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The Guidon

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Hays High School | 2300 E. 13th St. | Hays, Kan. 67601



Off Limits

School plans to revise policy
regarding student cell phones
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ON THE COVER



Cover photo illustration by Eleanor Bittel

ORGANIZATIONS

Environmental Club seeks to raise awareness by cleaning up trash, bringing back recycling

By Kennedi Fischer
26kfischer@usd489.com

Completing more activities during this year, the Environmental Club has been busy, creating tote bags, picking up trash around the community, making new recycling bins for the high school and trying to get funding to return paper recycling bins to the classrooms.

On Feb. 27-28, the club sponsored a tote bag painting activity, which any student could participate in during PRIDE Time, to encourage the use of reusable bags. Also, on March 10, Environmental Club partnered with FFA to collect trash around Frontier Park.

"I believe we made a difference," junior Lily Butler said. "You really don't realize how much trash can get stuck in trees and bushes. The place definitely felt a lot cleaner after we were there."

Another project that the club started during first semester and continued this semester was bringing back recycling at Hays High School. While recycling for bottles, cans and paper used to be managed by Special Education students, two years ago, the recycling center that the school had worked with closed, and taking the recycled products to another recycling center was deemed too complicated to organize.

So, Environmental Club decided to take on the project of recycling at school, starting with plastic bottles and aluminum cans. Club members painted two recycling bins to make them more noticeable then placed the bins in the Commons area. Members collect the recyclables once a week and take the bags to their houses to be picked up by the City of

Hays, which collects recyclables with trash.

"Usage has been good," junior Jenna Kisner, the club's Social Media Coordinator, said. "The only issue we've had is non-recyclables and liquids being put in the bins."

Looking ahead to the new school, members plan to add at least four more recycling bins for bottles and cans. Plus, the club has been seeking funding to bring back paper recycling in classrooms.

However, the club needed funds to get the plastic crates needed

to collect the paper. So, the group has reached out to the Heartland Community Foundation Youth Action Council for a grant, which would be \$100 dollars to supply crates for 20 teachers.

"So many students use a lot of recyclable material," junior Aralen Maupin, the club's Student Involvement Director, said. "We hope that, by implementing more recycling at school, it will reduce the amount of waste and raise awareness within the school and community."



Photo by Lily Butler (Indian Call)

SAVING THE EARTH

During an Environmental Club trash pickup event at Frontier Park earlier this school year, senior Reagan Bates adds a styrofoam cup to a trash bag held by senior Samara DeWitt. Environmental Club has sponsored several activities this year, including trash pickups, tote bag painting and recycling.

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

The Hays chapter of the National Education Association organization (HNEA) will be hosting a banquet on Tuesday, May 6 to honor not only retiring teachers, but also Master Teachers from each district school. Every year, HNEA members vote on Master Teachers in their buildings to recognize exemplary educators. For Hays High, HNEA members selected math teacher Desirae Kinderknecht, who has taught for 21 years.

What do you believe helped you be chosen as a Master Teacher?

"While I am not exactly sure why I was chosen this year, I always strive to bring enthusiasm, encouragement and positive energy to my classroom. This marks my 21st year as a math educator, with 10 years being at a middle school

teacher
Desirae
Kinderknecht

level, and I continue to be passionate about supporting student growth."

How did you feel when you found out that you were selected?

"I was truly honored to be selected. It was a wonderful reminder of why I love teaching and how much I value being part of the 'tribe' here at Hays High School."

What is your favorite part about teaching at Hays High?

"My favorite part of teaching high school students is seeing the students engage in deeper thinking and make meaningful connections. I also really enjoy the sense of humor and the relationships that come with working with older students."

Reporting by Kennedi Fischer

POLICIES

OFF & AWAY

Based on state recommendations, school plans phone ban for next year

By Reagan Bates, Kale Schwien & Tavia Wynn-Coffman
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For the 2025-2026 school year, the cell phone policy for Hays High School will change.

During the last four school years, the administration has issued a color-coded chart for staff to use with students. Prior to that, students were not able to use their phones during classes or lunches at all – just during passing periods and before or after school.

With the current chart, when teachers say that their classrooms are “red,” students are not able to use their phones, and when teachers say that their rooms are “green,” students can use their phones for approved tasks.

“At each of the buildings where I have been a principal, we have utilized the ‘red and green chart’ to communicate expectations of phone use in the classroom and around the building,” Henderson said. “Over the last several years, the dependence of our students on their devices, particularly pertaining to personal communication and social media, has become nothing short of an addiction. In talking with families and even students themselves, there is a real concern for creating healthy parameters and restrictions to keep the focus on school.”

Hays High, like many Kansas schools, are aligning their policy with the Kansas Board of Education’s Blue-Ribbon Task Force on Student Screen Time, shown in the graphic, which it unanimously approved on Dec. 10. While the state board approved the recommendations, schools can create their own policies locally.

The state task force tackled the phone issue after multitudes of research have surfaced about the negative effects of students using their cell phones while at school. For instance, according to a Feb. 19 article by the National Center for

Education Statistics (NCES), negative effects include students being distracted and not paying attention in class, earning lower grades, cheating on assignments, cyberbullying one another using social media, having low self-esteem due to social media and more. Overall, it suggests that districts limit student phone use.

“The research and the guidance for student screen time in schools is overwhelming, pointing to a need to implement a bell-to-bell policy that makes phones inaccessible during the school day,” Henderson said.

According to Henderson, the administration is using the state recommendations to revise the policy for Hays High. While the policy is not finalized, it could involve a “bell-to-bell” ban, meaning students would be required to power off their personal devices at school, or a ban with the exception of passing periods. Once the policy has been revised, it will be presented for approval to the USD 489 Board of Education before being enacted next school year.

No matter what the final policy ends up being, people have opinions on a ban. Social science teacher Abby Gillan said a new policy will be beneficial for students.

“Phone usage has been an issue this year, and I haven’t really had issues with it before,” Gillan said. “I think it [the new policy] will have a positive impact on students’ social skills and, hopefully, on time spent on their academics. But, I think it is going to be difficult for students because cell phones have just been a part of our school culture in some way for a while now.”

Most students are, indeed, against a ban on their phones, saying that they should be able to use their phones during certain times.

“It is unfair that we will not be allowed to use our phones next year,” freshman Rylee Heeren said. “We should be able to use them at lunch or at least in the hallways. I don’t like the fact that we can’t have our phones in class.”

KANSAS BOARD OF EDUCATION BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE ON STUDENT SCREEN TIME RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Districts implement a bell-to-bell personal electronic device policy in K-12 schools.
2. Districts implement a policy for students to store personal electronic devices in a secure location inaccessible to them during the school day.
3. Districts develop robust safety and emergency procedures that are not dependent on students contacting authorities or family via personal electronic devices or school-issued devices.
4. Districts develop a process for teachers to report gaps in district-provided technology, so teachers do not supplement lack of or insufficient district technology with use of personal devices.
5. Districts create a personal device policy for staff members.

Information from KSDE

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ADMINISTRATION

Current Plainville athletic director to join administration for next year

By Brayden Staley
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As the school year ends soon, not only are seniors thinking about new beginnings, but also, some faculty and staff members are doing likewise. With current assistant principal/activities director Lance Krannawitter retiring at the end of this academic year, USD 489 has hired his replacement, Chris Drees, approving his contract on March 24.

Drees graduated from Thomas More Prep in 1998 and received his bachelor's degree in physical education and his master's degree in leadership from Fort Hays State University.

Drees taught at Palco for six years, serving as the athletic director for three of those years. After that, Drees started at Plainville as the athletic director and high school boys basketball head coach before interviewing for the open position in Hays, which he will start this summer.

"When I found out he [Krannawitter] was retiring, this was a position that I had interest in," Drees said. "Hays High is obviously getting a brand-new school. That is a big selling point for the community; people want to work there."

With the new school, Hays High will be able to host its home football games and an invitational track meet on campus – something that principal Shawn Henderson and assistant principal Fred Winter said has not been possible prior to the new school coming to fruition.

"That really resonated with me because it is just hard to wrap your head around that, with Hays being a school district for however long it has been in existence," Drees said. "Those events are important, and with the new school opening, I imagine that Hays is going to host just about everything, including post-season events. Every tournament you host – wrestling, basketball, track, baseball – those events are being magnified tenfold because of the new facility."

While Drees has ideas for the future, he said that one of the biggest challenges for him will be transitioning from a 2A school in Plainville to a 5A school in Hays.

"I am going to be relying on Mr. Krannawitter, the administration and the coaches to help with my transition," Drees said. "I am not afraid to ask questions, and I will also admit that I don't know everything, but I am excited to learn. However, I will be reliant on the people there to help me."

Math teacher and baseball head coach Dustin Dreher said that the coaches and sponsors will need to work closely with Drees next year.

"The new athletic director is going to step into a cool situation, with everything being new," Dreher said. "There are going to be a lot of new rules that he is going to have to set up, like who gets to use this field, when do we get to use this field [and] what teams are on this field, because there is going to be a lot going on, with not just the high school here, but with middle school here. It will be an organizational nightmare, but it is something he is going to have to take on."

Dreher also said he would like for Drees to focus on not only athletics, but also academics.

"The tie of academics with athletics needs to be more enforced," Dreher said. "I have a PowerSchool class set up with all my guys, and I try to make sure that my guys are staying on top of things. The school district could implement some stricter guidelines on grades. I think the athletic part of being in high school is a reward for those kids who can take care of the classroom setting. And, so, if he wanted to implement something like that, I would be happy with that."

Despite the new challenges, Drees said that he cannot wait to work at Hays High.

"Kids come to school to be a part of the athletic organization," Drees said. "Although, you need to take care of your schoolwork first, and then athletic success will follow."



new assistant
principal/
activities
director
Chris Drees

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TECHNOLOGY

School board approves purchase of new devices

By Alijah Arias
27aarias@usd489.com

Despite the recommendation of a committee to purchase iPads instead of laptops for students at Hays High School for next year, at the USD 489 Board of Education meeting on Monday, March 24, the board voted unanimously to approve a contract with Dell for 1,100 student laptops.

Officially since last fall, the district's information technology staff, led by Scott Summers, had discussed whether to continue using Dell laptops or to switch to Apple iPads. From there, a new Technology Committee was formed to get feedback.

While the Technology Committee suggested switching to iPads, many high school teachers and students advocated for laptops. In the December 2024 Guidon, some voiced concerns about iPads, including how using iPads would not prepare students very well for college or careers, how iPads may not be able to support certain software or devices and how iPads would make some schoolwork more difficult or impossible.

At the board meeting March 24, two students from Hays High's DECA, juniors Mitzil Carrillo Maldonado and Lizzy Vajnar, addressed the board members.

Speaking first, Vajnar explained that she and other DECA members completed data collection from 470 students in Grades 9-12. According to their survey, 84 percent of students preferred laptops compared to 10 percent for iPads and the remainder for other devices. They also asked students about the devices their parents use at work, with 82 percent of those students reporting that their parents use laptop or desktop computers instead of iPads while at work.

"We want to make the message clear that Hays High students support laptops more than the iPads," Vajnar said at the board meeting. "We want you to think about 'every student every day,' and give them what that they can use in their college and their career work. We urge you to vote for laptops so we can have our voice heard."

Speaking next, Carrillo Maldonado added that the DECA members found that most Kansas universities and colleges recommend laptops over iPads or Chromebooks and that iPads had various limitations for students – something she expanded on afterwards.

"iPads are much more limiting than laptops," Carrillo Maldonado said. "Their storage and battery life are far worse, and iPads aren't able to run certain apps or software efficiently or quickly, which would damage students' ability to learn in an education environment. I think the money the school believed could be saved by switching to iPads would show in the quality of work produced by students."

Cost was a large factor in the IT staff's and the Technology Committee's recommendations. At the board meeting, Summers said that the quote for iPads would cost about \$150,000 less than the Dell laptops would, which included buyback costs after the four years of the device contract. He also said that Dell offered

the best contract for laptops, compared to companies such as HP or Lenovo.

Despite laptops costing more than iPads, the board approved a Dell bid for \$605,935.

"I work with college students and get to watch them navigate a huge life transition," board member Jayme Goetz said. "Many of them are living on their own for the first time, figuring out new friends and new

methods of learning. I also watch as a portion of them struggle to learn how to use a laptop, as they only had iPads in their schools. I just felt like this was an additional burden placed on them at a very pivotal time of their lives. Since I had the opportunity to vote and possibly take that burden away from our students, why wouldn't I?"

In reaction to the board's decision, business teacher Lindsay Hart said she was satisfied with the device choice.

"I'm glad the board decided to continue purchasing laptops for our students," Hart said. "As we are working to prepare our students for life after high school, whether it be going on to college or into the workforce or even the military, personal computers are the dominant device used in many industries. It's important for students to learn to operate both PC and Apple platforms. Students have been using iPads K-8 in our district, so switching to laptops in high school is a beneficial experience as they are preparing to move on."

"It's important for students to learn to operate both PC and Apple platforms. Students have been using iPads K-8, so switching to laptops in high school is a beneficial experience as they are preparing to move on."

teacher Lindsay Hart



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1. Study Space

Study space is a key element of students' finals strategy. To boost productivity levels, they should start with their environment.

First, their "space" should have enough space. The New Jersey Institute of Technology says, "A proper study space should have enough room for you to use your computer or laptop, open textbooks and take notes in a notebook... all at the same time."

Second, the article said that students should prioritize comfort, cleanliness and lighting in their study spaces. "Studies have shown that studying or reading in dim lighting can increase feelings of anxiety and make it harder to retain information. However, bright lighting that is too harsh may prevent you from focusing, as it is distracting when bouncing off a book or computer screen."

Finally, students' study spaces should be free from any distractions. Examples include their phones constantly buzzing with notifications, loud conversations, television noise or anything else that is pulling their attention away. If students find themselves unable to focus in their homes, switching up their environments can also lead to increased focus. Coffee shops, libraries or even outdoor spaces can provide excellent conditions for finals preparation.

"To study for finals, I typically like to go to the public library or a coffee shop with all my notes from the semester. From there, I will use techniques, like active recall and flash cards, to test myself. I also find it super helpful to study for 25 to 30 minutes and then take a break to make sure I don't get burnt out."
- senior Kallyn Meyers

"My strategy for studying is filling out the final review we are given in some classes as many times as I can. I familiarize myself with questions I will come across. I like to watch as many YouTube videos I can find over topics on the final because I am a visual learner, and it helps me absorb the information."
- sophomore Savannah Clingan

3. Preparation

Studying for finals often demands efficiency and preparation to find success. Aimlessly sifting through information that has been covered in class will leave students feeling more overwhelmed than ready. Staying organized by outlining study plans and goals is another way to take on finals season.

The Princeton Review suggests using a calendar or a planner to outline one's final exam schedule, including when, what and how the student will study for each exam. Breaks are also important and should be worked into the schedule.

To create realistic plans, students should not procrastinate, then attempt to cram just a few days before finals. Instead, the Princeton Review said that students should be thoughtful about what they study. First, they should review material that they know will be on the final exam. Then, they can move to other areas that are likely to appear and finally, they can study smaller concepts that will possibly be covered.

"I encourage students to check with their instructors about what the final is — format, cumulative or unit final, points, days to work on it, open-book/closed-book or notes allowed/not allowed," English teacher Lisa Renz said. "Take the guesswork out of the picture; this can help with stress!"

2. Health

In midst of finals, physical health may seem like the least of students' worries. Yet, taking care of their bodies has significant effects on their academic performance.

Global University of London published an article discussing the benefits of exercise during exam season, which include better concentration, increased energy, improved mood and strengthened memory. "So whether you're reviewing for an exam or listening to a lecture, you'll be able to retain what you learn much more easily if you have been doing some regular exercise."

Proper hydration and nutrition can also boost cognitive functions while preventing headaches and fatigue. It is important to note that caffeine is not a substitute for water. While caffeine has benefits — like short energy boosts — it should be consumed in moderation to experience the advantages without drawbacks. More than 400 milligrams per day can cause anxiety, insomnia, irritability, tremors and heart palpitations.

Furthermore, sleep has been shown to help students retain information and perform better on tests than those who are sleep deprived. "Even though it's a really busy time of the year for everyone, remember to get enough sleep and eat healthy," English teacher Lisa Renz said.

With final exams and project deadlines looming soon, students can use these techniques to prepare now

Just about a month remains in this school year, and the prospect of carefree summer nights is nearly within reach. With temperatures outside on the rise, it seems impossible to stay focused on schoolwork when the appealing glow of warmer weather and the tempting lure of summer adventures are calling all of our names. Yet, before we can relax, there are obstacles that stand between high school students and their summer plans: finals. In order to stay "locked in" for this last test of your limits, it will require strategic planning and conscious effort. Here are some tips to help you succeed during this upcoming finals season.

4. Teacher Advice

After preparing, it is time to buckle down to actually study. If students do not know where to start, here are some suggestions, based on psychological research.

"Find your max time you can really concentrate (20, 30 or 40 minutes) and then take a five-minute break; set a timer and stay disciplined," Psychology teacher Matt Brooks said. "Then, start ANOTHER subject and go for that max time. Then repeat the process with another subject or go back to the first one. If you're a procrastinator and have a tough time even starting something, try this: get in a place free from as many distractions as possible and set a timer for five minutes. Tell yourself you are only going to work for five minutes, and when the alarm goes off, you can stop. But, most of the time, you will find that you are into it and can keep going."

And, after studying, if students are still feeling overwhelmed before finals, teachers suggest to talk to them ahead of time about their finals.

"Since we have two days for finals, if students have more than they think they can handle in a single day, they can see if they can take finals on another day," English teacher Lisa Renz said. "A teacher might make an accommodation for a student who has three or four finals in a single day."

Final Countdown

Praises

- "Hunger Games"
- Sandwich method
- Woot Woot Wagon
- Nice weather
- Baristas
- Laptops
- Gardening
- Garage sales
- Tiramisu Oreos
- "Minecraft" Happy Meal

Protests

- People not washing their hands
- Scholarship applications
- PRIDE Time after lunch
- Helicopter parents
- New phone policy
- Nonchalance
- Annotated bibs
- Licking envelopes
- One-pagers
- Kanye West

Staff Playlist

Alijah Arias

"Julianna Calm Down"
by The Chicks

Reagan Bates

"Days Gone Down (Still Got the
Light in Your Eyes"
by Gerry Rafferty

Eleanor Bittel

"Hey"
by Pixies

Hank Corsair

"The Monster"
by Eminem with Rihanna

Delia Dixon

"Sunday"
by The Cranberries

Kennedi Fischer

"WAIT"
by DoeChii

Cason Grezeszak

"For Keeps"
by Lucy Dacus

Kale Schwin

"3.5"
by Ian

Brayden Staley

"Unstoppable"
by Sia

Clare Tholstrup

"Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves"
by Cher

Katelyn Willemsen

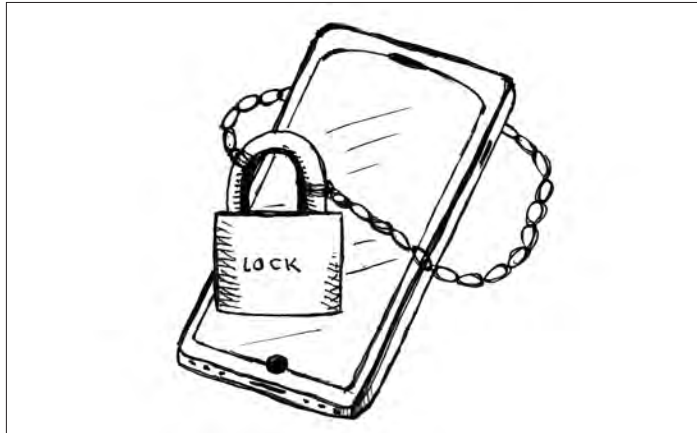
"Swan Lake"
by Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Tavia Wynn-Coffman

"Southern Nights"
by Glen Campbell

Jessica Augustine

"Tiny Dancer"
by Elton John



Cartoon by Eleanor Bittel

Administration should not ban student cell phones next year

At a work session in March, the USD 489 Board of Education heard input from Hays High School's administration about the suggestion of banning student cell phone use for next year, which we think is both unnecessary and unrealistic.

Many schools are enacting similar policies, due to phones distracting students during school hours and having other negative effects, such as an increase of cyberbullying and a decrease of self-esteem due to social media use. While some students allow their phones to be a problem, we think that phones should not be banned totally at Hays High for next year.

To begin, many students need their cell phones for communication with their family members or workplaces, especially if they need to change plans or if there is an emergency. If students are not allowed to use their own phones, the office secretaries will have to accept calls during the day and interrupt classes for the students to take calls, adding more work for the secretaries and more interruptions of classes.

In addition to needing phones for communication, students in some classes and organizations need access to their phones for their assignments or duties. For instance, in journalism, we use our phones to take photos or to record interviews for accurate information and legal purposes. Without being able to use phones, that hinders our work. Additionally, more school organizations are getting social media accounts, which students often maintain, but they have to use their phones, seeing as the district blocks social media outlets on the internet. Again, without being able to use phones, the students cannot post important information or updates during the day.

Besides using cell phones for communication and for school tasks, let's be honest, a total ban will be difficult to enforce. Despite teachers currently using the administration's green and red system of use, with "green" being phone use allowed when the teachers give their permission, and "red" being phones will not be used, students still find ways to sneak their phones while classrooms are "red." Even if a ban were implemented, trust us, students would find ways to use their phones.

Instead of banning phones for students, we think the school should continue the current phone policy, allowing teachers to determine use for their classes. We feel that putting a schoolwide phone ban into effect will just cause more behavioral problems from students and will just create more work and more frustration for the faculty and staff members.

Opinion of the Guidon Staff

Agree: 13

Disagree: 0

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The *Guidon* is a student-produced newsmagazine published to inform and entertain the Hays High community, to record the history of the school and to serve as an educational tool for journalism students. Under the supervision of a faculty adviser, journalism students have the opportunities to inform, investigate, entertain, interpret and evaluate in an open forum – all accepted functions of the traditional free press – and have the responsibilities to provide accurate, fair, objective and truthful coverage. Should unintentional errors in content be made, they will be retracted in the next issue of the school year.

The views expressed here are those of *The Guidon* staff and do not express the opinions of the USD 489 Board of Education, administration, faculty or staff. Advertisements must meet content, deadline and size requirements, and acceptance does not constitute an endorsement from the student staff or by the school district.

The staff welcomes letters to the editor, as long as they are not libelous, an invasion of privacy, obscene or copyright protected. Letters must be signed and must include the writer's name, address and phone number.

The *Guidon* print edition earned the Kansas Scholastic Press Association All-Kansas Award in 2009, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2024; received the National Scholastic Press Association Pacemaker Award in 2009; was an NSPA Pacemaker Finalist in 2009 and 2011; and received the NSPA First Class Award in 2012, 2018, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Other policies are available upon request by contacting adviser Jessica Augustine at jaugustine@usd489.com.

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RANDOM THOUGHTS WITH REAGAN

Columnist applauds new 'Hunger Games' book, old classic rock album

March 12 12:36 p.m. Our new band name just dropped – Haff-Chued Nudels (the misspellings are necessary).

Band members and their names:
Tavia Wynn-Coffman = Angel Hair
Clare Tholstrup = Rigatoni
Me = Bowtie

Our first single shall be called “Lost in the Sauce,” and our second will be “No Parm, No Foul.”

March 13 11:52 p.m. Can we please talk about the teasers for the new “Shrek” movie? The animation looks horrible. What did they do to my guy?

March 27 9:02 p.m. I just finished the newest “Hunger Games” book, “Sunrise on the Reaping,” and let me tell you something, I am devastated. That was the saddest, most gut-wrenching story I have ever read, and I have never been more crushed in my entire life. I shed *actual* tears. Author Suzanne Collins has yet again written one of the most life-changing books I have ever read.



By Reagan Bates
25rbates@usd489.com

This was the first time I have picked up a book in nearly two years (embarrassing, I know), and I finished this book in just a couple of days because of how captivating the story was. I was so invested in the plotline the whole time, and I thought she wrote Haymitch’s story so beautifully.

All of the connections to pre-existing characters were so interesting to read. I especially loved seeing how Katniss’s and Haymitch’s stories were intertwined. I won’t go into too much detail, so as not to give any spoilers away, but I highly recommend reading this book.

March 28 8:52 a.m. I love garage sales so much. I just got a 200-disc CD player for 10 whole dollar bills. I am so hyped now to go to garage sales every weekend this summer.

April 4 10:21 a.m. Spotify may actually be the worst at shuffling my songs. They give me so many songs in a row by the same artist. I turn on ‘shuffle’ because I don’t want to listen to the same people all the time. :(

April 4 11:32 a.m. I just checked out the first “Hunger Games” book because I have been craving a reread of the series now. I will hopefully provide an update when I get through all of the books!

April 5 1:24 p.m. I put on a super cute outfit... just to spend the day at work. Boo!

April 8 8:20 p.m. Over Spring Break, I acquired Gerry Rafferty’s “Night Owl” from 1979 on vinyl. Many of the songs have been stuck in my head, so I have decided to rank them in order of how much I enjoyed each song. I am, by no means, an expert on Gerry Rafferty, so take my ranking with a large grain of salt. I also should note this is my opinion as of right now and is subject to change.

1. “Days Gone Down (Still Got the Light in Your Eyes)”
2. “Night Owl”
3. “Get It Right Next Time”
4. “Why Won’t You Talk to Me
5. “It’s Gonna Be a Long Night”
6. “The Tourist”
7. “The Way That You Do It”
8. “Already Gone”
9. “Take the Money and Run”
10. “Family Tree”

Student reviews Playboi Carti's long-awaited, much-delayed album

On March 14, Playboi Carti’s finally released his highly anticipated new album, “MUSIC,” on all streaming platforms.

For more than four years, Carti’s most anticipated album has been teased, delayed, changed and twisted. On March 13, 2021, just three months after his second studio album “Whole Lotta Red,” Carti captioned an Instagram post: “LeT’s dr0p this new Album. w3 noT done.” He then teased the album again on Sept. 13, 2021, with a new name, “NARCISSIST,” but the album was not released in 2021.

In April of 2022, he revealed the album was still on the way and mentioned some lyrical content. From May to September, studio leaks of Carti and producer Fl1thy surfaced, showing them dancing to unreleased tracks. But, the album was not released in 2022.

On Dec. 7, 2023, Carti posted on Instagram, with the album now being titled, “I AM MUSIC.” Immediately, all Vamps, Carti’s self-proclaimed fanbase, demanded new music, and on Dec. 8, a music video was released on Carti’s Instagram. But, the album was not released in 2023.

For the next year, teasers flooded social media, as fans began to grow more annoyed. After assuming that new music was not coming, fans rallied to backlash and started #IAMLIAR. But, the album was not released in 2024.

Suddenly, in January 2025, billboards in Los Angeles and New York began popping up, with the album title and song titles. On March 12, Carti announced that the final release was set for March 14. And, to everyone’s surprise, the album actually dropped and subsequently skyrocketed to the Billboard Hot 100.

The original release featured 30 songs, with a run time of one hour and 16 minutes. Just 11 days after the release, the deluxe “MUSIC – SORRY 4 DA WAIT” hit streaming platforms with four additional songs. These songs included three solo tracks, along with the hit “BACKROOMS,” which features rap artist Travis Scott, who is featured on the album five total times.

In listening, I enjoyed some songs, such as “EVIL JORDAN,” “PHILLY,” “RATHER LIE” and “TRIM.” These songs have energy and are reminiscent of Carti’s last two albums. I was also impressed with

certain features, such as The Weeknd on “RATHER LIE.” His singing with Carti rapping blend surprisingly well. I was disappointed, however, with other features; “WE NEED ALL DA VIBES” shows that adding more artists does not necessarily make a song good.

After the long wait, most fans believe that the album did not meet expectations. I think the album has some strong points, but the lows overpower the project. Irony as it is, the album actually seems to be quite rushed, and with 30 songs, it prioritizes quantity over quality. I agree with critics, who say they feel Carti delayed making the album and then rushed production before he released it. Of his three albums, I believe this is his weakest and rate it a 5/10.



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FACILITIES

With new high school building set to open, athletes reflect on change in sports facilities

By Hank Corsair
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With fall and winter sports concluded and just spring sports to finish, most Indian athletic teams have officially closed out old facilities, such as Fort Hays State University's Lewis Field Stadium, where the football team had played, and the current Hays High School gym.

However, returning athletes can look forward to playing in new facilities at the new high school building, with state-of-the-art features and great home crowd advantages.

At the new building, there is a designated Athletic Center, according to principal Shawn Henderson. It will feature a main gym, an auxiliary gym, a two-story weight room, a larger wrestling room and multiple locker rooms with coaches' offices, plus the football field and the track will be just outside the Athletic Center.

Inside, the main gym will be used mainly for basketball and will be twice as big as the current gym, with 2,077 total seats and a walking track above the bowl of seats. The auxiliary gym will be used mainly for volleyball, as the court will be stained with volleyball borders, and will have 500 seats. Another unique feature in that gym is the north wall, which will feature a mural of Hays High athletics.

Outside, the football stadium will have 2,000 seats on the home side, including some chairback seats, and the visitor side will hold 500 people. The stadium will

give the band easy access to the field, as the band room will have an exit door to the field, and it will give Hays High the ability to host home football games and track meets for the first time.

For returning athletes, there are mixed feelings, saying goodbye to the current venues, especially

after historic seasons for the football team and the girls basketball team this year, and moving into their new homes.

"What I'm going to miss about it [Lewis Field Stadium] is all the fun memories I had there," sophomore defensive end Tanner Geist said. "What I'm looking forward to the most is the atmosphere that is going to be at the new stadium and getting to create so many more new memories."

Likewise, junior Zoe Winter said leaving these gyms for the new facilities is bittersweet.

"I'm going to miss the memories in the gym, from watching my older siblings play in it, to winning sub-state this year," Winter, a girls basketball player, said. "But, I'm looking forward to making new memories with my friends and getting to be the first team to play in the new gym."

The new athletic facilities are sure to bring great experiences to fans, players and students. The football stadium will have its inaugural game in September with an opponent to be announced, and the new gyms will have their first volleyball game with a future opponent and first basketball games at the Hays City Shootout.

ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT



Softball

senior Riley Dreher

Senior Riley Dreher, a three-year All-Conference and All-State softball selection, will look for another big season this spring before taking her talents to Hutchinson Community College next year.

How does it feel to once again be a team leader?

"I wouldn't trade it for the world. I love my team. They put in the work, and that makes my job 10 times easier."

Who or what has helped you the most with your success in softball?

"My parents started teaching me proper fundamentals from the time I was, like, 5, and that gave me a great foundation. The Pit that Jeremy Schmeidler built also has been an asset."

What do you and the team hope to achieve this season?

"My personal goals are to hit over .600 and get WAC Player of the Year. Some team goals of ours are to win the WAC, go to state and go into every game prepared and focused."

Reporting by Hank Corsair



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GIRLS BASKETBALL

ROAD TO STATE

Lady Indians ends season by making history, collecting accolades

By Katelyn Willemsen
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After one of the best seasons in school history for Hays High School girls basketball team, the lady Indians finished their season at the 5A state tournament – their first appearance at state since 1996.

The team finished the regular season with an undefeated record of 20-0, as Western Athletic Conference champions and as sub-state champions with victories over Great Bend, 78-31, on March 6 and over Hutchinson, 56-17, on March 7.

“I was really proud of the way our girls handled sub-state,” head coach Len Melvin said. “They took care of both teams just like they prepared to do, and they were rewarded with a trip to state.”

The lady Indians secured the No. 1 seed in the state tournament, where they were set to face No. 8 seed St. Thomas Aquinas, a private school from Overland Park, in the first round on March 12 at Emporia State University. By just three points, 51-48, the lady Saints – who were the eventual state champions – ended the lady Indians’ perfect season.

“We played a very good St. Thomas Aquinas team,” Melvin said. “Our girls played hard. We battled foul trouble and struggled to score at times, which made for a tough game. But, I am proud of this team and all that they have accomplished this year; it is a very special group.”

Those accomplishments were numerous, starting with the Hays City Shootout on Dec. 5-7. In addition to winning the tournament, senior Molly



Photo by Ally Crottinger (Indian Call)

HISTORIC BASKETBALL SEASON

Facing Great Bend in sub-state play, freshman Jenna Schmeidler handles the ball on March 6. After winning sub-state, the girls basketball team went to state for the first time since 1996.

Martin and freshman Jenna Schmeidler earned selections to the All-Tournament team, while senior Katie Linenberger received the Tasha Arneson Most Inspirational Player award and also a spot on the All-Academic team.

During the first game of the Shootout on Dec. 5, Martin also set another school record. Last year, she broke the record for career three-point shots; this year, she broke the record for career steals.

“Breaking a school record requires having amazing teammates, coaches and support systems,” Martin said. “Breaking a school record also felt so rewarding and reminded me that hard work pays off.”

Midway through the season, in the Colby Orange and Black Tournament,

Linenberger, Martin and Schmeidler made the All-Tournament team, while the team earned another championship.

To finish the season, Martin and Schmeidler earned All-WAC First Team honors, and Linenberger and junior Zoe Winter received All-WAC Second Team honors. Schmeidler earned WAC Player of the Year, and Melvin received WAC Coach of the Year for girls basketball.

The team also received multiple All-State honors. For the Kansas Basketball Coaches Association, Martin was 5A All-State Second Team, and Schmeidler was Honorable Mention.

On KSHSAA Covered, Schmeidler earned 5A All-State Second Team, Martin received Third Team, Linenberger and Winter were Honorable Mention and Melvin was Coach of the Year.

For Sports in Kansas, Martin and Schmeidler also were on the 5A All-State team, Linenberger and Winter were named Honorable Mention and Melvin was recognized as Coach of the Year.

Finally, the Wichita Eagle named Schmeidler to its 5A All-State Second Team, Martin to its Third Team, Linenberger as an Honorable Mention and Melvin as the Coach of the Year.

“My first year of high school basketball was amazing,” Schmeidler said. “We accomplished so many of our team goals, like making it to state. Being a starter was a great opportunity to learn more about how the program works to prepare me for the next three years. This season was very special, and I wouldn’t have wanted to make history with anyone else.”

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NATURE

digging it

Creating and tending one's own garden provides multiple benefits and products

By Clare Tholstrup
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With Earth Day approaching on April 22, some people may look into ways to connect with the Earth, help better the environment and grow their own plants. A great way to do this is through gardening.

The Mayo Clinic reports that gardening can provide many benefits, especially health benefits. To start, the various physical tasks while gardening, such as cultivating soil, digging holes or squatting to plant seeds or to pull weeds, can increase exercise. In addition, gardening can improve one's diet by allowing people to produce their own non-chemically altered foods. Raising fresh produce will also create an incentive to prepare healthier meals by incorporating more fruits and vegetables.

"It [gardening] helps encourage me to be outside a lot of the summer, as well as provide me with a grocery store in my own backyard," teacher Sam Voorhees said. "It is also a healthier option than some vegetables you might buy at the grocery store, alongside the processed foods."

In addition to the physical benefits, the Mayo Clinic states that garden work in general, but especially while outdoors in nature, can also reduce anxiety and stress, improving one's mental health.

"The benefit of gardening for me personally is that I get some time alone," junior FFA member Maci Vanek said. "I enjoy the peace of being in the greenhouse and getting to work with my hands."

With gardening meant to be a healthy activity overall, getting started should not feel like a burden. Starting a garden does not require large areas of land or vast amounts of supplies. A garden can be as simple as growing a few herbs in a kitchen window to elaborate as having an wide variety of flowers, fruits, plants and vegetables.

Another way to start gardening is to find plants that will be easy to grow and will not need large amounts of care. One should also keep in mind the different requirements for the plant, such as water, sun, soil and other requirements.

Although native plants – plants that have evolved naturally within a specific region – are typically more adaptable to their natural area, they will still prefer certain environments. In Kansas, Black-Eyed Susans, Butterfly Milkweed and Sunflowers are native plants that prefer full sun, while Purple Coneflower and Cardinal Flowers are native plants that grow best in partial shade.

"We have a sunflower forest along the alley; they are volunteers," teacher Cheryl Shepherd-Adams said.

While native plants do not necessarily produce food or large flowers for bouquets, they can add pops of color to landscaping and help the surrounding environment by attracting and supporting pollinators that can benefit vegetable gardens or flower gardens.

"Just like my parents always did, I have a vegetable garden, too," teacher Jessica Augustine said. "While I grow vegetables, I add flowers, like Marigolds and Zinnias, nearby to draw in bees to the area."

Even if choosing not to include native plants, there are many other options and spaces to garden.

Vanek uses her agriculture class at Hays High School to grow flowers in the greenhouse, just as other students in Horticulture participate in starting plants in the greenhouse.

Then, of course, there is gardening produce, which can take more intense labor but can be rewarding. Voorhees said she grows different vegetables, including carrots, sweet onions and tomatoes, and various herbs, including basil and thyme.

Gardening could be beneficial for anyone; they just have to determine the plants, location, size and workload that best fits their goals.

Photos courtesy of Maci Vanek



Anticipated Albums

Bon Iver - "Sable, Fable"

Djo - "The CruX"

Elton John & Brandi Carlile - "Who Believes in Angels?"

Grace VanderWaal - "CHILDSTAR"

Julien Baker & TORRES - "Send a Prayer My Way"

Spin Doctors - "Face Full of Cake"



Future Films

April 4
"A Minecraft Movie"

April 11
"The Amateur"
"Drop"
"Warfare"

April 18
"Sinners"
"Sneaks"
"The Wedding Banquet"

April 25
"The Accountant 2"
"Cheech and Chong's Last Movie"
"The Legend of Ochi"
"Until Dawn"



Witty Wisecracks

How do pirates celebrate on April Fool's Day?
They walk the plank!

What do you call a dinosaur that loves the month of April?
A "prankosaurus"!

What do you call a parade of rabbits that are hopping backward?
A receding hare-line!

What kind of garden do bakers grow?
Flour garden!

Why is the letter "A" like a flower?
A bee comes after it!

When should you not plant spring flowers?
When you haven't botany!