

The East Rock Record

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MAYOR MEETS REPORTERS

Outlines top priorities, answers wide-ranging questions



New Mayor Toni Harp poses with several East Rock Record reporters and Principal Peggy Pelley following a press conference at the school.

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New Haven's new mayor, Toni Harp, wasn't going to run. But finally three big concerns – about jobs, safety, and schools – con-

vinced her last January to join the race, she told reporters at East Rock School.

"I decided late, very late," said Mayor Harp. "I was on the board of alderman and I had been a state senator for the past 20-21 years, but I did not seriously think about being mayor."

You don't often see the mayor

at your elementary school. Yet, Mayor Harp, the first female mayor in New Haven history, visited with East Rock Record reporters on December 12. When Mayor Harp came into the school, she seemed like she was excited to see the students. She was very nice when we asked both funny questions and serious questions.

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Every day recess is only for some

New state law applies only for K-6

BY ASHLEY CARDENAS, ANTONIO
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Have you ever wanted to go outside and have some fresh air? Maybe get a break from teachers and all the pressure that is put on you?

Well, that's now a reality — but only for some students.

A new law in Connecticut makes recess mandatory this school year for all students in grades K through 6. The law says students should get at least 20 minutes each day to participate in recess related activities.

Supporters of the policy cite several reasons for the passing of the law, including the many health benefits it brings.

Ms. Yury Maciel-Andrews, a parent with two children at East Rock Community Magnet School, says the law nurtures student development.

She said, it allows "students structured time to play where they can develop their social and playing skills." She believes recess is a benefit for all students, who seem happier when they "get the little break that everyone needs."

SEE PAGE 11

Uniforms come to East Rock

BY CAMERON BLATCHE,
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EDITED BY MADDIE MCMAHON

Students walking through the glass doors of East Rock Community Magnet School will now be clad in white, khaki, and navy blue colored clothing.

This year for the first time at East Rock School, administrators have made wearing uniforms mandatory. New Haven Public Schools do not have a district-wide policy on uniforms so each school sets its own rules. Under East Rock's dress code, boys must wear khaki pants with white or navy collared shirts and girls must wear white, khaki, or

navy pants, dresses or skirts with white or navy collared shirts.

In the past, East Rock had a dress code, but few teachers enforced it. Now with the move to a new building, East Rock School Principal Ms. Peggy Pelley is leading an effort to ensure all students arrive at school in uniform.

Ms. Pelley believes the dress code will improve student learning by making clothing less of a distraction during the school day.

"I believe that the uniform policy contributes to a positive school climate and improves student achievement," she said.

City officials also think uniforms are a good idea. Both newly-elected New Haven Mayor Toni Harp and Superintendent

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Catch that tweet? It's your homework

BY MARC GONZALEZ, LIZMARIE
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JAMES MACIEL-ANDREWS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY MCKAY NIELD, NYASHA SARJU



Are you following Mrs. Rachel McMinn? Not down the hallway, but on Twitter?

Last fall, Mrs. McMinn, a teacher at East Rock School, posted homework on Twitter.

If you checked your Twitter feed on October 10, you would have read the following assignment for East Rock School seventh and eighth graders:

"Recount a book or text you have read. What was the theme? What in the text helped you to decide this?"

Include title and author of text." That's 135 characters, within the 140-character limit set by Twitter for the maximum length of a tweet.

Mrs. McMinn, a Language Arts teacher, says she got the idea for 7th and 8th graders to use social media from her husband who directs sciences at Platt High School in Meriden. With so many kids already on Twitter she thought, "Why not use social media for posting homework?"

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SCHOOL NEWS

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Students, teachers divided on new dress code rules

UNIFORM FROM PAGE 1

Garth Harries are pro-uniforms.

"I personally like uniforms because it makes everyone pretty much equal and you can't use clothes to develop cliques," Mayor Harp said. "You all look the same way, [so] you spend your time focusing on education."

Mr. Harries acknowledged that uniforms can be "controversial" because some families might have difficulty affording the uniforms. He said the city tries to supply uniforms for those who cannot pay for them.

Teachers and students have different views of the new rules. The 2013 East Rock Record Survey shows that 66 percent of students do not like the dress code. Several teachers support the dress code because they think students focus better. "I think everybody looks nicer in their uniforms," says Ms. Erika Koch, who teaches fourth grade. "I don't want to insult any one style, but it's less distracting. You focus less on style. It's easier, a no brainer, to get up and put your uniform on."

Art teacher Ms. Elizabeth Cassidy likes the uniforms so much that she wears it herself. Special education teacher Ms. Pepe Santorelli supports the dress code because it is less expensive than buying lots of clothes. "It is easier and cheaper and there is no competition with other students," she said.

Students are divided on whether a uniform makes it easier to get dressed in the morning. Of 221 students surveyed, only 104 students said having fewer clothing options made life easier. Many students do not support the dress code and think that it keeps students from express-

ing themselves. "I hate uniforms because we should have our own style," said fifth grade student Gymesha Heath. Seventh grader T'najia Bowling does not like the dress code because it requires students to wear similar clothing instead of showing their creativity.

Giancarlo Ocasio, a 5th grade student, said it doesn't make sense to wear a uniform because "in the future we will not have a dress code so why try to influence us now to wear it?" Liz Marie Ortiz, a 7th grade student, has mixed feelings. "Sometimes if kids wear uniforms, less bullying happens," she said. "But kids should wear whatever they want to freely express themselves." Whether they like the policy or not, most students follow the dress code. Most who responded to the survey, 164 students, have not been in trouble for violating the dress code. Still, 58 students said they were caught breaking the uniform rule.



School superintendent Garth Harries speaks with Record reporters.

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SCHOOL NEWS

Would you believe: Students want discipline?

BY KELSEY SNEDEKER, ANDREA CORONEL, AND KRISHNA PATEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY KELLY ROSS AND FRANCINE WOLF

Would you believe that teachers were once allowed to whip students?

Just ask your grandparents what happened to those who got into trouble in school. Behave badly and you might have gotten a slap on the wrist or a paddle on the butt.

That would not happen today in the U.S., but what can teachers do when children misbehave?

Corporal punishment—discipline of a physical nature—is a hot topic in schools around the world. Several countries still allow teachers to hit students in school.

According to the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, a non-profit organization, Venezuela, Uruguay, and Costa Rica still use corporal punishment.

Teachers at East Rock don't support physical discipline. "Corporal punishment teaches children that violence is how you solve problems," says Mr. John Kennedy, who teaches seventh and eighth grade math. A better approach, he says, is "convincing someone to do the right thing."

Yet, Mr. Kennedy says, "Without order learning is so difficult." Mr. Clay Selmont, who teaches music, also believes that to have a safe learning environment there should be a set of rules that are fair for all students.

Having rules are important but what are the consequences for those who misbehave?

In the past, some teachers at East Rock could keep students who acted up from having recess. Teachers found it was both a disciplinary tool and way to let a student sit out and

calm down. It allowed a student to think about why his or her behavior was inappropriate.

This year, however, teachers are no longer allowed to deny students recess. That's because a new law makes recess mandatory for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Students must have recess.

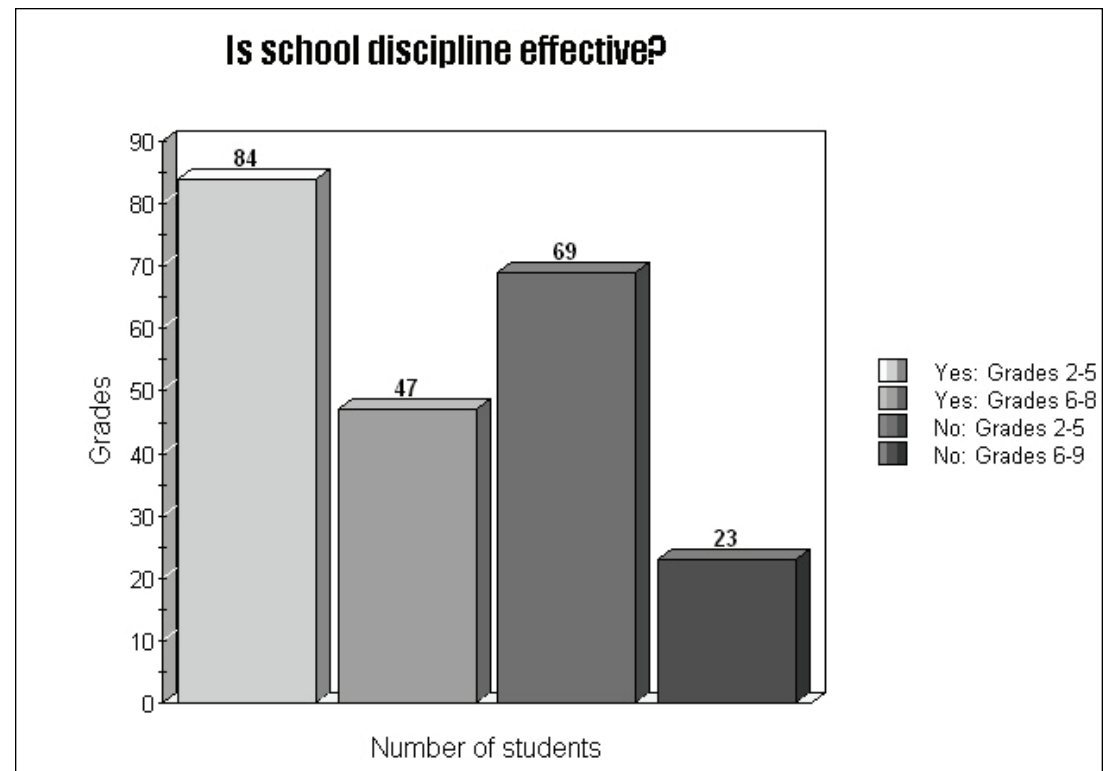
Superintendent Garth Harries says there alternatives to traditional discipline practices. His suggestions? Detention, in-school suspension, reflection papers, and community projects. "There is a whole range of things," he says.

What do students at East Rock think about school discipline? Results of the 2013 East Rock Record survey show that most students think that the school needs discipline and that it does, in general, work.

Survey results showed that 59 percent believe school discipline policies work while 41 percent believe they do not. The majority of students, 67 percent, also say that discipline has an effect on student behavior while 33 percent say does not have any effect. Other results show a commanding majority of students, 76 percent, feel that discipline is needed while only a mere 24 percent feels it is not.

Discipline at East Rock, like across the United States is different than some other countries. In addition to common discipline approaches like detention, suspension, writing referrals, calls home, or even convincing a student to behave properly, some foreign schools also use corporal punishment.

Seventh grader Baqir Shekly, who is from Iraq, said that in schools



there, children who misbehave are hit with a ruler on the hand. In Mexico, seventh grader Mariam Mendez says teachers don't hit but they are very, very strict and make students who don't do their homework stay after school.

At East Rock teachers use many discipline techniques. One common form of discipline teachers use is to write a referral. A referral is a formal write-up that explains a student's misconduct. Referrals are then sent electronically to the office

to be looked over by the administration. The administration has the final say on whether or not a student will be suspended from school. This, ultimately, gives administration power and control if a student misbehaves.

There are a many views about school discipline policies. But even though opinions vary, most students do think we need discipline in school—and actually want it in theirs.

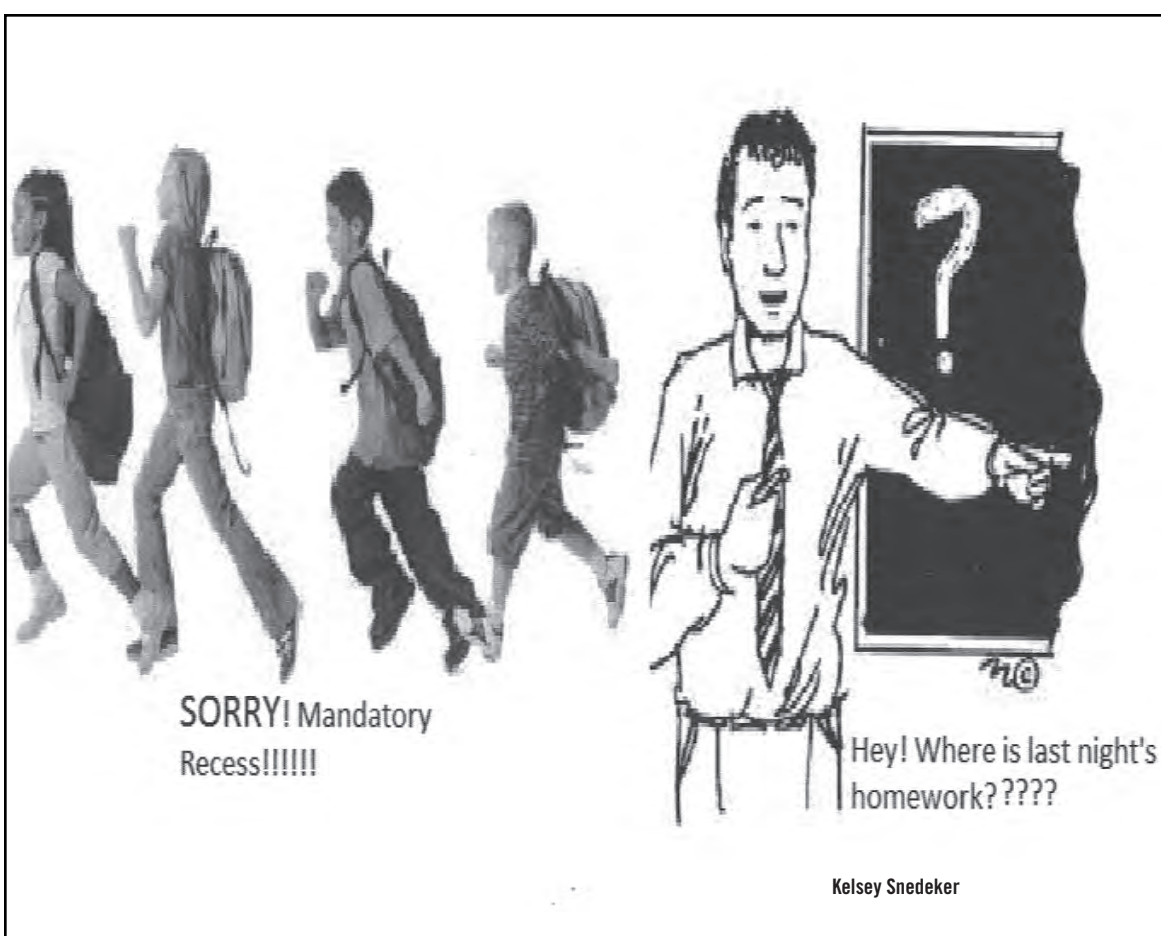


Best wishes
to the students at
East Rock School!



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SCHOOL NEWS

Spanish only “foreign” language taught at ER

BY ABOUBACAR KOUROUMA, GIANCARLO OCASIO, JAMES MACIEL-ANDREWS, DA-VONNA BENSON
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY ELLIAH HEIFETZ

Is Spanish really a foreign language?

At East Rock School, Spanish is the only foreign language taught. But many students already speak Spanish at home. Should those students have to study Spanish in school, too?

“I think that would be wasting time,” Wilson Coronel, a fifth grader at East Rock who speaks Spanish at home, said about studying Spanish in school. Mr. Coronel, whose family is from Ecuador, has spoken Spanish all his life. He would like the option of learning another foreign language in school. “I want to learn Italian,” he said.

New Haven Public Schools offer classes in French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Arabic, and Latin throughout the district. At East Rock School, however, students can only take Spanish.

Why is this? No one seems to know.

Jessica Haxhi, who was recently appointed Supervisor of Foreign Languages for the district, said when she met with East Rock Record reporters that she wasn't sure why East Rock only offered Spanish, and did not know why that decision was made.

We contacted Karen deFur, who held Haxhi's job until just last year. She did not know, either. “When I was the world language teacher at East Rock, I taught both French and Spanish,” she said. However, in 1997, she transferred to another school. “[Only] when I became supervisor in 2007, that is when I learned that Spanish had become the only language taught at East Rock.”

Mr. Coronel said many Spanish-speaking students would like to study a different foreign language. According to the 2013 East Rock Record survey, 89 of the 227 students who responded said they already speak Spanish fluently. Of those, 73 percent said they would like the opportunity to learn a language other than Spanish in school.

Even some students who do not speak Spanish at home would like more foreign language choices. “I don't speak Spanish, and I would like to learn it,” said fifth grader Mykell Hunter. She said she is “excited to learn another language” and would be especially interested in the Jamaican Patois from her family's native country.

One challenge to offering students lots of language choices, said Ms. Haxhi is that there are budget limitations. “If we had tons of teachers and resources and everything we wanted, we could have five different languages,” she said. For example, she said, if there are 50 foreign language students in a school, “it's hard to justify paying ten teachers with only ten kids in each class. But let's say there are two languages, there are 25 in each class. Then it makes more sense.”

New Haven Public School Superintendent Garth Harries said it's very important for students to learn Spanish. “It's such an important

spoken languages in the world,” said Ms. Haxhi. “It's an important language to know for jobs, because so many people speak Spanish in the U.S. and around the world.”

East Rock Record reporters voiced to Ms. Haxhi that students who speak Spanish at home may have an advantage in classes. “Certainly that puts native speakers at an advantage for the speaking,” Haxhi agreed. “But sometimes that can be a really good thing for those kids, too. Sometimes if they just came to the U.S. that can really help them. If they're struggling academically this can be a place for them to do well.”



Jessica Haxhi, supervisor of foreign languages for New Haven Public Schools, speaks with East Rock Record reporters.

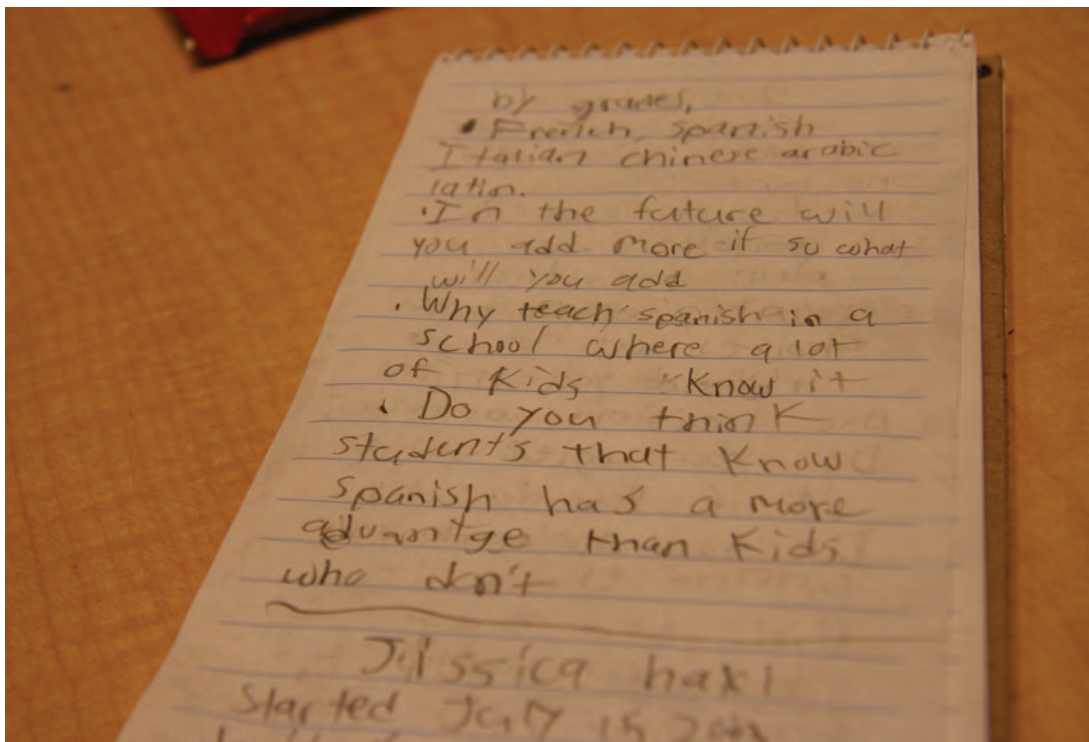
language to speak in this country,” he said, adding that it's especially true in New Haven.

“If you look at the system we have about 8,700 African American students, and about 8,300 Hispanic students. In kindergarten we have 600 African Americans and about 750 Hispanics,” he said. “Spanish in this city is becoming more and more important which is one reason why our K-8's focus on Spanish.”

Having Spanish taught at East Rock may have some benefits. “Spanish is one of the top two most

Even though a student may speak Spanish at home, Ms. Haxhi said, that doesn't mean they do well in grammar and writing. Studying Spanish in school, she said, can help with those skills.

Still, Ms. Haxhi agree expressed a wish for an expanded department. “If I had lots of money and lots of teachers, of course I would add more languages for you to choose from,” she said. For now, however, Spanish is the only “foreign” language taught at East Rock School.



Da-Vonna Benson

COMMUNITY NEWS

MAYOR FROM PAGE 1

Harp was very serious when talking about the violence in our community. Among other things, she said that she hopes to get the guns out of young people's hands before something bad happens.

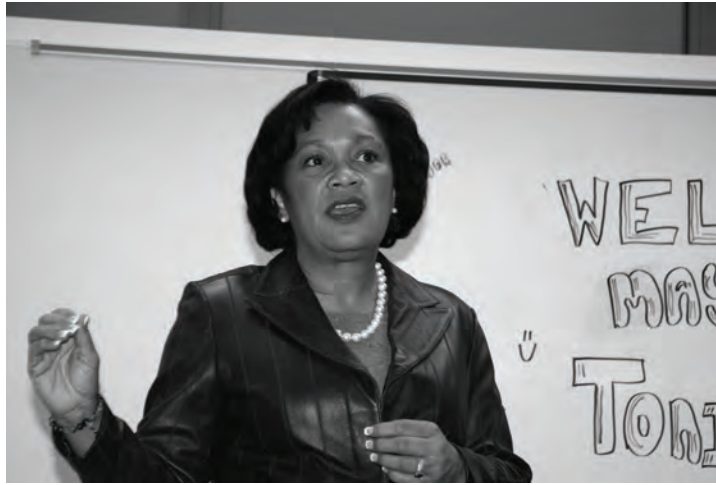
On a lighter note though, Mayor Harp also talked about her hobbies: "I like to knit," she said. Still on the topic of things that she likes, she laughed and admitted that her favorite pizza is "bacon and jalapeño."

Mayor Harp said the number one thing she plans to focus on is helping people get jobs. "We need more jobs for New Haven residents," she said. "New Haven currently has one of the highest unemployment rates in the state."

Her second concern was safety. Mayor Harp wants to reduce the gun violence on the streets, and to take guns out of the hands of young people who are not authorized to have them. "We need to have more programs that understand what is going on with young people," she said. "We've got to find ways for people to learn to settle their differences that don't include guns or violence."

Mayor Harp said her third area of focus is education. She points out that New Haven has one of the best universities in the world and wants public schools, she said, "to be as great as Yale." She also cares about school security. "I'm really proud

that we have very safe schools. As a matter of fact it was very hard for me to get into this East Rock School," she said.



Mayor Toni Harp answers questions from East Rock Record reporters

How will Mayor Harp implement her ideas?

Mayor Harp says she plans to increase jobs by helping small businesses. "We have some large businesses like Pratt and Whitney, but most of the people in the state work for small companies," she said. Because of this, she wants to promote local small business that can make new local jobs.

Mayor Harp also said she sees a connection between safe streets and a strong education system. She said the creation of after school programs will make kids less likely to join gangs and engage in violent behavior.

She also thinks schools should better address needs of families and wants some schools to have

hours that go from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. "You need to have a school day that is the same length as your parents work day," she said.

Her idea is that students would be allowed to stay at school during non-class hours before and after school participating in extracurricular activities (like the East Rock Record) that keep them safe and occupied until their parents can take them home. She said this would give kids a chance to learn interesting things and have less time home alone to get into trouble.

Reporters asked Mayor Harp many questions, including how she plans to help immigrants and refugees. She said that she supports existing programs, like providing identification cards.

"The other thing I support is the DREAM Act," she said. "What the DREAM Act says is that if you come to this country undocumented but have gone through our school systems-and you go to college in our state school system-you would not have to pay out of state tuition. I would like to help get it passed on the federal level."

"You need to have a school day that is the same length as your parents work day."

—Mayor Toni Harp

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Advice from students: What the new Mayor should do first!

Mayor Toni Harp should make people stop killing and shooting because my aunt got killed by a knife and I missed her very much. I can still remember her. I just want to see her really much. Please stop the shooting and killing. You are the best Mayor ever. I want to be you some day.

—*Dierdre-ann Lawson, Grade 2*



Since you're the new mayor I wanted to give you a suggestion, I think we should put even more attention on bullying because the attention that's already on it seems not to be working. Kids are still bullying other kids all over New Haven and in this school; it seems to be getting worse. Some kids can't speak up because they're scared that the bully is just going to bully them more. A majority of time that is what happens when a kid gets bullied and adults aren't noticing this. By speaking up and standing up for themselves, they actually could make things worse so speaking up thing isn't really helpful anymore.

—*Seni Arocho, Grade 7*

I think the first thing Mayor Toni Harp should fix to to stop gun violence. I think that because my two aunt's friends got killed by teens.

—*Daniel Bedoya Valencia, Grade 2*

Why is this world so horrible now days? Between shootings, kidnappings, and rapists; no one seems to get the fact that we are in the real world and not on television or in a book. I think children and adults should join programs or something so everybody can put the guns down and keep their hands to themselves. Everybody is worried about everything other than education. We need your help. Kids can't even be outside without drive-by shootings or someone coming to snatch him or her up. It's a shame that people are losing their loved ones over cruel things in this world. Maybe if children have some knowledge they will get a job or become positive member of society. Let's keep the violence off the streets and finish school! Please help us find ways to help students stay in school and become successful. Life is a challenge. You can't be anything without a high school diploma!

—*Kelsey Snedeker, Grade 8*

I think the first thing Mayor Toni Harp should fix is the MetroNorth trains.

—*Natalie Dayana Maynard, Grade 2*

I think the first thing Mayor Toni Harp should fix is Metro North. I think this because people are not getting to their work.

—*Nicholas Conde, Grade 2*

My suggestion to you, now that you are our mayor, is that you should build an amusement park in or near downtown New Haven. This is a good idea because it will help keep kids off the street and out of trouble when they are not in school. This is something kids will love and have a lot of fun doing. Please give this some thought.

—*Baqir Shekly, Grade 7*

I think the first thing Mayor Toni Harp should fix is people selling drugs. I think this because it is really bad.

—*Hector Luis Ayala, Grade 2*

I think the first thing Mayor Toni Harp should fix is to stop killings, guns, and selling drugs. I think this because a lot of people are dying.

—*Peter Lopez, Grade 2*

I think the first thing Mayor Toni Harp should fix is people shooting people. I think this because shooting is bad.

—*Fallous Sokhna, Grade 2*

Mayor Toni Harp, I am writing to you today to let you know of some things I think you should consider for our city now that you have become its newest mayor. I think you should bring more protection to our city to protect our people from harm. More police officers on duty at one time would help in this effort. Having more officers on the streets will make people in the city feel safer.

—*Saul Pabon, Grade 7*

LETTERS TO SUPERINTENDENT GARTH HARRIES: Possible to can uniforms—and more field trips, please?

Dear Superintendent Harries,

I am a student at East Rock Magnet School here in New Haven. I am writing to let you know of some things I think you should consider for our school now that you have become New Haven's Superintendent of Schools. I think that you should let students in New Haven wear normal clothes and not have to wear uniforms. I think this because we should be unique and dress as we want to and not have to wear uniforms to school.

I also think that we should have more field trips. As studenst we work hard inside school and outside of school. Even when we are on our vacations, we are given work to take with us. Field trips can be fun but they are also a learning experience.

Thank you for onsidering my ideas.

Sincerely,

Mariam Mendez, Grade 7

Dear Superintendent Harries,

Hello my name is Skyphets Thipharacksa. I am a student at East Rock Magnet School. I'm a 7th grader who thinks that students need to be taken on more field trips. Field trips are not only fun, but they also provide learning opportunities for students. As a student in the younger grades it seems that we went on a lot more trips. As I have moved along into the upper grades, our field trips are less and less. They are almost to the point of being nonexistent. I believe that if students were able to gain some learning experiences, hands on, on a field trip, these students would be more driven in school.

Please consider suggesting more trips to teachers and administrators in our school district. You would make a lot of students happier -- and happier students mean harder working students.

Thank you,

Skyphets Thipharacksa, Grade 7

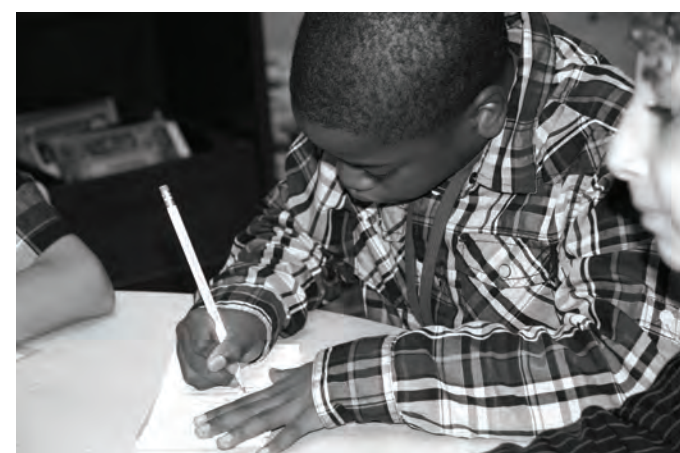
Dear Superintendent Harries,

Hello, my name is Cameron Blatche and I'm a 7th grade student at East Rock Magnet School. I'm writing to you because we have a dress code and none of the students like it. I was wondering if you can try to do something about it.

I would suggest having dress down Friday. That means we could dress in anything we want and it makes things easier and fair.

Thank you,

Cameron Blatche, Grade 7



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HEALTH & FOOD

Community garden grows fun, learning

BY SAMANTHA SCOTT, NATALIE MAYNARD,
AND MASON RICKEY
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY LORENZO LIGATO

Who wouldn't like to pull carrots or smell tulips while playing with their friends?

East Rock students going to the playground for recess this spring will find a brand new community garden, with raised beds of green plants, healthy vegetables, and colorful flowers. In an effort to bring kids outside of the classroom and educate them about gardening and healthy food, East Rock Community Magnet School has started a community garden near the playground area of the school.

The community garden officially opened on Oct. 23, during an inauguration ceremony with students, teachers and parents. In the fall, the community garden looked like a pile of leaves and soil on top of hexagon-shaped and rectangular beds. When spring inches closer, students and teachers will see a variety of plants grow from the soil.

"The possibilities are endless," said East Rock Community Magnet School Principal Ms. Peggy Pelley, adding that students will have many opportunities to work in the garden. Students, Ms. Pelley said, will be involved in every step of the process: from garden design to planting, from maintenance to harvesting.

The community garden was the idea of a parent volunteer, Erin Flood Harrison, who applied for a grant from Common Ground, a center for environmental learning and leadership located in New Haven. Ms. Flood-Harrison, who learned about Common Ground from a friend, said she approached the school administration with the idea of a community garden because she wanted children to be able to do some "hands-on learning in connection with healthy food and nature."

In addition to Common Ground, much of the funding for maintaining the community garden and procuring seeds will be supported by donations from members of the school community, Ms. Pelley said.

While it is yet not clear what plants or flowers will grow in the garden, students at East Rock are excited about the new green addition to the school's playground area.

According to a fall 2013 East Rock Record survey, 180 out of 222 students surveyed said they would love to help grow the community garden. Only 42 students said they are not interested in taking care of the garden. Of these, 23 are in

grades fifth through eight.

"A lot of older kids don't really care about the garden," said Dericka Moses, an eighth grade student at East Rock School. "I think people should know more about it."

The same survey also asked the students what they would like to grow in the community garden; suggestions ranged from flowers like roses and daffodils to veggies like corn and tomatoes to fruits like strawberries and watermelon.

Four teachers interviewed shared the students' excitement, noting that kids will enjoy working outdoors with the plants.



East Rock Students and Principal Peggy Pelley break ground on a new community garden at the school.

"I'm really excited about the community garden," said Ms. Dawn DeNuzzo, who teaches second grade. "I hope it goes very well."

Ruth Bard, a teacher in the special education program for kindergarten through fourth grade, believes the community garden is a great opportunity for students to do "hands-on" experience outside of the classrooms.

"This is the best way of learning," Ms. Ruth Bard said. "Everybody can do it, even if you're not good at reading or writing. That's the best thing about the community garden."

New Haven Public Schools Superintendent Garth Harries also praised the community garden during a press conference with East Rock Record reporters on January 9. "I think gardens are a really good thing for schools to have," said Mr. Harries, whose wife is a farmer who grows tomatoes, strawberries, and other vegetables and fruits. He said he would like "as many schools as possible" to have community gardens.

Despite the excitement, all teachers inter-

viewed agreed that they have to make sure that students are safe. Some students, for example, suffer from allergies so garden organizers will accurately label the plants and flowers to prevent any potential allergies, Ms. Bard said.

"We have access to all children's health records," said Ms. Angela Maiocco, a fourth grade teacher at East Rock School. While she wishes the all kids had access to the community garden, Ms. Maiocco said student safety and health always come first.

It's hard to know how well plants will grow, as the garden is "still in the planning stages,"

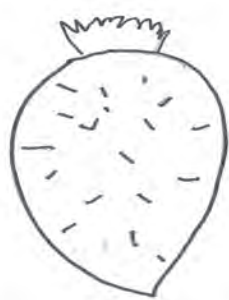
Ms. Pelley said. She added that a garden committee has been created to make any decision related to the community garden. The committee, which includes both teachers and parents, will seek input from the entire school community to plan for the garden, Ms. Pelley said.

If the community garden turns out to be successful, Ms. Flood-Harrison said she would love see vegetables from the garden served at the school-wide picnic in June – or even at lunch in the school cafeteria.

"We'll have to wait and see what happens," Ms. Flood-Harrison said.



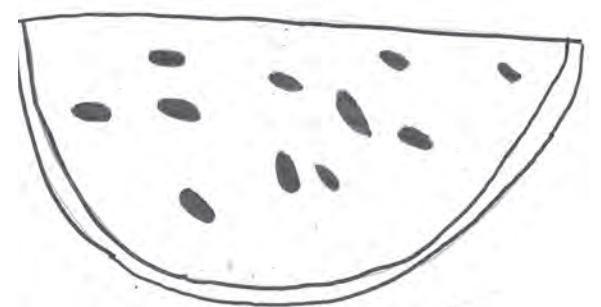
Mason Rickey



Natalie Maynard



Mason Rickey



Natalie Maynard

What should we grow in the community garden?

Vegetables: 15% Fruits: 20% **Flowers: 55%** Other: 10%

source: East Rock Record Survey 2013

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HEALTH & FOOD

School lunch struggles to please palate

BY VALAMAE JENKINS, GIANNI ESTRADA, AND
DERICKA MOSES
EAST ROCK REORD STAFF
EDITED BY DAN STEIN AND JAKE DELUCIA

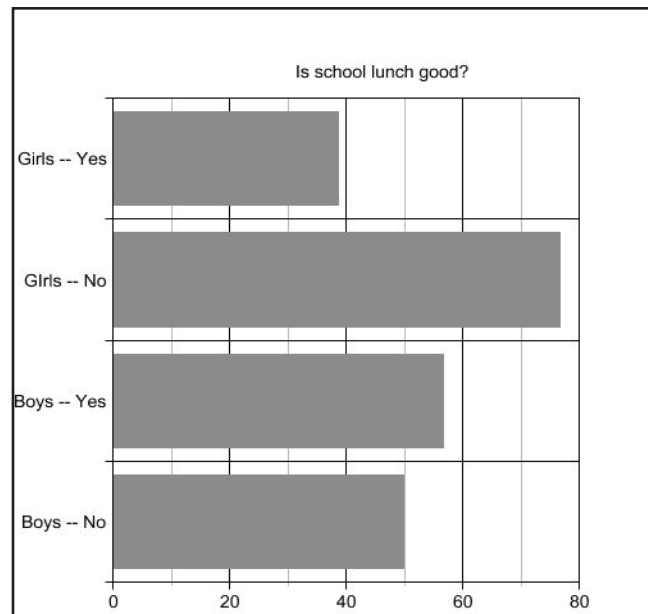
When you talk about school lunch, kids often stick out their tongues—and not to get a better taste of the food.

Downstairs at the East Rock School, a clean and new school cafeteria is filled by students each day. Around 12 p.m., students march through a line as cafeteria workers pass out the food. Even though the cafeteria itself is nice, student opinion at East Rock School does not rate very highly the food offered at lunch.

According to the 2013 East Rock Record Survey, more than half—56 percent—of students said they were not satisfied with the school lunch. A common complaint, echoed by more than half of students, was that they had received food that was not properly cooked.

Even though the majority of students don't like the lunch, three out of seven interviewed said they did like the cookies and not all students dis-

like the food. Second graders Natalie Maynard and Mason Rickey disagreed about whether the macaroni and cheese was good or not.



Out of six teachers interviewed, all six said they had never eaten the school lunch. When asked, none of the teachers said they wanted to eat the food when they looked at it. Kelly Ross, a Read180 teacher, added that the food seems, “not as healthy as they claim it to be.” School nurse

Tanya Abdoule-Karim said that “on meatball, pasta, and taco day three to five students come in three to five hours after eating lunch complaining of stomach pain.”

Superintendent Garth Harries said he has found school food to be a “significant challenge” because of the importance of providing nutritious and appetizing food that is also affordable.

“Part of the complexity of offering affordable, appetizing and nutritious food are all the regulations. We get a certain amount of reimbursement, it is a federal law,” Mr. Harries said. “You have to take a certain pattern of food so that it is sufficiently nutritious.”

Seventh grader Tnajia Bowling suggested that school lunch could be improved by adding a “cold cut station, a hot food station and a pizza station.”

Seventh grader Lizmarie Ortiz said that the school “should have a fruit bar.”

Ms. Bowling said that real juice or soda would be better than the current situation, in which students often throw away their juice or milk.

Do 7th and 8th graders also need a break at school?

RECESS FROM PAGE 1

Several teachers are also acknowledging the benefits of the recess time including Erika Koch, 4th grade teacher at East Rock.

“It’s awesome. They can have fresh air and they can go outside, let energy out, and also get exercise,” said Ms. Koch.

Not everyone believes the law will have the positive impact many hope for.

Several teachers worry that new rules may get in way of educational time by making it mandatory for teachers to shorten their daily lesson plans by 20 minutes. Others raise safety concerns, arguing that bullying and injuries will increase as recess time increases. Other teachers

behavior can lead to negative consequences,” said Tanner Munroe, a 6th grade teacher at East Rock School. “Taking away recess seemed to be an effective strategy at helping students modify negative behaviors.” Some parents have told teachers they agree, saying they would rather a child miss recess as punishment than stay afterschool to serve detention.

Still, many people like the law. Some believe it does not go far enough because it makes recess mandatory only for students in grades K-6. Seventh grader Marc Gonzalez said older students need a break, too. “Recess wouldn’t just benefit the younger kids, everyone including middle

responded to the East Rock Record 2013 survey say the policy should be amended to include students in grade 7 and 8.

Several community leaders also support breaks for older students.

“I do think 7th and 8th graders should have

**Mayor Toni Harp:
All students should have 15
minutes of recess twice a day**

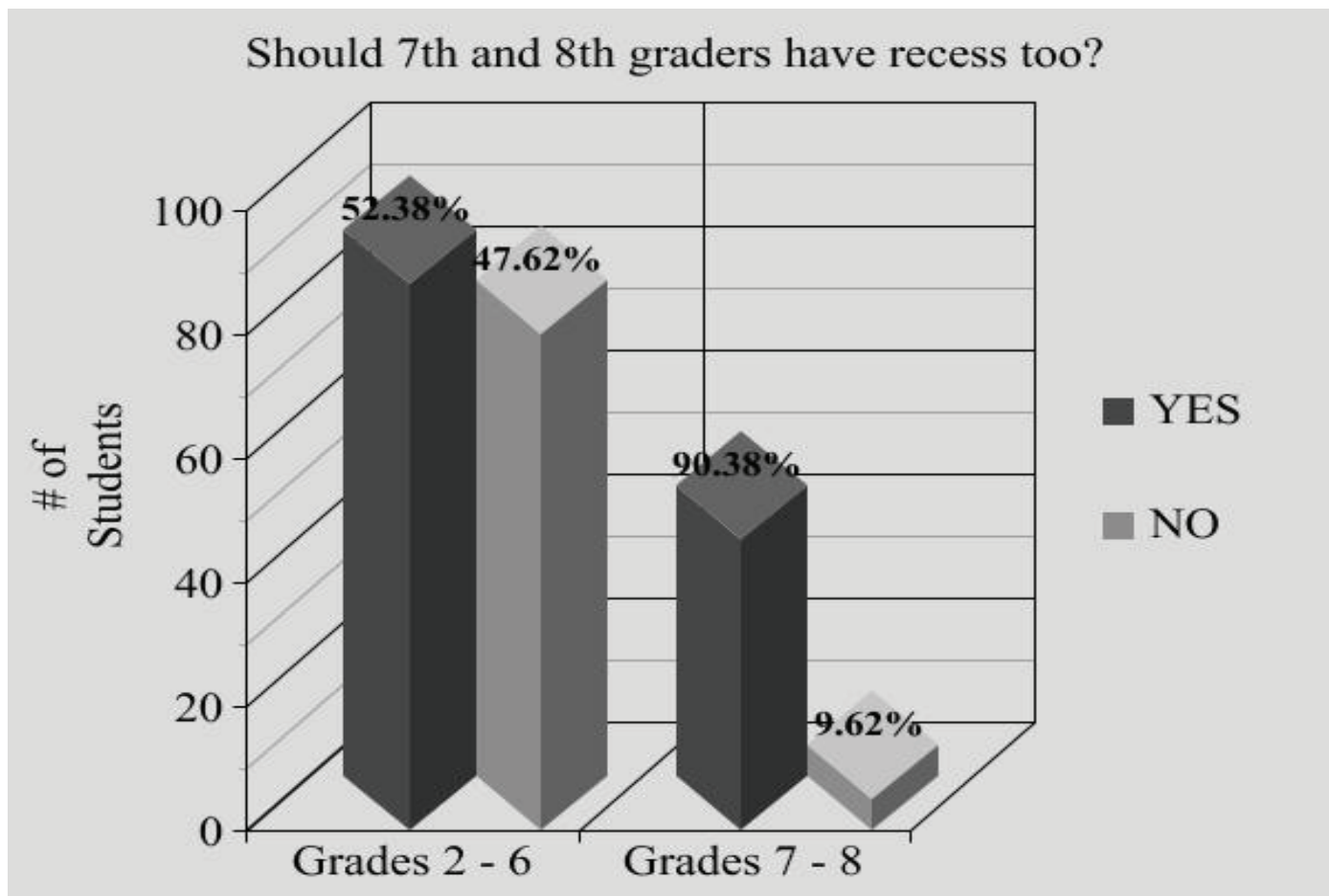
free time during the day,” said New Haven Public Schools Superintendent Garth Harries, who added that schools “need to work hard to prepare 7th and 8th graders for the independence they will have in high school.” Mr. Harries also said that he needs breaks, too. “I still like to run around,” he said.

New Haven Mayor Toni Harp believes grades 7 and 8 should also have recess and that, “there should be more time for recess.” Mayor Harp believes there should be “at least 15 minutes of recess for all students twice a day. I know that’s a lot, but I think it would be a good way to release steam for everybody.”

Is there any chance that 7th and 8th graders could get recess, too?

East Rock School Principal Margaret Pelley, who also supports expanding recess, told East Rock Record reporters that administration is “exploring the option of utilizing a portion of the 7th and 8th grade lunch wave for recess.”

Lace up your sneakers and stay tuned.



complain that the new law takes away a tool they have used in the past when students acted up: Taking away recess.

“Sometimes students need a reminder that poor

school and high school students, can benefit from the activity and little break that recess provides.”

Mr. Gonzalez is not alone in his thinking, as 75 percent of students in grades 6 through 8 who

MUSIC & SOCIAL MEDIA

Vibrant voices: Yale Whiffenpoofs sing for reporters!!!



Members of the Yale Whiffenpoofs with East Rock Record mentor Dan Stein (center) do a live concert for East Rock Record reporters in the school library last month.

BY MIMI BENNET
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoofs, weird name right?

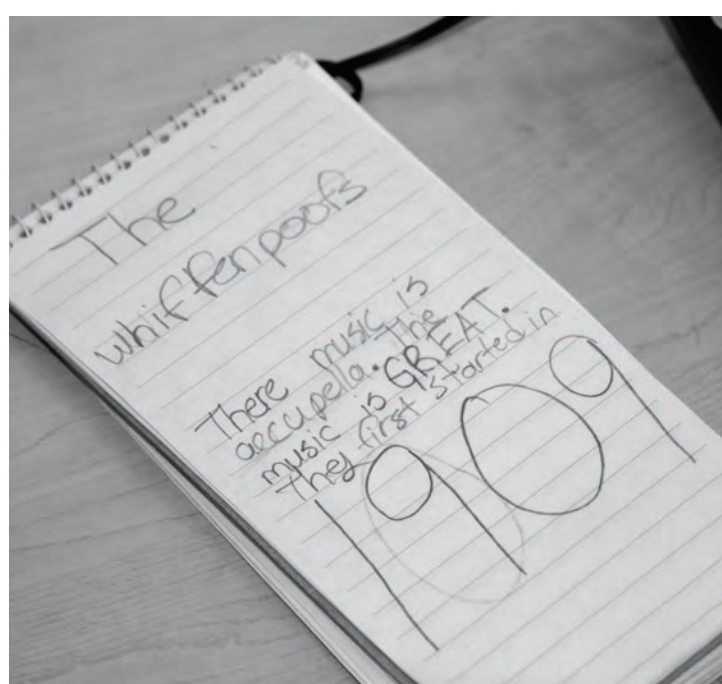
The name came from an old tale that went like this: The King of the castle went missing. When the Princess found out, she looked everywhere in the castle and everywhere outside. A dragon, called a Whiffenpoof, told the Princess where the King was and then the Princess followed the Whiffenpoof's directions and later found the King. The Princess thanked the Whiffenpoof. That's how the Whiffenpoofs got their name.

Today, the Whiffenpoofs are an all guy a capella group. There are 14 guys in the group. They have traveled to 30 different countries and six different continents. The Whiffenpoofs were first started in 1909. They have been a group ever since. They have matching shirts with the Whiffenpoof bird in the top right corner.

They originally started off with four people. They get new people every year. Every year they change the group because it's so life-changing they want everybody to experience it.

BY TUPHEN OUTSOLA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoofs are the best guy singers ever. They came today and sang "The Boxer," "Nature Boy," "Skinny Love," "Ride the Chariot," and "Operator." My favorite was "Skinny Love." I have been thinking that maybe someday I can be like them. They started this whole thing in 1909 and there are 14 of them. They went to 30 countries and six continents. I was like, WOW! That's amazing! When they go to a concert they have to wear long tails and white ties (bow ties) for their necks and black shoes to go with their outfit.



Good notetaking during Whiff concert by a young Record reporter.

BY ABOUBACAR KOUROUMA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

What I liked about the Whiffenpoofs was that they had great harmony and made great lyrics. One of my favorite songs was "Operator" because they sounded so good I thought they were autotuned and when you are autotuned you sound really good. Also, they made good expressions in their singing which made it even better.

One of their songs was from The Beatles and it sounded great. The Whiffenpoofs also sang at the White House for people who go to a holiday party for entertainment. I hope they really liked it because the Whiffenpoofs were very good singers. When the Whiffenpoofs came they also taught us a warm up which they do which was hard at first but easier the second time. When they first started their warm up none of them got it the first time but with their effort they got better in a flash. Whiffenpoofs try hard not to get nervous in front of a large crowd. A singer from the Whiffenpoofs named Ike said he gets nervous in front of a huge crowd but he "still survives."

BY MEKHI MCCRAY
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoofs are a famous singing group from Yale University in New Haven, CT. They are an a cappella group. They started in 1909. They use their voices to make music. They performed for us, The East Rock Record, on Thursday, January 23, 2014. I really liked their voices and the songs they sang. My favorite was called "Operator." I liked it because it was fast and beautiful.

BY VICTORIA PRUSEUTH
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoofs were great today when we met them. I liked when they performed the songs called "Nature Boy" and "The Boxer." The reason I like those songs is because they speed up the beat and the other gang comes in and stays under control. They are some nice people who help other people to sing.

BY DA-VONNA BENSON
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoofs got their name from an old story about the king being missing and a girl going to find him. When the Whiffenpoofs came in they sang some old songs. My favorite was the Whiffenpoof song. They had on matching outfits that had a Whiffenpoof on it. It's a dragon that has wings and feet like a hawk's feet.

BY ASHLEY CARDENAS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoofs are the best a cappella group I have ever seen. They have perfect melody that blends in with the lyrics that they are singing which just makes the performance magical knowing they are only using their voices. Their songs are upbeat and also very romantic and gentle. For example, "Operator" was very upbeat and I enjoyed the way they each had their own rhythm to add to the song. On the other hand, the song "Skinny Love" was very romantic and the lyrics were touching and meaningful. I also enjoyed that when somebody had a solo the rest of the group echoed what he was singing and created a wonderful tempo and rhythm.

BY MASON RICKEY
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoofs singing group started in 1909. Their voices blend together and sound so cool. The singing group is 105 years old. It is an all boys singing group. They are from a university called Yale in New Haven, CT. The Whiffenpoofs travel around the world. There are 14 people in the group. They are famous. Here are some of the songs they sing: "Operator," "The Boxer," "Ride the Chariot," "Skinny Love," "Nature Boy," and "The Whiffenpoof Song."

BY NATALIE MAYNARD
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoof's music is a cappella. The music is GREAT! They first started in 1909. My favorite song was "The Whiffenpoof Song." I loved it when everybody got a chance to do a solo. They were very loud and very noisy, but they were very good. They all looked like they were having so much fun. They travel a lot. I heard that they went to Washington, D.C. to visit the President of the United States of America. One of the mentors who helps us write the newspaper is in the Whiffenpoofs. His name is Dan. They were so good that I would love to hear them again.

BY ANTONIO MOORING
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoofs is a group that sings different levels and only make music with their voices. My favorite song was "Ride The Chariot." It was my favorite because it was catchy and amazing to listen to. They go to more than 30 different countries. They take turns doing solos and have duets. They're always on beat and I like that.

MUSIC & SOCIAL MEDIA

Whiffs a mashup of JT & Miley Cyrus? See the reviews!

BY DERICKA MOSES
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoofs are an all guy a cappella group. They travel to 30 different countries and six continents. They have matching shirts. The Whiffenpoofs sound like Justin Timberlake mixed with Miley Cyrus. They practice two times a week. When the Whiffenpoofs were founded in 1909 they had four people. They have sung at the White House, jazz festivals, and other places. They showed many facial features. I would recommend them. They are very good and worth your time. They were certainly worth mine.

BY GIANNI ESTRADA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoofs are an old a cappella group invented in 1909. The cool part about a cappella groups are that they don't use instruments. They use their mouths and their hands and fingers to make music. My favorite performance was of "Operator" because it had an exciting rhythm to it and everyone was excited and happy and I enjoy seeing every one being happy because being sad is bad! I don't usually listen to their type of music but I might start.

BY VALAMAE JENKINS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoofs are really cool. They were founded in 1909 when four guys were in Glee Club and had an idea to make a group and call it The Whiffenpoofs. They practice twice a week for two hours. They go to each others' houses to practice. Otherwise they practice in a Yale classroom.

BY MILES LITTLE
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

My favorite song was Operator because the soloist sang a little bit louder than the others. The gestures he used helped bring me into the song. The name "Whiffenpoofs" is from a fairytale.

BY MELVIN MOORING
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Operator was my favorite song because they had great harmony. They had great melody and pitch. They were awesome because they knew the right key and they didn't mess up. They go to about 30 countries and sometimes they meet with other singers. I liked when they were singing low then getting louder. They did this in every song but specifically did it in "Operator."

BY SAMANTHA SCOTT
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Whiffenpoofs travel all over the world. The Whiffenpoofs are good at solos. The Whiffenpoofs have lots of warm ups. They started in 1909. The Whiffenpoofs are 105 years old. They are really good singers. I really liked the Whiffenpoofs.



"The Whiffenpoof Song" with former Whiff and East Rock Record mentor McKay Nield (center).

What do you think about social media? #homework

TWITTER FROM PAGE 1

Mrs. McMinn believes that 7th and 8th graders are the appropriate age to use social media.

She is not the only faculty member who believes in meeting students where they are—on social media. Vice principal Mrs. Leslie DePriest said using Twitter is, "a great idea because most teenagers are frequent users of social media and it's a good way to communicate with their students." Mr. Joseph Lewis, school administrative intern, added that using social media for 7th and 8th graders is a good idea, "but under parental supervision."

Social media is popular at East Rock. The 2013 East Rock Record Survey shows that almost half of all students use social media, and 70 percent of those in grades 6, 7, and 8 use it. Sixty-four percent of older students said putting homework on social media was a good idea.

Even New Haven School Superintendent Garth Harries is on Twitter!

It might seem cool to get your math homework in a tweet, but some say social media doesn't belong in school. Social media includes websites like Facebook, Twitter and Ins-

tagram. Students share photos and chat with friends, but this activity can be seen by the public, a fact that concerns some teachers.

While some think it's a good way to reach students, others say social media doesn't belong in school. "We have to be careful," says 4th grade

64% of students in grades 6-8 say putting HW on social media is a good idea

teacher Ms. Erika Koch. "I know there are some great benefits to social media but I'm against it."

Even if it is limited to students in grades 7 and 8 and is focused on sending out assignments—not two-way conversations—there remains the ever-present problem that people could post inappropriate things on social media. Ms. Christina Crocco, an art teacher, agrees that "inappro-

priate things could be posted" and that there are better ways for teachers to reach the students than sites like Twitter.

Fourth grade teacher Mrs. Angela Maiocco thinks there are better options such as "Powerschool," a web-based student information system where teachers can post and

media, it hurts the ability to have real human interaction," she said.

Mr. Harries shares concerns about social media and is "not yet confident that students will be responsible" in using it. Still, he thinks schools should use more technology. "We don't allow enough technology and social media in our schools," he said.



East Rock reporters have questions for Superintendent Garth Harries

receive student assignments in a private, secure way. Specialized computer systems offer heightened security for students, which may put to rest safety concerns regarding social media in the classroom.

New Haven Mayor Toni Harp worries about over-use of social media. "If too much of a child's time and energy is used to engage in social

Although people get excited about this topic, some say putting assignments on Twitter is not a big deal. "Yeah, sure, why not," said seventh grader Ashley Cardenas. Yet, she says, "I'd never gotten my homework off Twitter." Eight grader Kelsey Snedeker, did get language arts homework off Twitter. "It's helpful," she said.



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BOOK REVIEWS

Wondering what to read on a winter's day? We've got reviews!

DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: The Third Wheel

BY CAMERON BLATCHE
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

This is the seventh book in the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, and in my opinion, the worst so far.

In this book, Greg, the main character, ended up as the third wheel in the relationship between Rowley and Abigail. Greg had planned for his best friend Rowley to set him up with a date, but Rowley set the date up for himself. Greg was stuck as a third wheel on their date. I think that Greg should have been the one with the girlfriend in the end.

I've now moved on to *Hard Luck*, the next book in the series, and it's so much better already. This book is funny and interesting, and I highly recommend it.

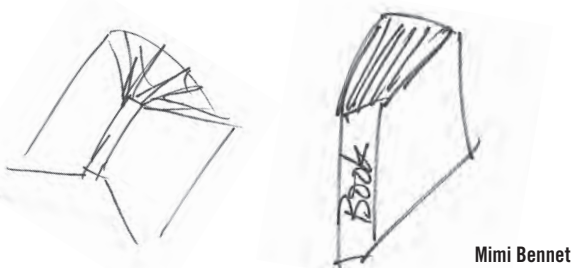
TWILIGHT SERIES TAKES YOU TO FANTASTIC PLACES

BY ASHLEY CARDENAS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Once I stepped into the magical pages of the Twilight series I wouldn't be able to take my eyes off of it. I would read so frequently that when I stopped I would forget that I wasn't in the book. It's filled with drama, action, mystery, and also romance.

It's about how a teenager, Bella Swan, moves to Forks, Washington to live with her father. She has a hard time making friends and isn't very sociable. But once she lays eyes on Edward Cullen, a vampire, she instantly knows that there is something different about him. He tries to avoid her but she doesn't care. Then one day Bella is walking in the streets alone at night and some guys want to hurt her. But then all of a sudden Edward comes with his car driving fast and tells her to get in. That was the beginning of eternal love. After that day they would be together all the time and hang out with each other. She also has a best friend named Jacob Black; He is a werewolf and has a crush on her, even though she doesn't have the same feelings.

This is the best book series I have ever read. It's really awesome and just so wonderful. Like who wouldn't want to read about true love and how life is if you're a vampire or werewolf? I recommend this book to everyone that has eyes. Once you read this book you will be surprised by the magical world it will take you to.



Mimi Bennet

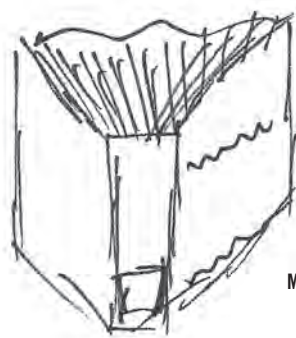
A FUNNY CAT NEVER GETS OLD

BY NATALIE MAYNARD
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Who doesn't want to read about a silly cat wearing a white-and-red striped hat?

This funny cat and two little kids are the main characters in Dr. Seuss' illustrated book *The Cat in The Hat* and its sequel *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back*. I was in kindergarten when I first read these books, but I've read them again in elementary school and I still love them. The Cat in the Hat is the story of a cat that does silly things, for which the kids are always blamed by their mother.

I recommend these books for kindergarteners and first graders. They might be a little difficult to read for young children, but they teach kids to be nice to their friends and families and to take care of their pets. In Dr. Seuss' stories, the cat eventually apologizes to the two kids for getting them in trouble; just like the cat, we should also tell people that we're sorry whenever we realize that we're being mean to them.



Mimi Bennet

IN A GLASS GRIMMLY: Giants and adventure!

BY GIANNI ESTRADA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

In this book by Adam Gidwitz, Jack and Jill go on this authentic adventure through the darkest and most evil part of the world.

The book takes you through Giant Mountain and Death Hole and many more dark places. Giant Mountain has actual Giants roaming the mountain and Death Hole is a pit filled with red ants living in it.

The two kids Jack and Jill decide to do the craziest stuff to get Jill the princesses' crown back from the creepy king of darkness who lives in the twilight zone on the other side of earth.

Jill talks to a frog and she falls asleep to what she thinks was a dream of the frog stealing her crown, but when she awakens her crown is gone and so is the frog. The frog was the creepy dark king's henchmen and was sent to steal her diamond crown. Her brother Jack helps her get it back before Dad comes back from his mission.

I think that most people should read this book because it's an awesome adventure and who wouldn't want to read about adventures when there are giants involved?



Mimi Bennet



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VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

WWE 2014 WrestleMania is fun, but a bad influence on kids

BY ABOUBACAR KOUROUMA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

WWE is a wrestling game that most people like to play when they're bored or just want to do something at home. In this game you pick a wrestler and fight an opponent. WWE can be fun, but it can also be a bad influence on kids.

It can be a good game because sometimes you can learn self-defense in the game which can sometimes help you in real life but can kind of still get you locked up. Also that game can help you exercise with the Wii because you get a lot of movement out of it. So it can be a good to use.

It can also be a bad game because it teaches kids how to hurt people and get themselves into big trouble with their parents. Sometimes they can try to do the move in it, and they think it's real, but it really isn't. They will end up hurting someone really badly.



Victoria Praseuth

Plasma Burst: Violent game of survival

BY JAMES MACIEL-ANDREWS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Plasma Burst is a violent game, but it teaches kids how to defend themselves. It's violent, because you play a stranded alien stuck on Earth. There are people who try to kill you, but you have to kill them first. There are also robots that try to kill you with rocket launchers. You can also take dead people's guns. It is basically a survival game. I like it, because there are really cool guns that you can equip yourself with. I want to be part of the Air Force when I grow up, so this is just practice.

Tanki= capture the flag

BY GIANCARLO OCASIO
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Tanki is a tank game that teaches you how to shoot. It's a computer version of capture the flag. You can hunt down online people on a team to capture their flag. I think it's good because it can give you experience for the future if you want to be in the Army. It's fun because you get to shoot and talk to people by pressing enter and then just writing what you want. One of the best things about it is that it's free, and it has really good graphics. I play it when I finish my homework. It gives me motivation to finish my work. I think it's bad because it can show you violence.

Minecraft is addictive game of strategy

BY WILSON CORONEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

As a lot video gamers might know that the famous game Minecraft is addicting as well as being lots of fun.

To beat the game you will have to kill the ender dragon. In order to reach the end you need to acquire resources to make a home, etc.

As you become addicted it is better to limit your experience to half an hour a day.

There is a lot to consider when playing the game. You will first have to get wood so you can make your home. If it turns night before you are finished, you might as well dig a hole that you can use for shelter.

You should stay there until it turns daylight and then finish building your home. You might also make tools like a pickaxe, hoe, axe, shovel and a sword to defend yourself. But don't forget your armor!

If you are having trouble finding stone or ore, I suggest digging down until you find stone. Then light it up with torches. This works for me!

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Neutrino, Dark Matter, and The South Pole

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DAVID SCHATZ (IMMUNOBIOLOGY)
Germ Busters! The Genetics behind
our Amazing Immune System
(or why we aren't sick all the time).

ISSUES & IDEAS

TASTY CREATION OR GROSS COMBO? Bizarre snacks kids make

BY LIZMARIE ORTIZ, FATUMATA SHERIFF
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

When kids get home from school, they are usually starving, so they make up a whole team of bizarre foods.

Here's a list of strange foods some kids enjoy making for snack:

1. Chicken and waffles
2. Frosted carrots
3. Peanut butter covered pickles

Marc Gonzalez came out of school starving, so he thought about a lot of recipes he could make, and he finally made his mind up. It was white bread with peanut butter, bananas, fluff, and Nutella. Now you may think that this is a strange snack to make or you might think it sounds good, but Gonzalez said it was DISGUSTING!

Juan S. came home from school famished. So he made himself a rare sandwich. First he put the slice of bread on the bottom. Then he added turkey and cheese. Next he drizzled ketchup on the cheese. To top it off he smeared a layer of peanut butter on the other slice of bread. This might sound revolting, but to him it tasted just SCRUMPTIOUS.

Some foods sound really good and some of them sound terrible, but they all show that kids are ingenious and have really creative minds.

MAKE MORE OF AFTER-SCHOOL TIME!

BY MASON RICKEY
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Some children are bored after they're done doing their homework in the afternoon. They just spend their time watching silly TV shows or playing video games.

Do you know what could be an easy solution to this problem? I think schools in New Haven and in Connecticut should offer more after-school activities. At my school we have six extracurricular activities: newspaper club, dance, MathCounts, science, instrumental music, and Girl Scouts

This fall I started going to the newspaper club and I love it. We wrote our own stories, learned about how newspapers work, made new friends and got to meet important people. We met New Haven Mayor Toni Harp a month after she was elected; we held a press conference with Superintendent of Schools Garth Harries; and we even listened to a performance by members of the Yale Whiffenpoofs. It's been a lot of fun, and I think more schools should have a newspaper club for their students. Schools should have more extracurricular activities. The possibilities are endless: book clubs, yoga, art, photography, and, why not, cupcake-making? These activities bring kids together outside of the classroom – and I can tell you, children really have a lot of fun.

NEW SCHOOL—AGAIN making transitions work

BY MIMI BENNET
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

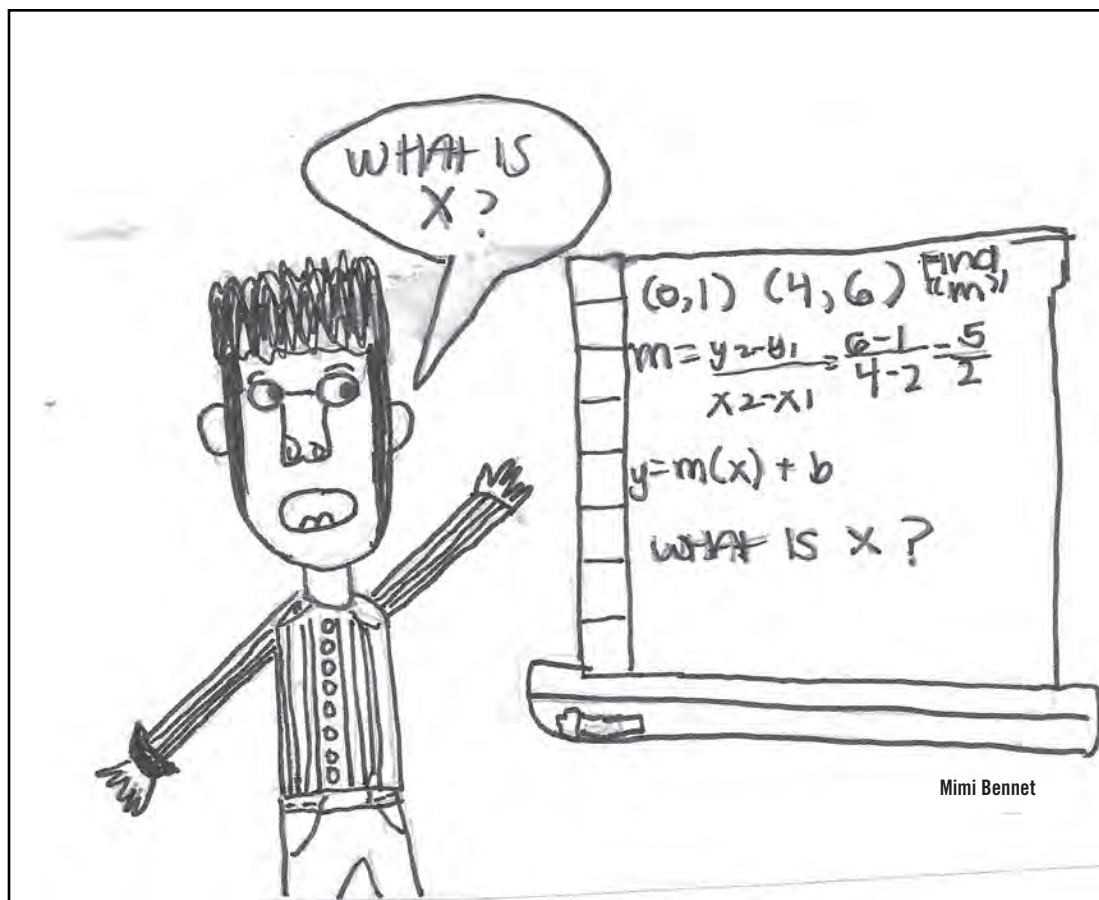
Transitions can be hard. How would you feel if you had been at one school for seven years then had to transfer to a whole new school in another town? Frustrated? Lonely? Sad?

Yeah, I have felt that.

In kindergarten, I went to Wexler-Grant School but then from 1st through 7th grade, I went to East Rock School and then Dag Hammarskjold Middle School in Wallingford, CT. Now I have transferred to my brother's school, East Rock, to finish 8th grade and to graduate.

On my first day of school, I was happy, sad and scared. I didn't say a word to anybody all day long because I was shy and nervous. I was amazed at how diverse East Rock was. At Dag, there were mostly whites and a few blacks. At East Rock, I saw blacks, whites, Asians, Hispanics, all types of races.

To see a whole school of different races? It was amazing. Later on, I started to feel comfortable because everybody was so nice and friendly. When the teacher assigned our lockers, people showed me what to do, how to do it, and why I needed to do it. After a while, I started to feel like I was welcomed. I started to feel that I belonged.




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EDITORIAL & OPINION

Letter from Principal Pelley

Dear East Rock Record Readers,

Congratulations to the East Rock Record staff on our first edition of the East Rock Record!



This newspaper is the result of a wonderful collaboration between the staff, students and parents of East Rock School, along with students from Yale and Coop High School (organized by the Yale/Coop High School Partnership in Yale's Office of New Haven and State Affairs), and nationally recognized journalist and author Laura Pappano, as part of the New Haven Student Journalism Project.

The 2013-2014 school year has been an exciting year for East Rock Magnet School. We are delighted to be back at 133 Nash Street where we have been busy collaborating with the East Rock community, our new mayor, Toni Harp, and our new superintendent, Garth Harries, as we work diligently to prepare our students for college, career, and life!

We are enjoying the features our new building offers, including:

—State-of-the-art technology and equipment designed to support student learning

—Outdoor green areas which boast ample space for a community garden and creative outdoor play

—Colorful landscapes to ensure a variety of physical challenges for our students

—A variety of safety features, including interior and exterior cameras, extensive lighting, and intercom with video

—Natural light to allow for a sense of connectedness between exterior and interior spaces

—Handicap accessibility

Our new facility supports learning in ways that we had once only imagined. Purposeful, supportive and meaningful work will continue to take place at this site, and future leaders will rise here. East Rock School will provide excellent educational opportunities for many years to come!

We look forward to seeing you at school!

Sincerely,

Peggy D. Pelley, Principal

New Uniform Policy Should Go

The board of the East Rock Record does not support the new uniform policy. The majority of our fellow East Rock students stand with us and agree that we should remove the policy immediately.

We think that we should be able to express ourselves with our own style. Kids our age don't want to wear the same clothes every day. We want to change our looks instead of dressing in uniforms with only three colors. Students in every school wanted to be able to look as if they are having fun and being themselves. When students wear uniform they stop looking like themselves.

Teachers think that we learn better with uniforms. One teacher says that the uniforms are simple so it's easier to wake up, get dressed, and go to school. New clothes are expensive, and some families cannot afford to buy their kids a new wardrobe. A uniform policy forces families to spend extra money.

Ask students around our school if they like uniforms, and few will say they do. We weren't asked about this policy before it arrived.

We dislike them because they are so simple and every time a student looks at another we all look exactly the same. We still learn in school and we can have our own identities without looking too similar. We want to attend a school that celebrates our individuality instead of denying it.

—By Victoria Praseuth, Tuphen Outsola and Mya Nixon

East Rock Record Editorial Writers (edited by Maddie McMahan)

The East Rock Record

East Rock Community Magnet School
133 Nash Street, New Haven, CT 06511

Editorial and opinion writers: Ashley Cardenas, Dericka Moses, Victoria Praseuth, Mya Nixon, Tuphen Outsola, Marc A. Gonzalez, Mekhi McCray, Mykell Hunter, Mason Rickey, Mimi Bennet, Lizmarie Ortiz, Fatumata Sheriff

More field trips = more learning

We should have more field trips in school. As students we get a lot of homework and sometimes get overworked. Students would like to go on a field trip now and then as a reward.

At my school, East Rock, if you do not have 80 points or above you cannot go on the field trip which I think is not fair. Each marking period we start off with 100 points and instead of getting written up the teachers have a point system. If you get written up you lose 10 points and you need 80 or above to go on a trip.

We get homework every day from most of all our classes and we also take a lot of tests. Yet we don't go on that many field trips. On an average we go on about four or five trips a year in 8th grade. I like field trips because it helps me learn better and I get a break from sitting at a desk all day.

—By Dericka Moses *East Rock Record Opinion*

Let's celebrate variety in dress

The dress code should be dressed down because:

1. Not everyone likes uniforms.
2. Uniforms are boring.
3. The whole school should have a party.

—By Mekhi McCray, *East Rock Record Opinion*

The Dull Uniformity of Uniforms



Thank you!

The *East Rock Record* would like to thank the following for their help and support:

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OPINION

Middle schoolers need sports!

Do you love sports and exercise? Would you like to be on a basketball, soccer or baseball team? What if there was one big problem holding you back? What if your school didn't have any sports teams?

That's the case at East Rock. I don't think that's fair. Every school should have at least two sports team for boys and for girls.

Children need physical activity. Our generation is fighting the worst obesity epidemic in history. Sports teams are a way to be healthy in a fun way. As part of a team, students learn good sportsmanship and can learn the three p's that are important in life -- practice, patience, and persistence.

Parents can also spend time with their kids by practicing drills and cheering for them when they play. By performing a sport in front of crowds, students benefit in the classroom. Their comfort in front of crowds will ease anxiety when making presentations to their class or answering questions.

Playing sports also makes the transition to high school easier because athletes will have friends they have played with since middle school. Playing in middle school also helps high school coaches because they won't have to teach players rules or how to play. A study on the website research.org found that 100 percent of people surveyed said middle schools should have sports. One comment: "Having sports in middle school is such a great thing to have at that age. It promotes an active lifestyle for kids and gets them away from doing nothing with their time. They can bond with friends and learn about competition."

Many agree that middle schools should have sports team. Why don't we?

One argument is the cost. One way to combat naysayers is to ask for donations or hold fundraisers like hat days or no uniform days. Schools could charge admission to sporting events that could benefit the schools in other ways like paying for textbooks or field trips. Teams could also have a car wash in the summer or sell hot chocolate in the winter, which would also bring the teams closer together.

Our schools should definitely offer sports. It's ridiculous to think that our school doesn't have a single sports team. School is for the students, right? So if the students want teams, it seems logical that they should have them. We can't ignore this issue any longer. It's time to make a change.

—Ashley Cardenas *East Rock Record Opinion*

Uniform policy should be Uniform

Here at East Rock School, all the kids are wearing uniforms. But down the street at Worthington Hooker, no one is wearing a uniform. The uniform shows unity in schools, but only in that particular school. The policy should be equal across the whole district not just the schools. If one school looks united wearing the same thing, picture all the students across New Haven looking as united and as one.

The uniform policy here at East Rock is navy or white tops and navy or khaki pants. Across the town at Benjamin Jepson School, there is no uniform. The kids wear whatever they please following only certain restrictions. Both schools are in the New Haven school district, yet neither one shows any unity. It defeats the purpose of any uniform at all.

Other schools have strict uniforms, where each student is forced to wear the same two colors. The colors have a deeper meaning carrying pride and dignity for the school. A mess up could have your colors removed for a temporary amount of time, forcing you to wear a white shirt, a color at East Rock that is considered normal uniform colors; showing a stricter side to the uniform policy.

If the policy was equal across the board all students would wear a Polo shirt with the New Haven school district logo. A policy that is currently only at some schools would end up being a district wide policy. A policy meant to show unity would actually show unity.

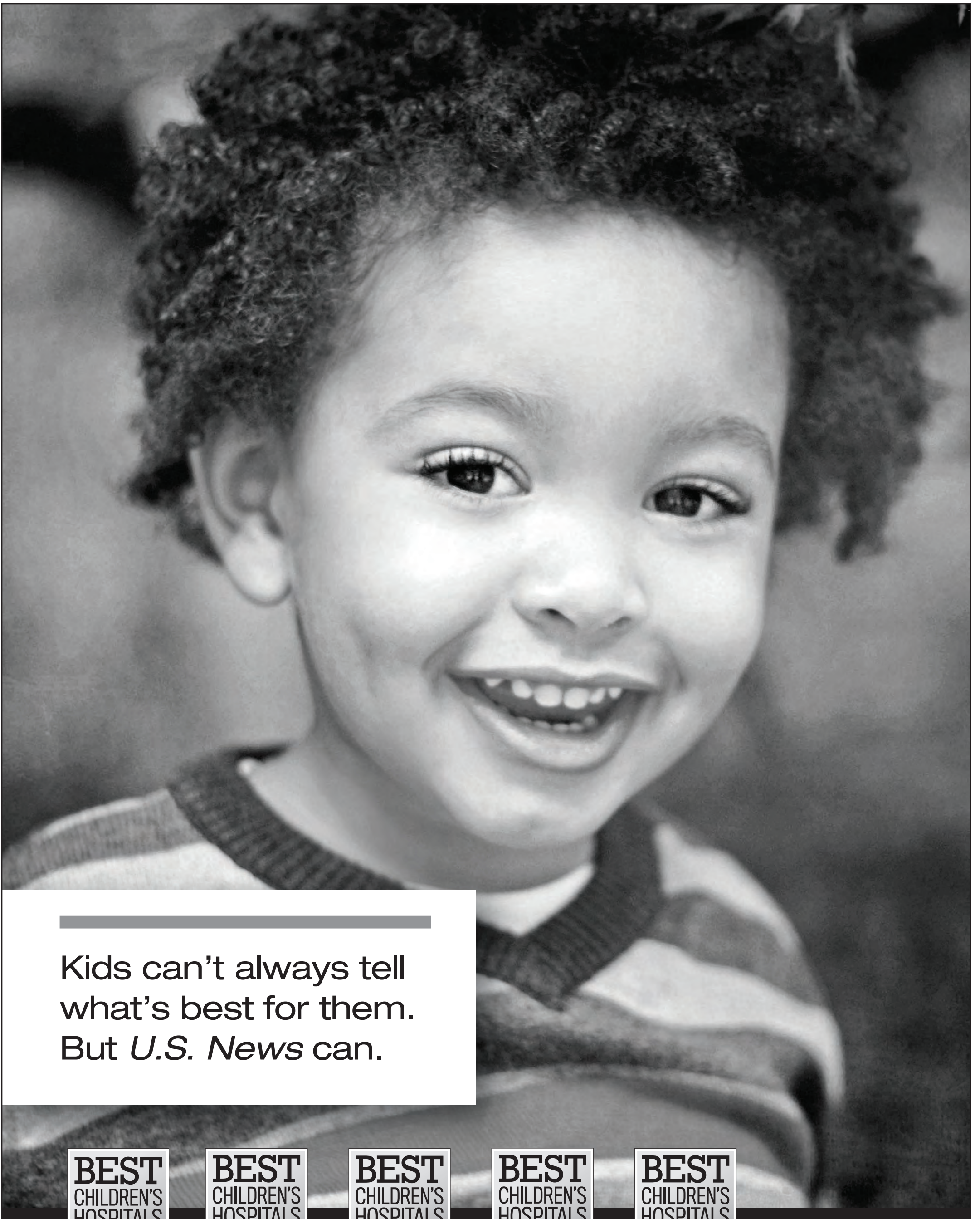
—Marc A. Gonzalez *East Rock Record Opinion*



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