

The East Rock Record

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REPORTERS QUERY LAWMAKERS

Travel to Capitol as 2013–2014 session ends; meet with political leaders



Reporters interview newly-elected state Sen. Gary Holder-Winfield in the senate chambers at the Capitol in Hartford minutes before the session began.



Reporters interview state Rep. Roland Lemar in the House of Representatives in the Capitol just five minutes before the session begins on Tuesday, April 29 (LEFT) and then meet with Senate Majority Leader Martin Looney in the Senate chambers (ABOVE).

BY VICTORIA PRASEUTH, GIOVANNI OCASIO, MEET PATEL, GIANCARLO OCASIO, TUPHEN OUTSOLA, ABOUBACAR KOUROUMA

EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

East Rock Record reporters traveled to Hartford to meet with and interview state legislators about their jobs, and about issues including the economy, the minimum wage, crime, school uniforms, and bullying.

Reporters went to the state Capitol in Hartford on April 29, a chilly Tuesday morning just about a week before the end of the legislative session. The building was beautiful and very fancy on the outside and the inside. It had gorgeous flower gardens and a gold dome at the top. It looked like a palace.

Inside there were a lot of pillars and stone steps going up and down. Even the bathrooms were fancy and had automatic soap dispensers. There are VIP areas with velvet ropes and vending machines on every floor. There were a lot of people in suits and a lot of business going on. The state Capitol is one of the most exciting places to visit. We felt really important and that if maybe we do really, really well we could work there one day.

Reporters met in the Senate chambers with Sen. Gary Holder-Winfield who was

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Dangers Lurk Online F.B.I. Cyber Crime Agent Has Advice

BY ABOUBACAR KOUROUMA, GIANCARLO OCASIO, GIOVANNI OCASIO, DAVONNA BENSON, WILSON CORONEL, AND MEET PATEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY ELLIAH HEIFETZ

Do you feel safe on the Internet? At East Rock Community Magnet School, many students have access to the Internet, but do they know how to stay safe?

“It’s a big problem,” East Rock Principal Peggy Pelley said of the potential dangers for children using the Internet.

We interviewed students, teachers, and even FBI agents to figure out how safe the Internet is, and how to protect ourselves online.

For example, we learned many apps and websites are not as safe as they look. Fifth grader James Maciel-Andrews is one student who is concerned about Internet safety.

“I do not feel safe because there are hackers out there that might take my personal information,” he said.

Many students at East Rock need help with Internet safety. Results of the East Rock Record Spring Survey found that 196 out of 225 students surveyed have access to the Internet at home. Of those, 95 reported being contacted by someone they did not know and 61 responded online to

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Harp Health Idea: Tax Sugary Drinks

BY KELSEY SNEDEKER AND ANDREA CORONEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY KELLY ROSS AND FRAN WOLF



Dierdre Lawson

Should sugary beverages be taxed? New Haven Mayor Toni Harp recently proposed just that! Mayor Harp says that a “tax on high-calorie sugary drinks would reduce sales of the beverages and generate about \$144 million in revenue.”

Mayor Harp says she is concerned about the rise in childhood obesity and thinks that taxing sugary drinks could help cut down on their consumption. Health experts warn that drinking soda is very unhealthy.

“It is no news that soda is bad for

your health,” says Mila Pearson, a registered dietician and certified diabetes educator at Cornell-Scott Hill Health Center in New Haven. “Soda is nothing but sugar water with no nutritional value that can increase the risk of obesity and diabetes.” She said it can also cause tooth decay, kidney stones, and weak bones.

Many politicians have tried to improve public health—especially problems stemming from obesity—through government laws, but they have had limited success. Mayor

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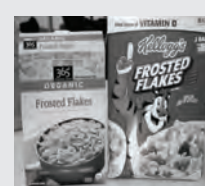


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TECHNOLOGY NEWS

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CYBER SAFETY MUST BE SERIOUS BUSINESS

INTERNET FROM PAGE 1

strangers who contacted them.

F.B.I. Special Agent Michael Morrison, member of the Bureau's Cyber Crime Squad, met with East Rock Record reporters to talk about Internet safety. He said students should watch out for applications, or "apps" that can be downloaded onto a computer or smartphone.

"One of the things bad guys will do when an app becomes popular like Talking Angela or Angry Birds is they will make something that looks like those popular apps," he said, adding that the "bad" apps can steal your information. "When you are getting an app, you need to make sure you are getting the right one and not an imitation of it."

Mr. Morrison also mentioned that apps and social media sites like Facebook and Twitter can be unsafe. He said many students have social media and think it is just a game, but it is actually serious because you can put yourself in danger. He told reporters about his 16-year-old niece, who made friends with someone online who said he was 18 and she agreed to meet him. He ended up being 32, and was arrested. "We were very lucky she didn't get hurt," Mr. Morrison added.

To avoid these kinds of dangers, Mr. Morrison said people should be very cautious about sharing personal information online. Of Internet hackers or predators, he said: "They can't get anything that you don't type in."

Many say that parent supervision is one way to help kids to stay safe.

East Rock 4th grade teacher Angela Maiocco believes that the only time kids should go on social media is when they are supervised by a parent or guardian. Ms. Maiocco is so careful that she does not have any social media accounts and doesn't like her friends to post any pictures of her children online.

Although Ms. Pelley does have Facebook, she said she was the last person in her family to get an account. She agrees that children should have some parental super-

vision when using social media. Mr. Morrison also suggested that, in case parent permission were not possible, "it would be a neat idea to do something on age restrictions on apps so they can be the right age for the app."

Some students do agree that parental supervision is important. "When you get on social media you have to be careful and make sure your mom or dad knows what is on your social media and who you follow, because if a random stranger wants to be your friend they might what to hack you and can see your personal pictures and comments," said Mr. Maciel-Andrews.

Some students who responded to the East Rock Record Survey said they needed parental permission to download apps. Results showed 86 of the 225 students surveyed—or 38 percent—said that they needed parental permission to download apps. However, 139 reported that they did not.

There is one thing that everyone we interviewed seemed to agree on: Don't talk to anyone you don't know.

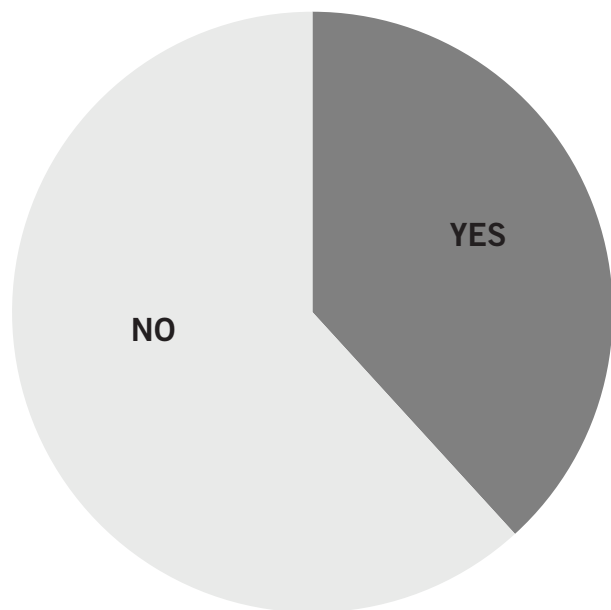
When Patricia Ferrick, the Special Agent in Charge of the F.B.I. office in New Haven, held a press conference at East Rock School, she said that she would never talk to someone she doesn't know online. "You should be careful what you share," she said. "They can't take anything that you don't give them."

Mr. Morrison emphasized to East Rock reporters, "Remember not to respond to a person you don't know." More students should listen to this warning. The survey results show that almost half of all students said they had been contacted by people they did not know and many responded.

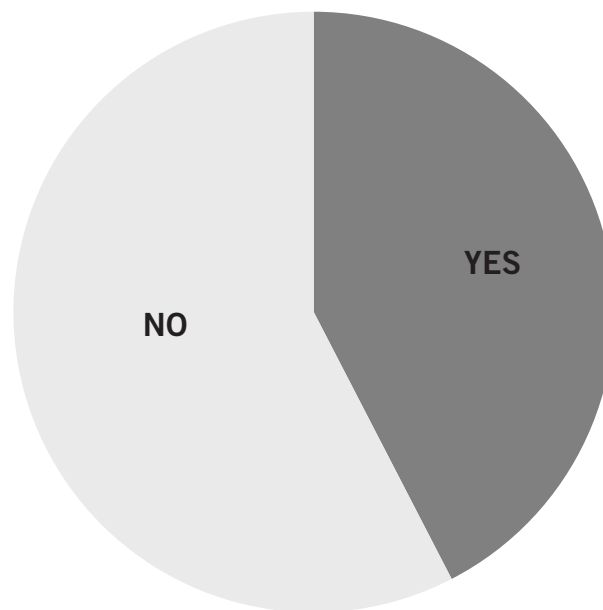
Mr. Maciel-Andrews says he does use Facebook and Twitter but does not talk to people he does not know or people that say mean things about him.

What's the next step? Some say that Internet safety should be taught not only at home, but also in school.

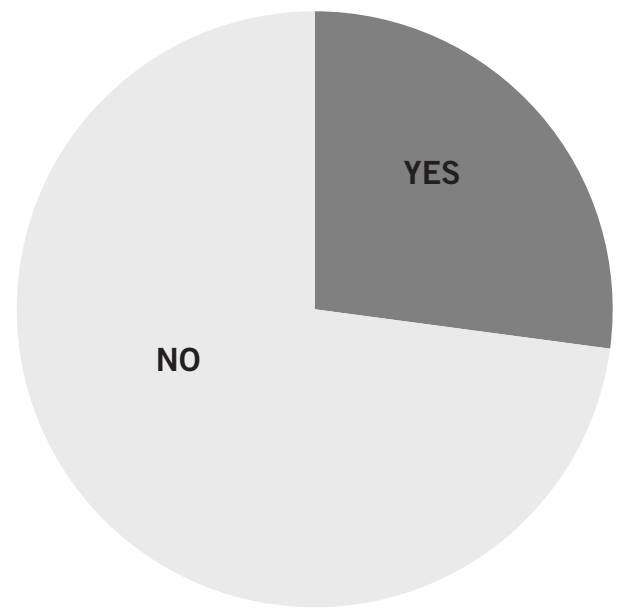
Do you need your parent's permission to download apps?



Have you ever been contacted by someone you didn't know?



Have you ever responded to someone you didn't know?



FBI AGENT: TRY THESE ONLINE RESOURCES

F.B.I. Special Agent Michael Morrison said there are some websites designed to help children and parents learn about safe Internet use, including some sites that even teach safety with the use of games!

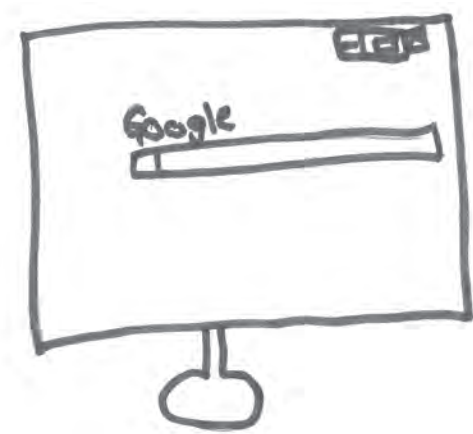
<https://sos.fbi.gov/> - The FBI's Safe Online Surfing site. Information and games divided by school year. You can play the games even without participating in the nationwide challenge.

<http://www.netsmart.org/> - More parent-oriented information about Internet safety.

The companion sites (with games and such) are at

<http://www.netsmartkids.org> (for kids) and

<http://www.nsteens.org> (for tweens and teens).



Natalie Maynard

SCHOOL NEWS

Field trips: Some grades get more than others

BY ASHLEY CARDENAS,
LIZMARIE ORTIZ,
MARC GONZALEZ AND FATUMATA SHERIFF
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY MADDIE MCMAHON
AND EDDY WANG

At East Rock School, many students say a highlight of the year is getting out of the classroom for a field trip. But many students say access to field trips is not equal—or fair.

Students, for example, notice that 5th graders go on more than twice as many field trips as older students. Last year, fifth graders took 15 field trips, while students in grades seven and eight had only four field trips in total. According to teachers we spoke with, this happens partly because students in 5th grade have only one teacher all day instead of different teachers for different subjects so it is easier to coordinate the field trips.

It also happens because at East Rock there are two types of field trips—those for educational purposes and those that reward good behavior.

Students and teachers disagree about how many field trips is a good number and whether or not having lots is a good idea. Mr. John Kennedy, a 7th and 8th grade math teacher who helps plan field trips, said 7th and 8th graders take about four field trips per year. He says there is the opportunity to schedule 7th and 8th graders to go on more field trips. He does not object to letting 5th graders go on many field trips.

“If the 5th grade earns those trips, they deserve them,” he said. “If the 7th and 8th graders earn them too, that would be great.”

Mr. Kennedy said different students have opportunities to go on different field trips, depending on what classes and activities they are in. “I just took a group of kids to the MathCounts competition,” he said.

Whether a field trip is for educational purposes or a reward, Mr. Kennedy said students who misbehave will not be included. “You can be banned from a field trip for behavioral issues,” he said. “If I can’t trust a student here, I will refuse to take a student on a field trip to New York City or to the Center for British Art.”

Fifth grade teacher Mr. Keith Wolkovitz, said the 5th grade will go on a total of 12 or 13 field trips this year, including to the movies, a nature hike, visiting the Peabody museum, and going to a green house. He said most of the 5th grade field trips have been free because East Rock has three free buses to transport the students around the New Haven area. Many of the trips are no longer free, so the 5th graders may go on fewer trips in the future.

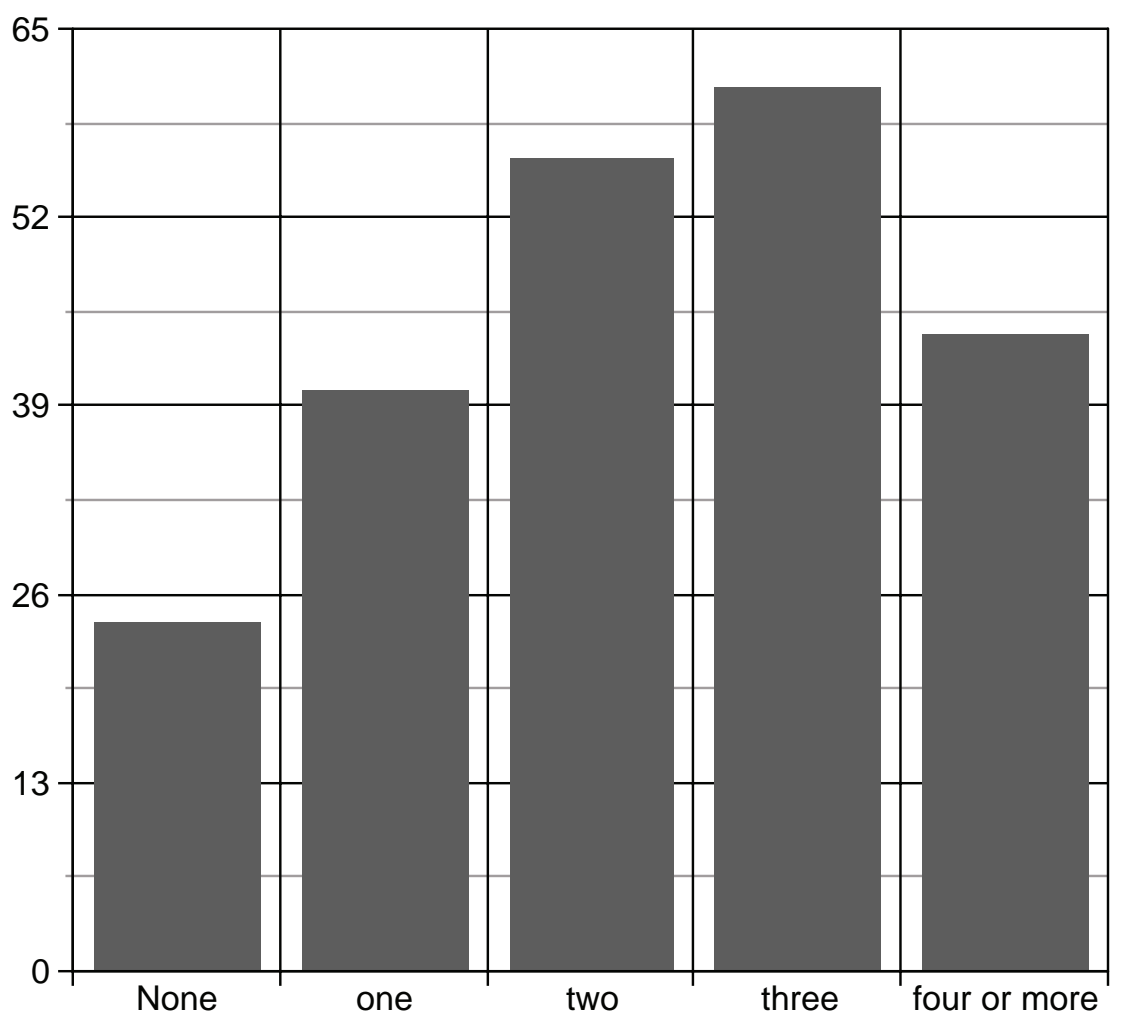
One difference between the field trips of the younger and older grades is that the older students go on more educational field trips.

teachers also have to prepare students for district assessments and make sure that all the units are taught, and because of this it’s difficult to have enough time for field trips.

Ms. Laura Generoso, a 7th and 8th grade social studies teacher, said the 8th graders took a field trip to another school to watch a school play. Ms. Francine Wolf, a 6th grade teacher, said that that trips should connect to learning in school. “Field trips should be an extension of what’s being done in the classroom,” she said. “My philosophy is that it’s a privilege for kids to go on field trips, not a right.”

Amanda Wall, an education professor at Georgia Southern University and former classroom teacher, said educational field trips can be valuable in giving students new experiences and perspectives. “Field trips are a way to extend the curriculum beyond the classroom,” she said.

How Many Field Trips Have You Taken This Year?

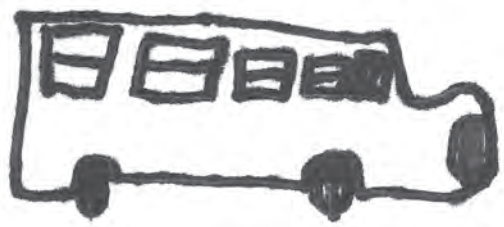


Sixth grade student Andrea Coronel enjoys field trips because it’s a chance to have fun and forget about difficult schoolwork.

While fifth graders might have more field trips, older students take bigger trips. Fifth grade field trips cost about \$3 per student, but the 7th grade trip to New York costs \$95 per person. In addition, the 8th grade dinner dance costs \$40 per person and a trip to the Lake Compounce amusement park costs \$27—a total of \$157 for the 7th grade field trips. Mr. Kennedy said 7th and 8th grade field trips cost about \$8,000 per year.


East Rock School Principal Ms. Peggy Pelley said East Rock doesn’t have a field trip budget, so sometimes students must pay a small fee.

“We take advantage of the many free trips that are offered,” she said.




Samantha Scott

Ms. Kelly Ross, a Read 180 teacher for 6th, 7th and 8th graders, says that students often have to pay for the field trips that they go on. She says that



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SCHOOL NEWS

SPORTS VALUABLE BUT LIMITED IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

BY TUPHEN OUTSOLA, JAMES MACIEL-ANDREWS, MYKELL HUNTER, RICCAI SMITH, NATALIE MAYNARD, DIERDRE LAWSON, AND ARYANA SNEDEKER
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY NYASHA SARJU, ELIZABETH HALEY, AND TANNER MUNROE

Sports are fun. Sports allow students to be with close friends, and get good exercise. Sports also train students to work as a team and learn to handle wins and losses.

“Aside from the physical and fitness you get, sports teach teamwork, cooperation, and life-long lessons,” said Mr. Erik Patchkofsky, New Haven Public Schools Director of Middle School Sports, who met with East Rock Record reporters. “If you can be successful in sports you can be successful in life. They teach life-long leadership.”

Sports may offer many benefits, but New Haven middle school students have limited opportunities to participate in athletics. What’s more, sports at the middle school level do not have the same numbers of teams for girls and boys.

There are 11 middle school boys’ basketball teams, six girls’ basketball teams, and five football teams. Mr. Patchkofsky said he believes there should be the same number of girls’ teams as boys’ teams, but that teams “are a direct reflec-



Erik Patchkofsky, director of Middle School Athletics for New Haven Public Schools, meets with East Rock reporters in the gymnasium for an interview.

tion on the amount of kids who come out to play.” He said that football teams have had girls play as well as boys.

According to Mr. Patchkofsky, one of the challenges in creating middle school sports programs is that most schools are now K-8 and therefore may have only two classes per grade, which is not enough to field full sports teams. In the past, he said, we “used to have seven to eight classes per grade so you could actually make a team out of one school.” Now students from several schools must combine together to form a single team.

Mr. Patchkofsky said the number of middle school teams varies each year. “We have had as

little as four girls teams in one season and as many as nine,” he said. “We add and subtract teams based on the amount of students who sign up to play from different zones in the city.” But after school sports cost money. They are funded as part of the general athletic budget, said Mr. Patchkofsky.

“There is not a line item budget for middle school athletics,” he said, adding that the cost for even one basketball game is really expensive—\$700. A bus trip to the game destination is more than \$300, he says, and the cost of each referee is \$60, plus the people who run the scoreboard get paid \$30 each per game. Even though each game

SEE PAGE 11

Best wishes
to the students
at
East Rock
School!



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SCHOOL NEWS

SURVEY: BULLYING PROBLEM IN SCHOOL

BY MEKHI MCCRAY, KYLIGHA HARRIOTT,
MASON RICKEY, SAMANTHA SCOTT, KANAI
KELLMAN, AND KYSEAN KELLMAN
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY RAY NOONAN AND CHLOE LARKIN

It happens in the cafeteria at lunch, during gym class, inside classrooms, and outdoors at recess. Bullying is common at East Rock Community Magnet School.

A survey by the East Rock Record found that nearly half of students said they had been bullied in school. The survey found that 108 out of 225 surveyed reported being bullied—and 20 percent admitted they had bullied others at school.

The survey also found the good news that 65 percent said they had stood up for students who were being bullied at school.

But probably most important, we learned how much bullying matters to students: 44 percent said it was a “big” problem, 42 percent think it is a “so-so” problem and just 14 percent said it was a “small” problem at East Rock School.

Bullying is a problem, but teachers and experts we interviewed had tips on how to deal with it.

Ms. Erika Koch, who teaches 4th grade at East Rock, said that if you bully someone there are always students that tell, so eventually the teacher will find out even though some kids try to be sneaky and do stuff they are not supposed to.

If teachers do catch someone in the act of bul-

lying or discover a student has bullied, they will contact parents, write a referral, or have a talk with the bullying student and give them a detention.

Second grade teacher Ms. Nancy Kelly said that if you see a student or anyone in the school being bullied, help them out. Even if the bully is not bullying you, she said, you still have to stand up for yourself and other people involved in it because you can stand up for yourself but the other person will still be bullied because you did not take the time to stand up for other people. She also shared her experience with bullying.

“I used to stutter and there were these girls that didn’t go to the same school as me, and they would make fun of me,” she said. “So I would check to see if they were there. If they weren’t I would go the regular way, and if they were I would take the long way.”

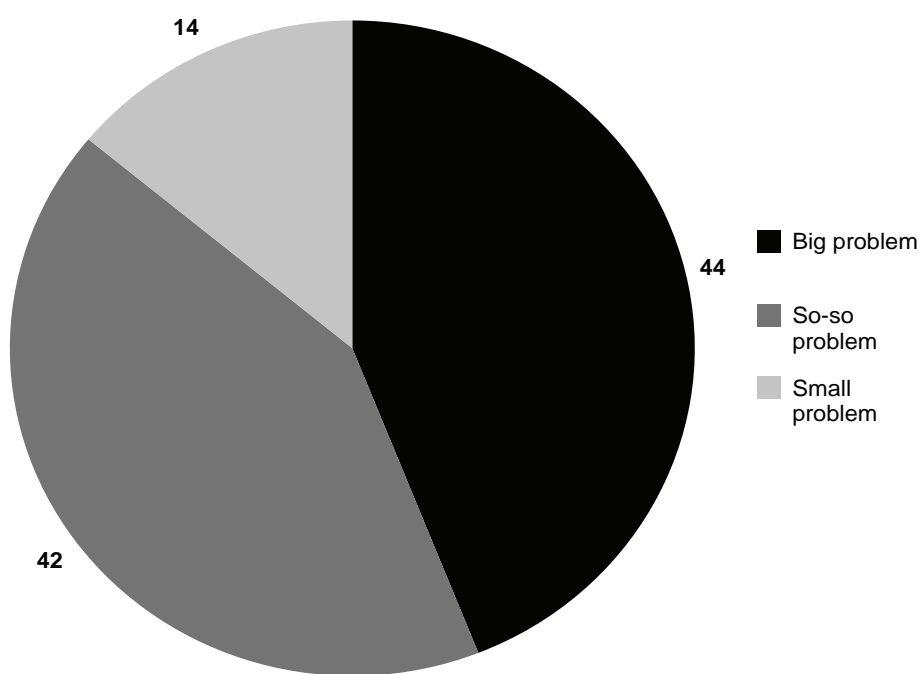
Rachel Collins, a clinical therapist from Cor-

safe environment in which children are not afraid to tell what they are dealing with when it comes to bullying.

She says kids often start bullying because they have been bullied or saw violence in the streets or

Nearly half of East Rock students surveyed said they had been bullied in school. 44 percent say bullying is a “big” problem. Only 14 percent say it is a “small” problem.

How Big a Problem is Bullying in School?



at home. Sometimes, she says, they bully because they are looking for attention. She also said you can stop bullying by showing bullies how they would feel if they were the ones being bullied.

“Children have mentioned feeling sad, upset, scared, angry, and confused about being bullied,” Ms. Collins said.

Bullying also happens over the Internet. Special agent Michael Morrison of the F.B.I. Cyber Crime squad said that bullying online, or cyber-bullying, is worse than in-person bullying “because they can hide.”

“Somebody in person might pick on your clothes, your shoes, your hair,” he added. “Online they might do all of that and they might do it as much as they want because you can’t walk away.” He said that bullying seems to be growing.

nell-Scott Hill Health Center, says she makes a

SPOT THE SIGNS OF BULLYING & KNOW WHAT TO DO!

BY JAMES MACIEL-ANDREWS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Have you or someone you know been bullied a lot by bigger and older kids who think that they are much better? Well, guess what?

Bullying is most common among small students. It happens at home and on the school bus, as well as at school, is used by people who have more power than the victim, and can be done repetitively.

If you or your friends are constantly being bullied, you should tell a teacher or administrator, or if it gets too serious, the principal or your mom. They are professionals at finding a solution to bullying problems because it happens so often.

A bad way of dealing with a bully is trying to fix the problem yourself. It makes the bully know that they are bothering you, and only makes them bully you even more. The best way to stop a bully is to tell an adult. It will make the child know that bullying is not acceptable.

If you are ever bullied on a digital device, you are being “cyber bullied.” Cyber bullying is one way of bullying. Don’t ever tell your friends the password to your phone. It will compromise your personal information. Always block a cyber-bully. If you do, their threats won’t reach you. You should immediately tell your parents if you are being cyber bullied. That way, they can address the issue with the child’s parents.

There are many signs that show that a kid is being bullied. If a child is coming home hungry, because they didn’t have lunch, that is a sign of bullying. It means that a bully took their lunch money (Note: All students at East Rock School receive free lunch). Another sign is if a child suddenly loses interest in going to school. It shows that a bully is making



Kanai Kellman

them not want to go back.

Also, if a child has lost clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry, and will not tell their parents, that supports the fact that a bully has taken something from them. Finally, declining grades are a clue that an aggressor is stressing them.

If you or your friends are being bullied, tell an adult. Look out for the obvious signs that show a person is being bullied (like having damaged belongings brought home). Oh, sorry. I could go on talking about bullying, but I’m late for a meeting on bullying prevention at my school. See ya!

COMMUNITY NEWS

CAPITOL FROM PAGE 1

recently elected to fill the seat of New Haven Mayor Toni Harp. There are 36 senators and they meet in a room that looks like a court with chairs in a circle. There is a fancy red carpet with the state seal. You are not allowed to step on the seal.

Sen. Holder-Winfield said he tries to fix issues with his own solutions, but he has learned that you also have to listen to other people.

“My job required that I get outside of what I think and hear what other people think,” he said. “I have to recognize that I am not always right.”

When Sen. Holder-Winfield came to New Haven he was an engineer. He started in politics because he “walked around New Haven and saw some things I did not like.”



East Rock reporters meet in press room with CT Mirror Bureau Chief Mark Pazniokas

This year in the legislature voted to raise the minimum wage to reach \$10.10 by 2017.

Reporters also met with Senate Majority Leader Martin Looney. He has a son and a grandson. He said he was glad the state raised the minimum wage.

“I was a strong supporter,” he said. “That is one of the best bills we have done so far this year.”

He said that schools should decide for themselves if students should wear uniforms. Sen. Looney said he was not bullied. “I had a good experience growing up,” he said. He said he loves sports and played baseball when he was a kid.

He is also a lawyer and he teaches at the University of New Haven and Quinnipiac University.

Reporters met with Rep. Lemar in the House of Representatives. There are 151 representatives. Rep. Lemar says he thinks having a school uniform is a good idea to help students not be distracted about their clothing. He also wants a tax on sugary drinks.

“The goal is to take whatever money we gener-

ate and put it into health programs,” he said. “It could support athletic programs, nutrition programs.”

On the national level, government subsidizes corn syrup and unhealthy foods so he says a tax would make unhealthy foods “a little on par with what healthy food costs.”

Reporters met with Mark Pazniokas, bureau chief of the CT Mirror. The press room was messy with piles of newspapers and old pictures, including one of Elvis.

“We decorate this room in a kind of goofy way,” said Mr. Pazniokas. Other reporters were busy writing the news.

Mr. Pazniokas said the budget matters because “people can hide things in. It determines who gets what in the state

and what programs will get adequately funded,” he said. “It determines how good schools are in New Haven and how much money they get.”

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Meet Patricia Ferrick: New F.B.I. Special Agent in Charge! SPECIAL PRESS CONFERENCE WITH EAST ROCK RECORD REPORTERS

BY ANDREA CORONEL, VICTORIA PRASEUTH, MEET PATEL, GIOVANNI OCASIO, TUPHEN OUTSOLA, AND JAMES MACIEL-ANDREWS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Patricia Ferrick, the new Special Agent in Charge of the F.B.I. in Connecticut, visited the East Rock Record earlier this spring. Special Agent Ferrick has been in the F.B.I. for 26 years and recently became the head of the state's F.B.I. office.

In a visit to East Rock, she shared stories about the cases she solved, the people she arrested, and what it's like to work at the F.B.I. She said it's really fun! Special Agent Ferrick caught her first criminal when she was just a kid and became interested in the FBI because her dad was a police officer. She wanted to investigate bad guys and put them in jail.

Special Agent Ferrick started off being a police officer in New York City. One difference between being an F.B.I. Agent and a police officer is that police officers have to go out and face crime that's happening on the spot while F.B.I. agents build a case and then go and arrest the criminals.

"The big difference between being a police officer and being in the F.B.I. is that the police officers are on the front lines of bad guys with a gun," she said.

Special Agent Ferrick said she has never fired her gun and doesn't want to.

"I almost did one time but the bad guy dropped his weapon. I was really glad I didn't have to shoot him," she said.

She has solved crimes and put about 45 criminals in jail. That was just her. In the F.B.I., she said they have SWAT vans that are bulletproof and they wear bulletproof vests. S.W.A.T. stands for Special Weapons And Tactics.

"When I go out on an arrest, I definitely wear a bullet proof vest," she said. Ms. Ferrick met with East Rock Record reporters the day before a big arrest in Branford.

Special Agent Ferrick said there are not a lot of females in the F.B.I. "When I first came there were eight percent women," she said. "Now it's closer to 13 percent."

She solved her first crime when she was 11 years old. Her father was a police officer and he gave her a fake badge, but she thought it was real.

In her neighborhood people were stealing gas out of people's cars in the 1970s. She and her friends thought they knew who was stealing the gas.

"I got my friends to do a stake out," she said. They wore dark clothes and wigs. They camped out and watched and saw who it was and spotted the license plate number of the thief's car. She recognized the license plate while she was walking to school and knew it belonged to a neighbor. When she knocked on the door of the house, she showed her badge.

The gasoline thief's mom answered the door. Special Agent Ferrick asked if the car was her son's and it was. Then she said, "Well, your son is in a lot of trouble."

The neighbor was angry and called Special Agent Ferrick's dad. When she got home her dad, she said, "was really, really mad." In the end, she said, they arrested the thief a week later and her dad was proud of her.

She is married to a SWAT agent and they have a 12-year-old son who likes to play hockey.



FBI Special Agent in Charge Patricia Ferrick with East Rock Record Reporters (TOP); reporters asking questions of Ferrick during the press conference (CENTER); Ferrick responding to a reporter question (BOTTOM).



We're on Instagram!

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8TH GRADE PROMOTION

Next Big Stage: Stepping up to High School

BY MIAZHAY BENNETT AND DERICKA MOSES
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY LORENZO LIGATO

Before April break, 8th graders at East Rock Community Magnet School anxiously awaited acceptance letters from area high schools. When news arrived, some were excited while others were nervous about leaving middle school and taking the next step in their life.

“I am excited about going to high school because it is a fresh start to my school career,” said East Rock 8th grader Kelsey Snedeker. She will attend Hill Regional Career, one of 10 comprehensive and magnet high schools in New Haven.

This year, the most popular high schools East Rock students will attend are: Hill Regional Career High in the Hill neighborhood, The Sound School Regional Vocation Aquaculture in the City Point neighborhood, and Eli Whitney Technical High School in Hamden, according to the East Rock Record 8th Grade Survey.

The same survey asked students about their thoughts on taking this next step. Results showed most students are enthusiastic about learning new subjects and joining extracurricular activities. However, many students expressed concerns about the increased workload, about making new friends and about the transition process.

“I am looking forward to studying biology, because I want to be a zoologist,” said 8th grader Edmil Javier Maldonado. Mr. Maldonado, who will go to The Sound School, said he is also nervous about meeting new people and taking harder and more advanced classes.

“What I am looking forward to most about high school is being successful,” said Orlando Rodriguez, an 8th grader who will attend Metropolitan

Business Academy.

All 8th graders interviewed thought the transition to high school would be challenging, a point made by Brian Flanagan, a guidance counselor at Wilbur Cross who works with 9th graders.

“When new 9th grade students enter through the high school doors on the first day of school they may feel like they are entering the unknown,” Mr. Flanagan said.

“Students may find high school harder because we are focusing on college and career readiness and preparing them for their goals after high school.” The good news is that incoming freshmen receive a lot of support from deans, administrators, and counselors who will help them figure out how to succeed both academically and socially.

“The freshmen team is very involved and supportive with the transition process to high school,” he said. “From orientations to advisory activities to award ceremonies, students will feel like they are supported.”

One big difference for 8th graders heading to high school will be the wide range of extracurricular activities, from intramural and team sports to arts and drama clubs.

All students interviewed for this story agreed that the summer before high school will be both exciting and challenging. Some said they will participate in summer transitions programs like the one offered at Wilbur Cross High School at the end of May. It is designed to help incoming freshmen “get a jump start on the transition to high school,” Mr. Flanagan said.

Other 8th graders at East Rock have plans for many activities, including summer jobs, attending camp, and even traveling. Ms. Snedeker will attend a 9th grade preparation program at Career High School.

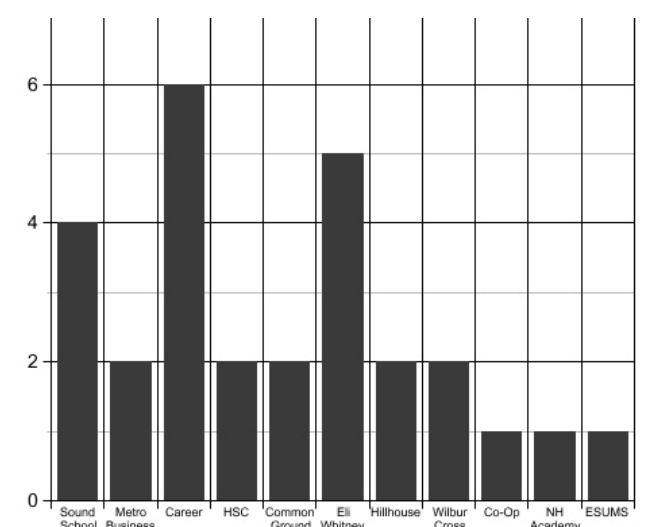
East Rock 8th grader Miazhay Bennett, will help out at L.E.A.P., an academic and social enrichment program for youth ages 6 to 23. “I’m excited this is the first job I’ve ever had,” Ms. Bennett said, adding that she hopes the experience will prepare her to get a job in high school.

Meanwhile, 8th graders at East Rock have one more event to look forward to: promotion will take place June 24 and, according to East Rock Principal Peggy Pelley, will be a “bittersweet” moment.

“It has been a pleasure to witness the social, emotional and academic growth of our 8th graders,” said Ms. Pelley. “They are a tight knit group. It is sad to think that they will be going their separate ways next year. At the same time, I am happy and excited for them as they begin a new chapter in their academic lives.”

Where Will East Rock 8th Graders Attend High School?

number of students from East Rock attending



source: East Rock Record Survey 2014

HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMAN REFLECTS BACK ON TRANSITION, FIRST YEAR

BY JAKE DELUCIA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

My name is Jake DeLucia and I’m a freshman at Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School in New Haven. I’m here to share my emotions leading up to 8th Grade Graduation, the start of high school, the transition, and overall experience.

The end of my 8th Grade year was so far the best time of my life. New Haven schools do an amazing job celebrating the move to this next chapter in life. Enjoy every minute of it. There are many days my friends and I wish we could go back.

The first day of high school, my alarm went off at 5:30 a.m. I had never been up this early, before the sun, yet this was when I’d have to get up every school day for the next four years. In elementary and middle school I didn’t roll out of bed until 7:30 a.m., and school started at 9:15 a.m. By that time now I’m in second period!! My mom wasn’t even

awake and we couldn’t take pictures outside because it was pitch dark! This made me sad because that was our tradition but we just took pictures when I got home from school. The early start was one of the biggest adjustments.

I was excited. I was looking forward to finally being in high school and seeing what the hype was about.

When I entered school, we had to go through metal detectors and get our bags searched. This was something I definitely was not used to. Then we stood in the main hall until the bell rang. In the school it’s easy to be overwhelmed by the numbers of kids and chaos, especially at Co-Op, the largest magnet school. I had to ask the principal for help finding my first class.

The first few weeks, I felt very intimidated. But soon, I got used to things that were different about high school. My honors classes brought another adjustment: getting used to the grading system. I learned the

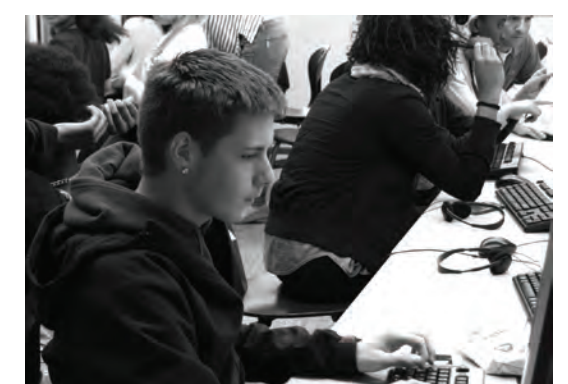
hard way that everything is counted strictly. In grammar school you miss a homework paper and it’s no worries; in high school you miss one and your whole grade drops. My advice? Make sure you do every assignment, and if you miss one, make it up and hand it in for partial credit.

One other thing I’ll never forget about the first day was how dead silent it was in class. Nobody talks because either you know nobody, or you’re scared to find out how the teacher will react. My first period teacher on the first day said the first few weeks are the worst for her because class is so awkward. Everyone was so shy they didn’t even raise a hand when Ms. Valerie Vollono asked a question; now we don’t shut up.

When I came to Co-Op I had a handful of friends from middle school, but I didn’t have every class with them so at some points I felt so alone. That didn’t last long; Co-Op is such a friendly and accepting school.

The first friends you’ll usually make at Co-Op are the ones in your art class. Art classes are a lot smaller in size than academic classes, so you feel more comfortable and it’s easier to talk to people. My biggest advice is don’t judge somebody until you really get to know them and always say hello to somebody you don’t know because that could turn out to be your best friend.

Overall, I have had an unforgettable freshman year. I have met some of the best people I will probably ever know, and I can’t wait to see what the next three years have in store. I wish you all good luck in 9th grade and beyond.



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FOOD & FITNESS

DOES ORGANIC FOOD TASTE DIFFERENT? EAST ROCK RECORD REPORTERS CONDUCT TASTE TEST TO FIND OUT

East Rock Record reporters gathered recently to answer a critical question: Does organic food taste different than non-organic food?

We first broke into teams to research questions —What does “Organic” mean? What is the history of organic food? Why are organic foods generally more expensive? —and present our findings to other reporting teams.

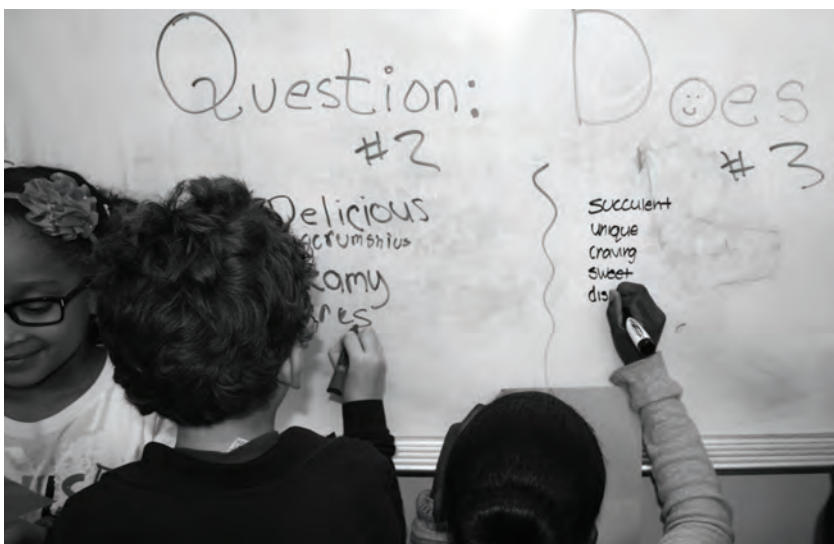
Then, we started tasting: Orange juice, carrots, bananas, sweetened flake cereal, pretzels and —yes! —milk chocolate.

Results? Opinions were mixed, but several reporters said they were surprised to learn that organic foods in some cases were tastier. “At first I thought non-organic food would taste a lot better because it has chemicals in it that make it taste better,” Aboubacar Kourouma wrote on his data sheet. “But in some situations organic foods tasted better.” Mr. Kourouma,

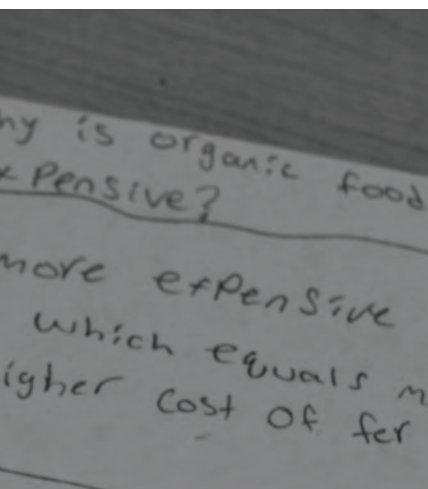
like several reporters, gave top marks to the organic bananas and organic orange juice.

Samantha Scott found the organic pretzels saltier. Lizmarie Ortiz found the organic banana to have “more flavor and firmer texture” but preferred the Hershey’s bar to the organic chocolate. It was “more chocolate-y.” Likewise, Kelsey Snedeker reported that the organic chocolate to have a “nasty aftertaste.” Mason Rickey decided that the organic carrots were only “a teensy-weensy bit better.”

Tuphen Outsola found the organic pretzels best and the non-organic orange juice better while Marc Gonzalez found that “for the most part, the organic food had a stronger taste.” Mr. Gonzalez noted that “I don’t like carrots, but the organic foods weren’t half bad.”



East Rock Record reporters brainstorm words useful when describing food (upper left); Team 3 discusses taste of organic and non-organic breakfast cereal (above); students research history of organic foods (left); and jot down notes on why organic foods typically cost more than non-organic food (far left).



Fair Play: New middle school gyms used for high school practice?

SPORTS FROM PAGE 4

costs so much money, New Haven does not charge any person who wants to be on a sports team, and they provide uniforms as well as transportation.

Afterschool sports offer one way for students to develop skills and stay fit. They also have physical education classes, but in some middle schools, Mr. Patchkovsky said, students only have class twice per week.

“I think that gym class if the budgets would allow, should be every day,” he said. “Right now it’s not every day. Optimal would be that kids had physical education every day.”

At East Rock Community Magnet School, students want more opportunities to play sports.

According to the East Rock Record Survey, 60 percent of students play a sport outside of school—but 80 percent said they would like to play a sport at school. The popular choices? Basketball, soccer, football, baseball, track, volleyball, and tennis.

Students said having school sports teams would have many benefits. Eighth grader Dericka Moses said sports teams would “make it like a real school and have a home team students can root for.” She also said that sports could fill long hours after school ends. “The school barely has anything so if we had some teams a lot of students would join because they want to be a part of something,” she said.

Lizmarie Ortiz, in 7th grade, said that sports could even help academics. “Students would have to keep good grades to be on sports teams, having

more teams would influence them to have good grades and work harder,” she said. Kelsey Snedeker, in 8th grade, said that afterschool would “motivate students to be more active, and encourage them to get fit and stay healthy. Kids will also have the chance to make new friends through these programs.”

Several educators also believe a stronger after school sports program would be good for students. Mary Glickman, a P.E. teacher at East Rock, says students are not getting enough hours of class each week and afterschool sports would be a great way to compensate for that limited chance to exercise.

Mr. Patchkovsky also sees benefits of afterschool sports on both a physical and social level. Many students view sports as a way to spend time with friends, be part of a team, and provide something after school that lets them get their energy out.

If after school sports make sense, why not offer them at East Rock School, which is newly renovated and has a large gymnasium?

“If we had the space, money, and staff, yes we should have more sports after school,” said Ms. Glickman, who met with East Rock Record reporters in the gym after school. Francine Wolf, a sixth grade teacher at East Rock, observed that, “you’d need a grant and you’d need transportation.”

Although East Rock School may not have any sports teams using its beautiful new gym, Ms. Glickman says high schools use gyms at middle schools for their practices. That, she says, makes it harder to create middle school sports programs. Some suggest forming a committee to find a solution.

After all, why shouldn’t middle school students be able to play a sport for their school?



PE Teacher Mary Glickman says students need more PE



Samantha Scott

FOOD & FITNESS

Bake it yourself: THE SECRET TO EXTRAORDINARY CUPCAKES!

BY LIZMARIE ORTIZ,
FATUMATA SHERIFF,
AND MARC GONZALEZ
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

How would you like to make the perfect cupcake to impress peers? We made nutella, Oreo, and mint cupcakes on Saturday May 3rd in the Sherriff kitchen. The magic began as our ingredients turned into a delicious treat fit for a queen.

Here's how you can do it too:

FIRST: NUTELLA CUPCAKE

You will need: Nutella, yellow cake mix, chocolate frosting, two zip-lock bags, cupcake pans and oven mits

1. Follow the directions on the cake mix box, baking cupcakes for about 10-15 minutes but check every five minutes using a fork or a knife to

see if it baked all the way through. If there is any cake mix on the fork or knife it's not ready.

2. When cupcakes are starting to cool put the chocolate frosting in a zip lock bag. Then use a butter knife to inject it near the bottom of the cupcake. Beware; cutting the bottom can ruin your cupcake. Cut a circle in the cupcake and remove the top. You insert a little frosting inside the cupcake, but too much frosting will overflow your cupcake.

3. Then place the top back on and frost with Nutella frosting in a circular fashion to cover the cut line and making a nice "pile." Once you finish you have a tasty nutella cupcake!

NEXT: MINT CUPCAKES!

You will need: Peppermint candies, blue cake mix, white frosting,

two zip lock bags, cupcake pans.

1. As you follow the directions on the box, crunch up six peppermint candies and add to the mix. Pour the batter into the pan, and bake.

2. Once they are done, let them cool. As they cool, make your white frosting. You will need to crunch more peppermints and put them into the frosting. Mix the frosting thoroughly.

3. Cut the cupcake the same way as the Nutella cupcakes. Put the mint frosting into the cupcake; replace the top. Frost. Now you have a minty indulgence!

LAST: OREO CUPCAKE

You will need: Oreos, chocolate cake mix, vanilla frosting, two zip lock bags.

1. Follow cake mix instructions.

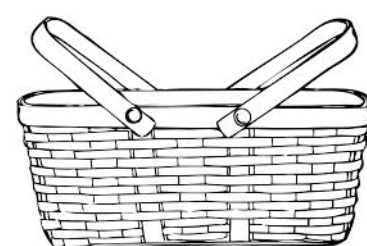
2. As you pour batter into each cupcake holder, place an Oreo inside.

3. As they bake, put vanilla frosting into a bowl. Take your first zip-lock with seven Oreos. Be sure to scrape the cream from the cookies! Crush into crumbs and add them to the frosting bowl and mix until it is grayish-brown.

4. Cut and fill cupcakes as before.

Now you have world famous decadent treats from Momma Sherriff and Ortiz!♥

**Don't forget the
East Rock School
FAMILY PICNIC
on JUNE 21!!!**



Should the state have a special tax on sugary drinks?

SODA TAX FROM PAGE 1

Harp's soda tax is the latest attempt to address this health issue. Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg also tried to fight obesity by limiting the portion size of soda to cut consumption. However, he faced resistance from residents who wanted the right to drink larger beverages and a New York state judge ruled that limiting drinks to 16 ounces was not legal.

Could a sugary drink tax work in New Haven?

In this state, cities and towns cannot create their own new taxes so a soda tax would have to extend to the entire state. Could such a state tax get passed in Hartford? State Rep. Roland Lemar said there is "a fair, though certainly not overwhelming, and amount of support amongst legislators to tax sugar-based beverages." While Rep. Lemar doubts "that a majority exists to actually pass the bill at this point," he does think the issue "is going to gain more support in the coming years as legislators try to tackle both the public health crisis and expense of obesity."

Even though the idea of the government taxing soda or limiting drink sizes is controversial, Rep. Lemar believes "that government policy should be part of the conversation when it comes to public health." He said that we "tax cigarettes and alcohol, and we now recognize that certain foods and sugar-based beverages have almost as negative an impact on our collective health as both of those things. No one like

taxes, but it costs a lot of money to support the 3.5 million residents of Connecticut and their respective needs. We recognize that obesity is costing people their lives and costing the state a lot of money in health care costs."

So how big of a health problem is sugar soda for adults and kids in New Haven?

Data from a 2013 report from Data Haven, a nonprofit organization that compiles and shares public information for the Greater New Haven area, showed that 47 percent of Greater New Haven residents

47 percent of New Haven residents drink sweetened beverages daily

said they consumed sweetened beverages daily, with most individuals drinking two or more cans per day. These survey results were not broken down by age but a Harvard survey done nationally from 1989-2008, reported that children between the ages of 6-11 increased their caloric intake from sugary beverages by 60 percent over that time.

They also increased their caloric

intake from 130 to 209 calories a day. The percentage of children in that age range drinking sugary beverages increased from 79 to 91 per-



New Haven Mayor Toni Harp would like to see a tax on sugary drinks to aid public health.

cent. The problem of overweight adolescents was found to be greater in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods where access to healthy food is limited.

At East Rock Community Magnet School, we conducted a survey asking students about drinking soda. Our results showed that out of 160 out of 225 or 71 percent of students consume 0-5 cans of soda per week, 21 percent drink 6-10 cans per week while only six percent drink 11 or more cans per week. When asked whether or not students thought drinking soda was unhealthy 77 percent responded "yes"!

"Yeah, soda is very unhealthy because it contains a lot of sugar and when you don't exercise you can get fat," says Elliah Helifetz, a Yale student mentor at East Rock Record.

"It's all about education," says Lorenzo Ligato, another Yale student mentor at the East Rock Record. "People should know what they drink and put into their body. Teachers and parents should educate kids about the risk of drinking too much soda. Soda is unhealthy because it has many calories."

Even though soda is unhealthy, many people say it is hard not to drink it. Some say the government should not be involved in stopping people from drinking sugary drinks.

Mark Pazniokas, Bureau Chief of the CT Mirror, an online newspaper, said some people point out that this looks like "the government is trying to be the nanny."

Senate Majority Leader Martin Looney believes soda drinkers have a lot of effects on health problems. But Sen. Gary Holder-Winfield says he's not sure the government should tax sugary drinks. "I have not come out against soda," he said when he met with East Rock Record reporters in the state Senate chambers in the Capitol. "I think the government sometimes goes a little far."

But over in the state House of Representatives, Rep. Lemar wants the tax, even though he does "drink sugary soda on occasion." "I know it's not good for me and I should give it up completely, but I still drink it sometimes – and I should pay a higher tax when I do!"

SUMMER READING & FUN

Sun's out, grab a great book!

HARRY POTTER: SCARY + FUNNY

BY MASON RICKEY AND SAMANTHA SCOTT
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

We think the Harry Potter books are good because they are mysterious, scary, and sometimes funny.

And here is one of the reasons why we think it is funny: In the first book, there was a three-headed dog named Fluffy. You could only get past him if you played music to him. The Harry Potter books are scary because in the fourth book Harry almost died, but somehow lived. Then, in the fifth book, he brought five others with him to the Ministry of Magic. There he fought some Death Eaters, Voldemort's supporters.

The books are very good, and they just get better and better. I think you should read them.

HANG OUT WITH ARTHUR!

BY KANAI KELLMAN
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

There's always a solution in the Arthur books. Arthur is a great student but he's always hanging out with someone who causes the problem. He always gets in trouble for the mess of D.W., his sister. Arthur has two sisters, D.W. and Kate. Arthur's baby sister Kate likes to walk around the house. The family gets excited because she never walks and she always crawls so when she walks they always get so hyped.

Arthur goes on field trips with his class mostly at the Sugar Bowl, where you can get hot cocoa, juice, and snacks. He goes to school, where his favorite subjects are art and math. Buster, Binky, Francine, Muffy, and the Brain are his friends. They go to the Sugar Bowl every day after school and they go to each others' houses. They play hide and go seek, video games, and imagine things in their minds. They always have a snack.

For problems, Arthur faces his teachers or his little sister D.W. He talks to his friends to get rid of his anger. When his little sister D.W. always touches his things without permission, he tells his mom and dad then they say "stop it" to D.W. and D.W. keeps on doing it! You can be in Kindergarten or older to enjoy these books.

DIVERGENT: twists, turns + action!

BY ANDREA CORONEL AND WILSON CORONEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Beatrice Prior is living in a dystopian future Chicago. The community is split into five factions, and each different faction was important: Condor (truthful), Amity (peaceful), Dauntless (brave), Erudite (intelligent), and Abnegation (selfless).

Once a year, every 16-year-old has the choice to stay with their family or go where they belong. They find out where they belong on the day before they get to choose what faction they are going to spend their whole entire lives in. This test is called an aptitude test that determines a person's skills in ability or a field of knowledge. Beatrice has to make a choice that is to go somewhere where she can be herself or stay with her family. The choice she picks is going to be very surprising for the readers and for her, too.

This book is amazing because Veronica Roth made the book with so many choices that the main characters could have made but they chose the opposite. This makes the story more exciting and opened up new ideas for the reader. Also I loved the action because there were so many twists and turns that I couldn't believe that happened. Don't get me started on her love interest Four. Is he divergent, too?? How does he hide being divergent then??

I would recommend Divergent to anybody in a heartbeat because it is so great. I can read the book and never get tired because of the action. I'll give the book 5 out of 5 stars and I would lend it to all my friends if I didn't get from the library.

So you heard it from me (actually us) folks: Read the book; it's amazing!

GUIDE TO SUMMER: 4 things to do

BY KYSEAN KELLMAN,
MILES LITTLE, AND DIERDRE LAWSON
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

1. Visit the South: If your family is looking for a place to visit, going down South would be fun. You get to bond on the trip. In the South you can ride a lawn mower in the street and can't get arrested for it. And go swimming because IT IS SOOOOOOOOOOOOOO HOT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
2. Celebrate the Fourth of July: Most families watch fireworks., but we also have a cookout, go to the park, and watch fireworks from a distance. We get to celebrate the birthday of America.
3. Play in the Park: You can play basketball and play tag with a friend. There are lots of swings and lots of grass to play on.
4. Go to the Beach: The beaches in Connecticut are awesome. You can get some food and go in the water. Do not drown in the water.

Babysitting this summer? Here's Help!

BY MYKELL HUNTER
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Recently I started babysitting my niece who is two years old. A few months ago when I first started, my niece used to scream, run all over the house, and throw stuff at me -- her bottle, her toys, and the TV remote.


Then I started realizing what she wanted and things got easier. I want to share some tips and tricks I've learned to help you take care of a baby.

Babies cry a lot.

1. One way you can help babies stop crying is to change their diaper.
2. Another way is to feed them. My niece's favorite food is french fries, and it calms her down to eat them.
3. I also take my niece to the park, but make sure to go with an adult like my sister. My niece runs a lot in the park, so it helps to have an extra person around.

Babies scream a lot.

1. One way you can help babies stop screaming is to give them some toys to play with. My niece LOVES her Thomas the Tank Engine toy.
2. Another way you stop them from screaming is to put them in the bath with toys, and this works for my niece.
3. I also (sometimes) let my niece watch TV to keep her from screaming.



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EDITORIAL & OPINION

Letter from Principal Pelley

Dear East Rock Community Magnet School Community,



Congratulations on another successful edition of the East Rock Record! I am extremely proud of our budding young journalists. The East Rock Record is a wonderful example of the dedication, commitment, and positive spirit of our students. Our journalism club participants have been quite busy chasing stories since our last edition came out in February.

I trust that you will thoroughly enjoy the 2nd edition of the East Rock Record. Special thanks to nationally recognized journalist Laura Pappano, student mentors from Yale University and Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School, East Rock staff and parents for providing our students with this amazing opportunity to have their voices heard.

Best wishes to all for a summer filled with great books and special memories!

Sincerely,
Peggy Pelley, Principal

The East Rock Record

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

Editorial and opinion writers: Aboubacar Kourouma, Kelsey Snedeker, Valamae Jenkins, Dericka Moses, Marc A. Gonzalez, Gianni Estrada, Mimi Bennett

Stop summer education loss: play (but read and study, too)

During summertime kids don't read which can affect them when they go back to school. It's bad when they waste time playing when they should be reading because then they will forget everything they were taught in school.

A lot of teachers say, "the more you read, the more you improve." So if you don't read during the summer, you won't get better at all because you wasted reading time playing when you could have done both.

Teachers pass out reading programs during the summer, but most kids don't give it to their parents because all they want to do in the summer is play. They say "summer is for fun, not education." I think that that's not true because it's for doing both -- having fun and doing educational things.

Do educational things at least three times a week and you will be all set.

Remember kids: don't forget to read during the summer! There is also this thing called Khan Academy where kids can go online and learn. It is a virtual learning website that is there all summer. If kids did that for at least a month they would be ahead of a lot of kids in their class.

FOUR TIPS FOR STAYING SHARP!!

1. Get a book you really enjoy and read it for at least 20 minutes
2. Print out a passage with questions and read it and answer the questions.
3. Go to a summer program that involves education in it.
4. Buy or make flash cards with math problems on them and review it every night before you go to bed.

—By **Aboubacar Kourouma**, *East Rock Record Editorial Writer*

8th grade bequests...

- I, Kelsey Snedeker, leave my seat in class to both of my nieces.
- I, Te'a Gray, leave my teachers to my sister Terrace Gray.
- I, Orlando Rodriguez, leave my lunch seat to my brother Julian.
- I, Alexandra Traveceras, leave my bus seat to my brother and sister.
- I, Tania Ramos, leave my seat in school to my brothers.
- I, Kevin Santiago, leave my bus seat to Kevin Romero and Hector Ortiz.
- I, David Pagan, class clown status to both of my sisters.
- I, Travis Jones, leave my bus seat to Saul Pabon.
- I, Isabella Lugo, leave my locker to my sister Kayla.
- I, Akilou Issifou, leave my seat in class to Khoshal Elyasis.
- I, Johanile Hurtado, leave my energetic personality to Karen Escalera.

Sugary drink tax looks like government overreach

Some people in Connecticut believe soda tax is a good way to fight health problems like obesity and diabetes. Using this line of thinking of taxing foods that are unhealthy, the government could tax fast food, soda, candy, and many junk foods.

Is it the government's fault that so many children and adults are obese? Kids and parents should make their own decisions about what they eat and drink. Parents should be disciplined about what their child consumes. Soda is bad for you because of the amount of sugar, but people are capable of controlling the amount of sugar soda they drink.

People have different opinions on this. Mayor Toni Harp wants to see a tax on sugary drinks. Others disagree. It's important to see, however, that it's really not only soda that makes people fat. Plus there are other ways to get people to be healthier. Maybe we should have more activities in New Haven to decrease the amount of obesity and increase people's health? I think parents of all kids should have control over what they and their child consume on a daily basis.

Back in 2008, I remember we could buy sodas, hot wings, cheese pretzels, and different type of sweets during lunch at school, but now we receive wheat bread, milk, water, and different fruits. I agree with the change and it shows that the problem isn't only with sodas. Most people understand soda is unhealthy but they should be able to make their own decisions about how much to drink without the government throwing in their two cents (or adding it to the cost of a soda).

—By **Kelsey Snedeker**, *East Rock Record Editorial Writer*

Thank you!

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OPINION

WNBA players need better pay: Male-female gap too large

Right now the average salary for a WNBA player is \$72,000 a year. On average, male NBA players get \$3.4 million a year, 47 times more than the women. I think the WNBA should be paid as much as the NBA players make a year.

Women devote equal time and effort to the sport, and just because they are women doesn't mean they should be discriminated against and get less pay than men.

The WNBA also receives much less publicity than the NBA. WNBA games are broadcast on less popular TV channels. The WNBA championship game had 548,000 viewers, and the NBA championship games have 18.2 million viewers, 33 times as many.

Low pay is sending best female basketball players abroad

If they received more attention, they would have as many fans interested in watching their games as the NBA. While you're watching an NBA game, you see stands filled with thousands of people cheering and roaring for the team. When you attend a WNBA game, you see fewer seats filled with people cheering and roaring them on.

Having been to both an NBA game and a WNBA game before, I think that both games were just as fun and exciting.

The United States is losing some of its female players to other countries. The most a WNBA team can spend on all their player salaries in a year is \$913,000. The salary cap for player salaries in the NBA is \$58 million per team. Because of this salary gap, No. 1 WNBA draft pick Brittney Griner signed with the WCBA, the Women's Chinese Basketball Association. She could only get paid \$49,440 as a rookie for the Phoenix Mercury, but, in comparison, makes approximately \$600,000 a year playing basketball in China. We should not be losing our best players to foreign countries. The United States should pay our women what they deserve.

—Valamae Jenkins *East Rock Record Opinion*

Common Curriculum = Equal Learning Chances?

Is the city of New Haven's new school uniform curriculum, really uniform? With the new Smarter Balanced Assessment Curriculum testing in place as part of the Common Core standards, the whole country's curriculum should be the same. It's possible that some schools may have a stronger group of brains, but chances to succeed should be equal.

At a math competition recently held at Yale for middle schools, students at some schools breezed through while others got stuck at question one. Is this because some schools get to choose their students? Or is it because the uniform curriculum isn't getting across the same way? Are all students getting the same chances to learn? As a district we should make sure that when people see "New Haven Public Schools" on a resume they will be excited, knowing that no matter what particular school they attended that the curriculum – and the learning – is world class.

—Marc A. Gonzalez *East Rock Record Opinion*

Farewell East Rock!

Graduation is a big deal for the 8th graders because we finally get to leave East Rock (not that we won't miss it here).

We are so excited to get to high school because we get to make new friends and be in a new environment. All year long people worry about what school they are going to and if they will get in. When they finally get the letter about where they will go, they are super-excited.

When we start shopping for our 8th grade dinner dance outfit, we will also be looking for our graduation outfit, too! When we walk across the stage a lot will be going through our minds and we will be thinking about all our memories at East Rock. I wish all my friends at East Rock good luck in the future and don't forget me, Dericka!



—Dericka Moses *East Rock Record Opinion*

Amusement parks & work: yes, you can enjoy both!

Do you like sitting in a chair all day or in an amusement park such as Lake Compounce?

How about this: Maybe work could be fun, such as math. You can make geometric shapes in math class. I'm pretty sure a lot of kids would rather be on roller coaster. I would like to.

The problem is that sitting in a chair all day will ruin your fitness and too much work can stress you out. There are a lot of choices to make.

There are also a lot of choices at amusement parks. Will you start off with the water park or the fun loopy rides? My favorites is the "Thunder Dash." It goes as fast as thunder, literally.

The best advice I have is to do your work and go on some awesome rides.

—Gianni Estrada *East Rock Record Opinion*

DEBATE: IS CHEERLEADING A SPORT? OR NOT?

So, my friend Mimi thinks cheerleading is not a sport but it really is. Why is it a sport? Cheerleading is a sport because you have to exercise, and like other sports you have to practice. You have to learn routines just like in basketball you have to learn plays. In cheerleading you have uniforms just like other sports. Not all sports involve a ball. In cheerleading the main goal is to learn the routine and perform it. Cheerleaders do not just jump around all day. They learn new routines and tricks so they can wow people for the big game. —Dericka Moses *East Rock Record Opinion*

My friend Dericka thinks cheerleading is a sport. I am here to explain why I think it is NOT a sport. One reason is because it does not involve a ball. Most sports like soccer, baseball, basketball, tennis, are unlike cheerleading, which does not involve a ball. Another reason is because there is no objective. For instance, basketball's purpose is to shoot the ball into the hoop. Soccer's purpose is to kick the ball into the goal. On the other hand, cheerleading does not have a purpose. Like what are you doing, jumping around all day? —Mimi Bennett *East Rock Record Opinion*



East Rock Record Reporters work with Yale and Coop HS Student mentors and East Rock teacher mentors on deadline in the East Rock Record "newsroom" (East Rock computer lab).

they came together to be closer. and to be free.

On October 17, 2013, dozens of cancer survivors from Smilow Cancer Hospital, along with family, friends and caregivers, gathered on Water Street in New Haven to share in the spirit of community. The project they participated in was the painting of a mural. They battled some of the most difficult forms of cancer. Yet thanks to the amazing advancements we have made in research and treatment, and through their own remarkable determination, they came together to beautify a neighborhood. And they delivered a powerful message: That cancer can be beaten. And that through science, compassion and the sheer belief in what is possible, the world is closer to free.



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