year for *Music*

In its 42 years of existence, seven years of mass expansion, and a year of nationwide recognition, Centennial High School's band program has only ever been run by one director. In recent years, that individual was David Matchim.

Upon Matchim's entrance to Centennial, the program had a miniscule population. Only two groups existed, and marching band was required for all members. There was no jazz band, nor was it a possibility. Year after year, the program grew. Matchim single-handedly transformed the department into that of four world-renowned professional ensembles: Jazz, Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Winds, and Symphonic Band. Each group gained traction

from major news media, music organizations, international festivals, and chief conductors.

During the 2018-19 school year alone, the most advanced group, Wind Ensemble, was accepted into the most prestigious music festival in the world. Additionally, the jazz band placed third out of over 200 groups at the Berklee Jazz Festival in Boston.

"We have a reputation to uphold," stated Matchim. "We're still riding the wave of a successful year last year, both for me and the bands... It adds a healthy amount of pressure that we have to keep up the great work and not stop surprising people with what we can do. We're not done yet."

After a year he often describes

as his "peak," Matchim knew he could not handle the program alone. And just like that, along came James Kranz.

"We complement each other well. His experience with marching band has been especially helpful," said Matchim. "There was definitely some anxiety about what the new person would be like for both me and students, and I'm happy to say I think everybody is pleased!"

Kranz and Matchim work alongside one another to co-direct the program, tackling groups, sectionals, and teaching together.

"[Matchim] has been very welcoming and helpful as I'm getting settled and learning about how the program functions," Kranz stated. "We have

similar ideas and philosophies and I think we work well together. I also want to give a shoutout to Mr. Leung and Ms. Vanover because they have been awesome as well."

Kranz formerly worked as the band and strings director at Atholton Elementary School. Having exclusively taught students ages eight through eleven, his transition from elementary to high school was nothing short of a shock.

"One of the biggest differences [between elementary and high school] is the schedule," affirmed Kranz. "We are able to make much more progress having rehearsals every day instead of only one or two short sectionals each week at the elementary level."



Senior bass clarinetist Nate Fleming plays with the Wind Ensemble. Photos by: Noorie Kazmi

"We have a
reputation
to uphold."

Previously having worked at a Howard County feeder school, Kranz recognizes the significant role they play in preparing such world-class musicians for the competitive status of Centennial. The program's success does not begin as new students enter their four years at Centennial; it begins at the elementary and middle school level.

"Band here is a supportive community built on mutual respect and high standards where every member is important and valued," added Kranz. "This continues through the middle and elementary levels too, which is an important part of the success here at Centennial."

Matchim and Kranz share similar, if not the same, philosophies, credentials, and beliefs. Having only spent several months working alongside one another, their team of two has already proven its power.

"Our feeder schools are doing a great job of getting students interested in music," said Matchim. "We've created a name for ourselves in the community and have noticed that some families even move so they can have their [kids] in our program."

The extent of Centennial's supportive community is known by one student in particular. Senior Nate Fleming has been a part of the band program for each of his four years at Centennial. Beginning as a clarinetist his freshman year in the lowest group, Symphonic Band, he quickly realized his love for the program. By his senior year, Fleming became the first chair bass clarinetist in Wind Ensemble.

"The quality of music education, I definitely feel, helps keep many people with [the music program] once they experience [it] at Centennial," stated Fleming.



Band Director David Matchim conducts Centennial's Wind Ensemble.

ing.

Students within the program, no matter their level of musicianship nor experience, recognize the significance of a powerful program. While a large band program does not equal a successful one, there is strength in numbers.

"The drive and passion that so many students have for music has most definitely helped the music program excel these past couple years," asserted Fleming. "But mainly the wonderful directors we have at Centennial help make this music program so amazing."

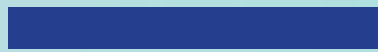
As Matchim stated, band becomes more than just a class, it becomes a community.

While growth in the program is an incredible stride, the skill required to now get into higher groups, Symphonic Winds and Wind Ensemble, has become significantly more advanced.

"You have to be really skilled on your instrument, a thoughtful musician, and there has to be a vacancy in the section you are interested in... a lot has to go right," Matchim stated. "It's



"Band here is a supportive community built on mutual respect and high standards."



tough to disappoint great players with audition results when, as a director and educator, you really want what is best for every student."

The music program at Centennial has been reshaped and redefined for years in the making. We now stand at a point in Centennial music history that has never been reached before:

a point of nationwide success, excellence, and dedication unlike any other. No matter the reason behind the vast expansion of the music department, it is the people behind the scenes: teachers, students, and the administration that continue to change the face of the program.

- Natalie Knight-Griffin



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³ The expected monthly principal and interest payment for a 15/15 adjustable rate mortgage of \$300,000 at an initial interest rate of 3.375% with zero points (3.710% APR) is \$1,326.29. Total estimated payments of \$477,463.50 (30 year repayment). Payment does not include taxes or insurance, actual payment may be higher. Rate is variable and can increase by no more than four percentage points every 15 years, never to exceed four percentage points above the initial rate (7.375% for this example). When the rate adjusts, your new rate will be the then current index (Weekly One Year Constant Maturity Treasury, or CMT) plus a margin of 2.750%, as long as the total adjustment does not exceed the 4.00% adjustment cap. The interest rates, annual percentage rates (APRs), discount points and



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