

The East Rock Record

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REPORTERS MEET LEGISLATORS

Questions on racial profiling, sick days, college costs



Clockwise from top left, reporters interview Rep. Toni Walker; Sen. Gary Winfield and Rep. Robyn Porter in the Senate chamber; pose at Capitol.

BY WILSON CORONEL AND EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

East Rock Record reporters traveled to Hartford to meet with key New Haven legislators at the State Capitol. Lawmakers were getting ready to debate the budget and important laws. It was the same day that a report on racial profiling came out.

Thirty-two reporters met with Rep. Toni Walker, Rep. Robyn Porter, and Sen. Gary Winfield and poked their brains

with numerous questions and topics. Reporters also went to the press room and asked questions to Mark Pazniokas, bureau chief of the Connecticut Mirror. The press area had different people working with different newspapers and the radio and all sharing one room.

The big news of the day was a report on racial profiling by police in different communities. When Rep. Porter met with reporters, she brought a copy of the report. Sen. Winfield said

racial profiling is a problem. Some places need to pay more attention that they are not just pulling over people because of their skin color.

“New Haven and the larger cities that have people of different ethnicities tend to do better than the suburbs,” he said. Sen. Winfield said the report shows suburbs that aren’t used to seeing black people have the biggest problems, bigger than in cities like New Haven or in smaller towns. Those suburbs,

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College is key, but how to pay for it?

NH Promise can help—if you qualify

BY MARC GONZALEZ, VALAMAE JENKINS, NATALIE MAYNARD, MELANIE CONTRERAS AND DANIEL BEDOYA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

EDITED BY DANIELA RODRIGUES FARIA BRIGHENTI, KELLY ROSS AND KAYLA IANNUCILLI

Going to college is nowadays seen as a necessary step to a bright future. But attending can cost tens of thousands of dollars a year. How are students and parents supposed to pay such a price?

President Obama in his State of the Union speech earlier this year brought the issue to national attention when he called for making the first two years of college free. In Connecticut, Hartford legislators say they want to make college more affordable. But the state Board of Regents last month voted to raise tuition at public colleges and universities by 5.3 percent.

That means average tuition and fees for state four-year colleges and universities will rise from \$9,168 to \$9,609 and from \$3,846 to \$4,032 at community colleges. Just 10 years ago, in 2004-2005, tuition and fees at 4-year state schools was only \$5,611. At community colleges, it was \$2,406.



Patricia Mellon, Executive Director of New Haven Promise, meets with East Rock Record reporters to talk about the scholarship program.

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Grades matter — and they also confuse

BY DAVONNA BENSON, ISABEL FAUSTINO AND VICTORIA PRASEUTH
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY JACQUELINE SALZINGER

“Nerve-wracking.” “Happy.” “Scared.” “Excited.” “Frustrated.” “Fair.”

When we asked East Rock students to describe their feelings about report card grades in one word, this is what we heard. Some words are positive and some are negative. Students have mixed feelings about grades. And—guess what?—so do teachers.

Most students say they care about their grades, and 89 percent of students who responded to the East Rock Record Spring 2015 survey said they care “a lot” about their grades.

Yet why do students feel so differently? What makes grades such a touchy issue?

At East Rock Community Magnet School younger students are graded on report cards



Nisha Brown

using two systems: “3 = goal,” “2 = proficient,” “or 1 = basic” on academic abilities and “consistently,” “usually,” or “needs improvement” on classroom “behaviors that support learning.”

Starting at fifth grade, students are graded using letters A through F. School counselor Kristin Cicarella says the switch is because students “mature” and are dealing with a new “level of work” alongside increased “cognitive abilities.”

There are also, she said, “three honor roll categories based on GPA,” which stands for “grade point average.”

High Honors with Distinction goes to students with straight A’s, High Honors to those with a couple of B’s, and Honors to mostly B’s and some A’s. Students who fall into one of these categories

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P.E. Prob: Not enough time!

BY NASIR ANDERSON, FALLOU SOKHNA, NELLIE JACKSON AND RAVI PATEL
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EDITED BY JILLIAN KRAVATZ

Students at East Rock Community School are not getting enough physical education.

According to the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, elementary school students should have 150 minutes of physical education per week, and middle school students should have 225 minutes.

Some states follow these guides, but Connecticut only requires that students have physical education without saying how often or long it should be. The state curriculum guides say elementary school students should have 60 to 100 minutes of physical education each week and 80 to 120 minutes in middle school. But state law also says districts don’t have to follow those recommendations.

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Time for P.E. not uniform across grades

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That gives physical education limited time in the school day.

"I know not only East Rock, but most schools in the state of Connecticut do not meet the recommended amount of time for P.E.," said Mr. Chad Rowan, a physical educator at East Rock who supervises gym classes for grades 5-8. "I definitely think we need more time in physical education."

Studies show that P.E. has lots of benefits. It helps kids stay healthy and strong overall, and research shows that exercise helps kids focus and learn. It is also fun to do and improves kids' moods. Health experts also say that increasing physical education in schools is key to combating childhood obesity.

"After so many hours of sitting, children get restless," said Ms. Daisy Gonzalez, East Rock PTO President and New Haven Board of Education member. "They need to get up and move. Then they can sit and focus on what they are going to learn."

Ms. Erin Salzano, a third grade teacher, said that "students are definitely calmer after gym and recess."

Other teachers agree. "I think P.E. is fantastic. It gets kids moving and teaches them about rules and discipline," said second grade teacher Ms. Dawn DeNuzzo.

Students at East Rock think they should be getting more time in gym class. The East Rock Record Spring

2015 survey showed that 86 percent of those surveyed wanted more P.E. Students disagree on the number of minutes that should be added to gym

Students in grades 3 and 4 get the least amount of P.E., just 90 mins. per week

class, however, with the largest group, 46 percent, suggesting an extra 30 minutes.

Some students at East Rock School are also upset because some grades get less P.E. than others. Third and fourth graders get the least amount of class each week. Some kids think this is wrong. Madison Wieliesz, a fourth grader, said that she wishes fourth grade got as much gym class as other grades.

East Rock School physical education teacher Ms. Mary Glickman said students in kindergarten and grades 7 and 8 get 110 minutes of PE per week; those in grades 1, 2, 5, and 6 have 100 minutes; and those in grades 3 and 4 get 90 minutes per week.

Having more gym class might not be easy for East Rock. "I don't know if there is room for more PE classes," said Ms. Salzano. "I think kids should be having three or four classes a week,

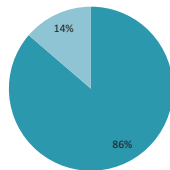
but it's really a scheduling conflict."

Luckily, gym class is not the only place to get exercise. Kids can also get exercise during recess or in after school activities. Teachers can also lead physical activities in the classroom, which research shows improves learning. East Rock gym teachers Mr. Rowan and Ms. Glickman sent out emails to East Rock classroom teachers sharing videos by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. These videos can be played on the smart-board and get kids moving with Zumba, fitness with Bob Harper, and Tae-Bo with Billy Blank.

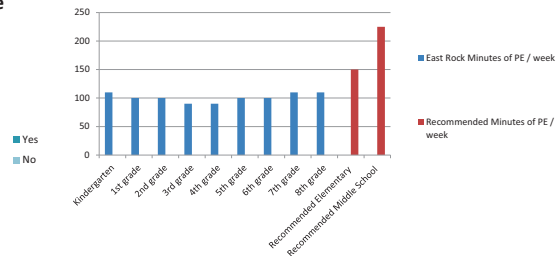


East Rock PE teacher Mr. Chad Rowan Teaching kids about physical education is about more than just playing games in class, said Mr. Rowan, who says they try to train students to continue exercising on their own. "It is important to teach kids things that they can do outside of school."

Should students have more gym class?



Physical Education



Source: East Rock Record Spring 2015 survey. Graphs made by Nellie Jackson

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SCHOOL NEWS

Fun, challenging learning happening in TAG

BY GIOVANNI OCASIO AND NISHA BROWN
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY RACHEL STRODEL

What does a chocolate chip cookie excavation—removing the chips from the rest—have to do with archeology? Both require you to be very, very careful.

This is one example of the activities that students do in the Talented and Gifted Program, known as “TAG” at East Rock Community Magnet School.

The goal of TAG is to allow students to grow and to help let them explore the arts and sciences. Students in the TAG program meet for two hours every week to learn about subjects ranging from forensics to the sociology of food. On special occasions, students go on field trips related to the TAG curriculum.

Fourth and fifth graders in the TAG program plan and build inventions that could help a person in their daily life activities, such as shopping and walking a dog. Students also learn about the history of important inventions and their inventors.

There are 550 students in grades 4 through 8 enrolled in TAG across New Haven, including 19 at East Rock School.

In the past, students from all over New Haven would travel from their own schools to a site where two TAG teachers would co-teach the TAG class. This year, Mr. Jason Catala, the TAG teacher for East Rock Community Magnet School who met with East Rock Record reporters, said that “the teachers go from school to school to teach the students.”

In the past, valuable instruction time was lost to transportation. Now students have more time to learn during TAG, he said. Mr. Catala also works with students at the Clinton Avenue School, Lincoln-Bassett School, Ross Woodward Classical Studies School, Benjamin Jepson School, and John C. Daniels School.

In case you were wondering: Not everyone in TAG is a test genius. Mr. Catala said that you



Talented and Gifted teacher Mr. Jason Catala talks with reporters.

don't have to be a perfect test-taker to get into the program.

“I was a classroom teacher once,” he said. “And there were students that I would nominate who maybe didn't test as well, but who had what we're looking for in TAG: students who think outside the box, who put in the extra effort.”

What does it take to get into TAG?

Students who score in the top 15 percent on state reading and math assessments or who are nominated by a teacher are invited to take a special test given once a year (in February or March) called the OLSAT for Otis-Lennon School Ability Test. TAG teachers also look at more than just OLSAT scores to decide if a student gets into TAG: a portfolio of the students' work, an essay and a teacher recommendation are also important deciding factors.

“We're still trying to figure out how to weigh each component,” Mr. Catala said.

According to Mr. Catala the curriculum for TAG is different from regular classes.

“Last year the 6th through 8th graders did archeology,” he said. This year students in those

grades will explore the sociology of food. “We rotate our curriculum and write it over the summer,” he said. As the cookie excavation example shows, Mr. Catala said, TAG is more hands-on than regular classes.

The experience is so special, he said, that students who go on to other talented and gifted programs, miss the program in New Haven.

The number of TAG students at East Rock went up in recent years. “This year, seven new TAG students entered the program in a year when the test was new and challenging,” Mr. Catala said.

But there are still more students in other schools that go to TAG. Ross Woodward School has the highest number of students that got into the TAG program. Some students quit the TAG program when they are in 8th grade and feel the pressure of being at a higher grade level and moving up to high school.

Sometimes, students have to miss class when they go on TAG field trips, making it more difficult to keep up with regular classes.

Marc Gonzales, an eighth grader at East Rock, said that participating in TAG has been a rewarding experience since he got into the program in third grade. “I love it,” he said. “It's a smaller environment, and you get to learn more challenging things and get a deeper understanding of what you're learning through hands-on activities.”

But Mr. Gonzalez sees room for improvement in the TAG program. “I think TAG could work on fitting more into the time they have to teach, since it only meets once a week.”

Analys Rivera, a seventh grader who is not in the program said that TAG should be accessible to more students. “It's not very fair, because you're not giving kids the opportunity to be in something they want to be in,” she said.

Other students who aren't in TAG, like Madison Wieliesz, say that it's fair that TAG is offered to some students and not others. “It's based on talent,” she said, “and some people are very talented, so they deserve to be in TAG.”

Cool team that competes: Mathcounts

BY JAMES MACIEL-ANDREWS
AND AALIYAH RODRIGUEZ
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY LYNDIA BLANCATO AND
RACHEL STRODEL

Imagine a math problem flashes on a board and you don't even get to read it before a contestant buzzes in and answers the question correctly. This actually happened at one Mathcounts competition.

Mr. John Kennedy, the seventh and eighth grade math teacher, has many students who are high achievers and accomplish the curriculum easily. That inspired him to bring to East Rock a program for kids who have advanced math abilities. Mr. Kennedy has taught math at East Rock for eight years, and started the

Mathcounts team four years ago.

Students join Mathcounts by invitation only. “If students are motivated in math and are recommended by their teachers, they get in,” said Mr. Kennedy.

Right now, the team is fairly small. Being on the Mathcounts team is a big commitment, said Mr. Kennedy. Some students can't participate if they don't have a ride home, or quit if they find the problems too challenging. In Mathcounts, students get very involved in their work, and are always ready to learn.

The students do challenging problems that Mr. Kennedy said are “reflective of the Common Core state test” that help get them ready to

participate in the competition. The problems also can help in life and in school classes.

Kelsey Snedeker, who is in 9th grade at Career High School, did Mathcounts last year at East Rock School with Mr. Kennedy. Through the program, she learned two- and three-step algebra equations. This year, she said, “I knew how to do it when I got to high school because Mr. Kennedy showed me in Mathcounts.”

The East Rock Mathcounts team will participate in a district-wide competition this month. East Rock usually does well in the tournament, but hasn't yet won a trophy. The tournament consists of three rounds

of competition: a speed round, an individual round, and a team test. The competition is Mr. Kennedy's favorite part and he's hoping to take home that trophy this year.



Mathcounts teacher Mr. Kennedy wants trophy.

SCHOOL NEWS

Surprise: Teachers don't always love giving grades

GRADES FROM PAGE 1

except they they have one C+ get Honorable.

Kelsey Snedeker, a ninth-grader at Career High School, graduated East Rock last year and said that East Rock grading prepared her for high school, which uses A-F grading. "It motivates me to actually think" about earning grades, she said. "When a teacher says something, it doesn't go in one ear and out the other because I know I'm going to have a test on that."

But grades may not make all students work harder. They make some scared or nervous. "Some people, if they get one bad grade, they're like 'I'm just going to do bad.' They think they're bad after just one bad grade," said third grader Nasir Anderson.

Teachers worry about this, too. Several said they want to grade students for their progress. Fourth grader teacher Ms. Angela Maiocco, who we found working on grades after school, said that "a lot of kids need a label" and "if you don't achieve, you work towards it." She said the grading system is not "specific enough" and letters are too general.

"There's a lot that goes on in between" the letter grade categories, she said. Sometimes Ms. Maiocco feels that grading is a "waste of time" because other parts of her job are more important. "It's not why I signed up to be a teacher."

Ms. Emily Phillips, a special education teacher, agrees. "I like working with students and I don't

really like grading them," she said. "Grades can mean putting someone in a category. I try to give



East Rock PTO president Daisy Gonzalez wants to make it easier for parents to be able to check student grades, homework and attendance.

grades based on how much effort a student puts in." Ms. Dawn Denuzzo, a second grade teacher, also worries about grade categories. "I think that kids should be graded on their progress and effort," she said. If students see too many numbers and letters that are low, "unless parents praise them for effort, this can be negative."

Ms. Daisy Gonzalez, PTO president and member of the New Haven Board of Education, said it's important for parents to be involved. "What I've found is if parents don't care, children won't care," she said.

Aryana Snedeker, an East Rock third grader, said one reason she is "proud" of her grades is because she said her "family encourages me to get good grades." Ms. Gonzalez sees many ways parents can be involved. While its important for

parents to keep track of how students are doing, Ms. Gonzalez said it is "harder for working and single parents" and parents who don't speak English as their first language to check grades. She wants to fix that. She said there is a new app for your cell phone called Power School that lets parents check grades, homework, and absences. It is only for a few grades now but Ms. Gonzalez said there are plans to expand it.

Grades are important to everyone, but right now many students are not earning grades that will help them in the future. A 2014 Rand Cor-

"Some people if they get one bad grade, they're like 'I'm just going to do bad.'"

poration study found that only one-third of New Haven Public School students graduate with a 3.0 GPA or higher. The East Rock Record Spring 2015 survey shows that students care about grades, but also worry about them: 45 percent of students said grades were "the biggest challenge in getting to college."

Grades matter. Or as East Rock student Mr. Anderson put it: "You should get good grades to get into a good college. They have college for people who don't have good grades. Some people when they get bad grades don't go to college. Sometimes they don't even finish high school."

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SCHOOL NEWS

DISCIPLINE: Sounds scary, but it's not always

BY MELANIE SOTO, VICTOR KLUTSEY
AND MEET PATEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY CHRISTINA BARTZOKIS

"Discipline" is a scary word. Students might think it's all about penalties—like detention and suspension. It can be, but there are also other types of discipline that East Rock students should know about.

Some discipline is punishment, but "discipline" may also reward students for good behavior. It is called "positive reinforcement." Honor Roll, High Honors, Student of the Month or Year, Dream tickets and prizes that you earn are examples of positive reinforcement.

"I think positive reinforcement is better than detention," said Ms. Daisy Gonzalez, president of the East Rock School Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and a member of the New Haven Board of Education. She would rather see school leaders and teachers encourage good behavior rather than punish bad. "I think positive reinforcement is better than detention," she said, adding that detention "should only be used as a last resort."

Most students at East Rock School are well behaved. According to the Spring 2015 survey, only 26 percent of students said they had been sent to the principal's office for bad behavior. The survey also showed that about two-thirds of students said teachers and school leaders were fair in handling discipline issues.

In some schools, discipline is a more serious issue. Across the district, school officials are trying to figure out how to use positive reinforcement more often to correct student misbehavior. Dr. Damaris Rau, the Executive Director of Schools, and Gemma Joseph—Lumpkin, Executive Manager of District Strategy and Coordination, said that schools are trying "developmentally appropriate discipline strategies" that might make students more aware of consequences of

their actions, urging students to make better choices, and to see their role in the classroom community. The district is also looking into using "restorative justice" which they said gives those who have acted wrongly "a chance to 'make amends to repair the harm they have caused.'"

These are good ideas, but many teachers said that sometimes students do need to face punishment for bad actions. Ms. Kelly Ross, a Read 180 teacher at East Rock, said sometimes punishments like detention are needed to "keep order in

time to think about what they did wrong, and how to fix it. If a teacher thinks a student should be suspended, they write a referral that is read by the school administration. School leaders decide whether or not to suspend the student after a discussion among all administrators or, in some cases, by a single administrator who was directly involved with the event.

Ms. Gonzalez said that students given in-school suspension should remain in an academic environment, which she described as a separate

Only 26 percent of students say they have been sent to the office. Two-thirds say school discipline is "fair."



Fifth grade teacher Nicole Wischert answers questions from East Rock reporters on discipline.

the classroom, so the children who want to learn can get an education."

When children misbehave, teachers have several options. If a student receives a detention, that can take place during lunch or after school.

In some cases, a teacher may believe a student should be suspended. There are two types of suspension: in-school (children stay at school) and out-of-school (children are sent home). Both teachers and administrators said in-school suspension should be used more often than out-of-school suspension.

Ms. Nicole Wischert, who teaches fifth grade, said that schools should serve suspension in school for less serious offenses. In serious cases, she said, out-of-school suspension can give them

classroom where they are supervised and can continue to do their schoolwork. Ms. Ross agreed and said that East Rock School "needs a space and certified staff member to run it."

Teachers say that discipline helps students learn. Vice principal Ms. Leslie White DePriest said that children most often get in trouble as a result of conflicts and misunderstandings between students, or because they don't follow a teacher's directions. Ms. Ross said that children should be held accountable, but also added that children must be in class so that they can learn. The many types of discipline at East Rock aim to create a good environment so that students can achieve their goals and get higher grades.

Reading challenge: Ice cream party not big enough lure for students

BY OSIANA BROWN AND ARYANA SNEDEKER
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY KELSEY SNEDEKER

Would you read 25 books if that would get you invited to an ice cream party?

That seems like a good deal to students who answered the East Rock Record Spring 2015 survey: 69 percent said they would. But last fall, only 80 students in East Rock School turned in summer reading journals, required as part of the Reading Challenge.

Why aren't more students participating?

Ms. Leslie White DePriest, assistant principal, said that while many students enjoy reading many also "don't see the value of completing a journal, and getting ice cream is not enough of a motivator to get them to 'buy into' the challenge." She said more students would participate "if the reward was something they valued, for example the picnic at the park that is going to be a part of the Spring challenge."

Some students like fourth grader Madison Rodriguez have participated in the past but did not do so this year. What's changed? Students cite several reasons.

Fifth grader Maik Gamble did not participate because, he says, "it wasn't fun" and felt as though an ice cream social was not enough to motivate him to read 25 books over the summer. He said he would have participated in the Reading Challenge if the prize was bigger, something like Lego people.

Jaquan Brown, a 6th grader at East Rock, did not participate because he simply did not know about the Reading Challenge.

80 percent of students say they love to read, but few completed reading challenge journals

Do students need a prize to read? Ms. Kelly Ross, a Read 180 teacher, believes so. "In order to motivate young people to read, we need to have some kind of incentive in place," she said.

The East Rock Record survey shows that about 80 percent of students said they love to read. Second grader Anshul Patel read 25 books for the Reading Challenge because he "loves reading. It's

my favorite subject."

Alec Samsel, also a second grader, read 45 books for the Reading Challenge because his dad wanted him to. Fourth grader, Nellie Jackson read 28 books because she likes reading. The best book she read was "Pete the Cat Gets a Bath."

Most of the students who participate in the Reading Challenge are in younger grades. Ms. Paula Daitzman, who is in charge of the East Rock Library, said that 72 percent of students in K through grade 2 turned in reading journals in fall of 2014, while four students in grade 6 and none in grades 7 or 8.

This spring East Rock School will be starting a new reading program called the Literacy Fair. The Literacy Fair will be like a Science Fair, but students will create displays about their favorite books instead of science experiments.

The district wants to start a new district-wide reading incentive program. East Rock School started the Principal's Reading Incentive Program in fall 2010.

See book reviews on page 12!

Begin Your Promise... Today!



There is a new process to begin the pledge for the New Haven Promise Scholarship and students, starting as early as sixth grade, can sign up online.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

NH PROMISE FROM PAGE 1

New Haven Promise pays tuition if you work hard and qualify!

College is getting more expensive every year, but New Haven students have something that can help. New Haven Promise is a program that covers up to \$10,000 in tuition per year for qualified students to attend local public colleges. Those who attend Connecticut private colleges can get up to \$2,500 each year to pay tuition at those schools. Promise scholars who attend college out-of-state can participate in a paid internship program.

"New Haven Promise can really help you during college because college really isn't cheap," said Kevin Rivas, a senior at Wilbur Cross High School, who will take advantage of the New Haven Promise financial help when he starts college in the fall. "It can cover all of our tuition, which is a real stress reliever and a big load off the shoulder of students."

New Haven Promise right now is serving 550 scholars who are enrolled in 20 different colleges, including 17 students at Yale and 112 students at the University of Connecticut. There will be another 200 scholars announced in July. This year the program will award a total of \$1.2 million in scholarship money.

To be eligible for the New Haven Promise, students must live in New Haven, maintain a 3.0 grade point average (GPA), a "B" average, have fewer than 72 absences during high school, and do 40 hours of community service by senior year. Students who meet these requirements can earn a bachelor's degree for \$0 in tuition. This does not mean college is free, said Ms. Patricia Melton, Executive Director of New Haven Promise.

"You still have to get other scholarships," she said. "We don't pay for fees and we don't pay for room and board. No books." The program also covers tuition only for students attending Connecticut schools, which aims to get students to stay in state and contribute to the community.

New Haven Promise scholars also perform a lot of community service. During high school, Mr. Rivas coached youth in sports and ran a blood drive. He has also served as student council president, worked as a lifeguard, and, of course, kept up his grades. Now he can get help paying for college thanks to the New Haven Promise.

His advice? "Don't be afraid to be a smart kid,"

Mr. Rivas said. "In the long run it will help you out. It's the road to success in the future."

Not all students are taking advantage of New Haven Promise. A November 2014 report by Rand Corporation showed that only 36 percent of the New Haven Public School graduating class of 2013 met the New Haven Promise criteria. The biggest barrier was grades. Only 44 percent of

a degree. State Sen. Gary Winfield told reporters when we visited the Capitol that "very few people in this building would oppose a bill that makes college affordable." He doesn't know what the solution is but expects legislators to come up with a plan because college has gotten too expensive. "The cost of college has gone up to the point where it's very difficult to go to college," he said.



East Rock Record reporters interview New Haven Promise scholar Kevin Rivas, who is a senior at Wilbur Cross High School.

seniors had a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

When Ms. Melton met with East Rock Record reporters, she pointed out that the requirements are not unreasonable. One problem, she said, is that students in some neighborhoods seem unaware of the requirements, which is why she wants students to learn about it earlier in their school careers.

"It's important that everyone know about it," she said, adding that students can sign up at any time, not just when they reach high school.

Many students do not know about the program. The East Rock Record Spring 2015 survey showed that only 42 percent of students had heard of New Haven Promise, even though 94 percent plan to go to college.

When we asked students what would be their biggest challenge in getting to college, 45 percent responded "grades," while 24 percent said "cost." Another 20 percent said "knowing how college works" was a barrier and 11 percent said "knowing how to apply."

For many students here and across the country, college costs are a major barrier to earning

President Obama wants anyone in the country to get a college degree if they want to by making community college tuition—free. "Not everyone has funds to go to college and this gives everyone a chance to learn and go further," said Cherron Mike, an East Rock parent.

Getting help paying for college matters. But one valuable piece of New Haven Promise doesn't have to do with money, said Ms. Melton who said Promise officials stay in touch. "Instead of going away to college all by yourself," said Ms. Melton, "you have a whole city there to cheer you on."

Want to be a NH Promise Scholar? Here's what you need to do:

1. You can apply yourself as early as 6th grade.
2. Get good grades! Have a GPA of 3.0 or better
3. Perform 40 hours of community service.
4. Have fewer than 72 absences in high school.
5. Live in New Haven, attend NH schools.
6. Don't get in trouble!

— By Daniel Bedoya

Promise Scholar Kevin Rivas: 'Don't be afraid to be a smart kid'

BY NATALIE MAYNARD AND
MELANIE CONTRERAS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY KAYLA IANNUCCILLI

Kevin Rivas is going to college next year—and he is excited that he will get help paying for it. Mr. Rivas is a New Haven Promise scholar. "College really is not cheap and it can cover all of our tuition, a real stress reliever and a big load off the shoulder of students," he said when he met with reporters from the East Rock Record.

Mr. Rivas is a senior at Wilbur Cross and is the highest-ranked student who is not Caucasian. He said he is #4 in his class. Mr. Rivas

was born in Puerto Rico. He is very involved at school. He has been president of the student government, captain of the varsity baseball team since his junior year and is founder of a swim club. He also ran a blood drive at Wilbur Cross.

He also does a lot of community service by helping to coach both basketball and baseball and running the Special Olympics Open Eyes program. Mr. Rivas applied to 16 different colleges, including Yale, Columbia, and the University of Connecticut. He was accepted early to Penn State and Central Connecticut State University. He was

accepted at *nine* colleges and will likely attend the University of New Haven. Mr. Rivas said he plans to major in mechanical engineering, and also wants to play baseball.

He has a lot of good advice for younger students. "Don't be afraid to be a smart kid," he said. "You might not look cool now but in the long run it will help you out. It's the road to success in the future."

It's also important, he said, to keep your grades up and get involved in community service early. "Don't wait until your junior or your senior year to get started," he said. "When it comes to senior year you're doing

all your applications and applying for scholarships."



New Haven Promise scholar Kevin Rivas will likely attend the University of New Haven in the Fall to study mechanical engineering.

COMMUNITY NEWS

East Rock Reporters visit state Capitol

CAPITOL FROM PAGE 1

"they don't know how to deal" with people of color. "They treat us differently," he said.

Sen. Winfield said one solution might be to have police wear body cameras "so we don't have to take the word of the cop or your word, the video is going to tell us the truth."

Reporters also asked questions about the state budget, college costs, gun violence, vacations, how laws are passed, and how they got their jobs and what they do if they are sick. Sen. Winfield said you can never get sick because the meetings will still go on without you and one person can make a big difference. "If I get sick, people I represent don't get representation," he said.

Reporters also interviewed Sen. Robyn Porter, who represents Hamden and New Haven. She said she loves her job but says it is a lot of work. "Sometimes we are here until 2, 3, 4 in the morning," she said.

When Rep. Toni Walker arrived in the Senate chambers, she spoke about the start of her career in politics in 2001. She said she felt like a student because she didn't know anything about politics when she started.

Rep. Walker said representatives and senators hear a lot of ideas for laws. If a law turns out to

be a problem or not liked by the people, she said, they can look at it again. "Laws aren't always finished, you can always change laws," she said.

But in order to change the law you need to have a group of people who also don't think that certain law is good. This process may take months or even years.

In the press room, Mr. Pazniokas told reporters that he had always wanted to be a reporter. He started in 1979, and in those years he learned that every story has difficult and easy parts. He said some days are crazier than others; sometimes he has to write only one story, but sometimes this number can go up to four.

Mr. Pazniokas also told reporters about the difficulties of the job. When asked if he gets frustrated, Mr. Pazniokas admitted that, "Yes ... when people don't tell me what I want them to. Or don't answer the phone."

The inside of the state capitol was very formal and fancy. It had nice tiles on the floor and it was kept very clean. There were statues of very important people and some of women with wings.

The House of Representatives was large and looked like the room where they have the State of the Union speech in Washington. It also looked a little like a court. There were desks with the names of the representatives and the number of the district they represent right next to their names. It had beautiful stained glass windows.

The Senate chamber room where we interviewed Sen. Winfield, Rep. Porter and Rep. Walker was

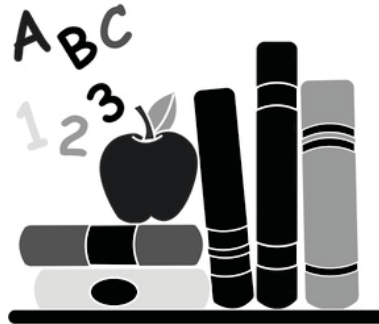
round and had a wine red carpet with a seal of the state of Connecticut in the center. You couldn't step on the seal. Sen. Winfield said that rule is to show respect because the seal "represents the state" and that "you wouldn't want to walk on the state of Connecticut."

"In my opinion the state capital was absolutely marvelous," said Anlys Rivera, a reporter who went on the trip. "The carvings in the wood were so precise along with the paintings. I loved the statues as well; they resembled the ancient Greek gods and goddesses."



At left, reporter taking notes; top, the state seal; bottom, reporters planning questions in the House of Representatives.

Best wishes to
the students
at East Rock
School!



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SCIENCE & DISCOVERY

HOW DO SCIENTISTS GET IDEAS?

We asked (and then experimented ourselves)



BY PAULETTE JARA, CHELSEA CORONEL,
ANGIE TAFOYA, KAITLYN KRONBERG
DIERDRE LAWSON, NYASIA DONEGAL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY ANTHONY KAYRUZ

East Rock Record reporters (above) meet with Richard Therrien, who is in charge of the New Haven Science Fair; reporters (at right) make and then experiment with oobleck. See recipe below.



We sat around the pan and looked at what might have been the weirdest stuff we'd ever seen. The mixture of water and cornstarch created a gross but interesting substance that looked like pudding with lumps.

When we lightly touched the goo, our fingertips gently sank into the liquid and reached the bottom of the pan, but when we slapped our palms against the surface, the goo acted like concrete, not liquid. We slapped it, then sunk our fingers into it, then slapped it again. Oooo this was cool!

We didn't understand why the substance hardened and softened, but our experiment made us wonder.

Mr. Rabib Chaudhury, a PhD candidate in chemical engineering at Yale University, felt the same awe of science when he cleaned a penny by dropping it into a glass of vinegar and water. "It was the first science experiment I ever did," he shared with East Rock reporters. "It still fascinates me how something as common as table vinegar could make a penny shine."

Mr. Jon Powell, another Yale graduate student in Engineering, fell in love with science when his second grade teacher performed an experiment in which a penny was stood on the end of the hook of a coat hanger. After carefully balancing the penny on the bottom of the hook, the teacher spun the hanger around the penny, and everything stayed in place. Mr. Powell, though he did not know it at the time, saw centrifugal force in action. "It was simply amazing!" he said.

Both of these young professionals have an important trait in common: an amazement of science when they were young led them to pursue science when they got older. Each year, students at East Rock Magnet School—and across New Haven—can experience the same sense of wonder that Mr. Powell and Mr. Chaudhury felt dur-

ing the New Haven Science Fair.

The New Haven Science Fair was started in 1995 to get students interested in science and motivate them to pursue careers in STEM later in their life.

Mr. Richard Therrien, who is in charge of the science fair met with East Rock Record reporters and explained that students need positive and interesting experiences in science when they are young. Mr. Therrien said the science fair allows students to "answer a question they are personally interested in."

One of his favorite science fair projects was an experiment that tested how effectively different types of materials blocked sound. The student did the experiment because his grandparents had trouble sleeping, and he wanted to see which walls would be the most soundproof.

Mr. Jack Crane, who has worked with the New Haven Science Fair since it began, also emphasizes that students "should think of things that are of interest to them and questions they want to answer." Mr. Crane talked about a student who did a project on DNA characteristics that relate to Alzheimer's because his grandfather had the disease. "Even though the student didn't solve his problem, he did excellent work and clearly cared about his topic."

Great science projects do not always come from personal experiences. Scientists say new ideas occur spontaneously and at unexpected times.

Dr. Aaron Bloomfield of Yale's Center for Green Chemistry and Engineering e-mailed us to explain that the most revolutionary discoveries come from the simple questions: "what the heck is that?" or "what the heck is happening?"

These types of questions—along with New Haven's brutal winter—encouraged fourth grade students at East Rock Community Magnet School to study which type of salt melts ice the fastest for

the science fair. After many experiments, they found out that table salt melted ice faster than larger crystal like rock salt. The enthusiasm from the four graders as they described their experiment was infectious. Salt seemed like the most interesting material on the planet!

There has been a lot of excitement leading up to the science fair. The East Rock Record Survey showed that 77 percent of students were looking forward to the Science Fair. "That was the goal since the start: to get kids excited about learning science," said Mr. Crane.

WANT TO MAKE GOO (or Oobleck)? HERE'S HOW:

You will need:

- 1) one cup water
- 2) 1 1/2 to 2 cups of cornstarch
- 3) a pan to mix everything in
- 4) a spoon to mix with

Combine the water and cornstarch. The substance will have qualities of both a liquid and a solid. If you dip your hands into the goo slowly, it feels like a liquid, but if you slap your hand against it, it feels like a solid!



Mr. Jack Crane started the New Haven Science Fair in 1995.



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THEATRE

MEET THE CAST: LONG WHARF THEATRE'S "BROWNSVILLE SONG!"

Actors visit school, perform scene and talk with East Rock Record Reporters



Top: Reporters with cast of Brownsville Song; Curtiss Cook Jr. and Kaatje Welsh perform a scene from the play. Left to right: Curtiss Cook Jr. (Tray), Catrina Ganey (Lena), Kaatje Welsh (Devine), Sung Yun Cho (Merrell) and Anthony Martinez-Briggs (Junior).

BY DANIEL BEDOYA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

I just watched the best scene in the entire world from the play "Brownsville Song." The play was based on a newspaper clipping and was written by Kimber Lee. The characters are Catrina Ganey playing Lena, Tray's grandma, Curtiss Cook Jr. playing Tray, the 18-year-old, Kaatje Welsh playing Tray's little sister Devine, Sung Yun Cho is Merrell who is Devine's mom, and Anthony Martinez-Briggs is Junior, Tray's friend who gets in trouble and he also plays a Brooklyn college student. In the scene we saw Tray kept on doing funny things to get Devine to get up.

BY VICTORIA PRASEUTH
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

I liked the scene from the play "Brownsville Song" because it seemed interesting to try to act out what is now "a rampant problem" in society: a good kid that gets shot and killed by accident. Knowing the problems in the play might help people talk about racism and help students think about how violence has come into this world.

BY VICTOR KLUTSEY
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The play about Tray is called "Brownsville Song." At first I got scared and then I realized that Tray dies but doesn't get shot on stage. I asked a question: "How do you act getting shot and how did you actually not get shot?" Mr. Curtiss said that he didn't get shot. Somebody asked the question if they get paid. They do get paid to act. The street violence in "Brownsville Song" is just fake, but it might feel like it is real.

BY JAMES MACIEL-ANDREWS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

"This play is shedding light on what is getting overlooked, and a lot of that has to do with race." This is what the actor, Curtiss Cook Jr. playing an 18-year old named Tray, replied when we asked him what the play meant. The play is based on a tragic story about a young boy who was in the wrong place at the wrong time and was shot. This play is about something that actually happened.

BY ANSHUL PATEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Welcome! We had actors visit us at the East Rock Record. We took notes about their play, which was called "Brownsville Song." They get paid to act in the play. They also have to pay taxes. This play is about a boy named Tray who got shot by mistake. Tray is a hard-working big smart boy. The actors said it was hard memorizing the lines that Kimber Lee wrote.

BY ALEC SAMSEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Actors from the play Brownsville Song came to East Rock School. They played one scene. The main character is Tray. Tray's grandma is Lena. Tray's sister is Devine. The scene we saw was funny and made us laugh. The actors said it was hard to learn their lines because the play was written without any punctuation.

BY MELANIE CONTRERAS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

I liked the character Tray because it was funny when he posed like a tree. When the actor Curtiss Cook, Jr., who was Tray, talked, I liked the way he felt about the play. He was sad because this story happens to a lot of people. In the scene they did for us, Tray was looking for his little sister to take her home. She told Tray about her role in the swan dance. Tray paused, "Why are you going to be a tree? I thought you were going to be a swan!" Tray and his little sister in the play act like real siblings. Catrina Ganey, the actress who played Lena, said they didn't know each other at first, but then they started laughing and that's how they got through the tough parts of the play.

BY MEET PATEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

I just saw an awesome part of a play. It is about a kid that learns a lot, but who gets shot by accident. We only saw a scene. The play is "Brownsville Song." It is based on a newspaper clipping. It happened in Brownsville, Brooklyn. The actors were from Long Wharf Theatre. It is directed by Eric Ting. The play is by Kimber Lee.

BY ANALYS RIVERA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The scene of "Brownsville Song" that the actors playing the characters Tray (Curtiss Cook) and Divine (Kaatje Welsh) performed was AMAZING!!

They acted like they weren't performing and they really were brother and sister. After the performance I asked, "When doing a performance that is based off such a deep subject like this did it affect you emotionally or mentally?"

Catrina Ganey who plays Lena responded that it did get to her emotionally because she has had five people die instantly in her life. She kept those feelings on the back burner and since getting into the play it brought back those memories and she was able to face them. You could tell the play got to the actors because the story was so sad and actually happened. Sung Yun Cho who played Merrell said, "We laugh a lot and that's how we get through this." This quote was one of my favorites along with one of the actors saying "laughter is the best medicine" because no matter how sad things get or how gloomy you feel with just one smile or one laugh it will brighten up your mood and make things not feel so hard.

BY MARC GONZALEZ
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

"Brownsville Song" is the inspiring story of Tray and his life in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York. Written by Kimber Lee after hearing the story of a boy killed with his whole life ahead of him, it is truly powerful. While the cast was able to laugh and joke, they point out the play's deeper message of younger minorities getting killed. To get into the role emotionally, Catrina Ganey, who plays Tray's grandmother Lena, met with a New Haven mother who lost her son to violence. Ms. Ganey said she got to feel, "The grief in her heart." The play also helped her remember the people in her life she lost. This play hit home for many of the actors. The main character, Tray, is played by Curtiss Cook Jr. who said in some ways, "I was just like this kid." But Tray was not as lucky as he was to avoid violence.

BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS

DK WHAT TO READ? HERE'S HELP!

ON AIR fun: Kid takes over radio station!

BY MEET PATEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

In the book, *Frankly, Frannie*, Frannie goes to a radio station on school a field trip. When Mr. Sanders goes to use the bathroom, Frannie takes over the radio station. Then her teacher comes to tell her not to, but she thinks they are cheering for her. Then a call comes and the person asks, "Where is the voting for the new mayor?" She answers, "the local theater." "You mean in Morristown?" "Yes." Then Mr. Sanders comes and takes Frannie from his seat. Then her teachers take Frannie and her class outside of the building and wait for the bus. There is a big traffic jam. When she gets home her parents are mad at her. Then she goes to her room to sleep after dinner. When she wakes up she sees the mayor she wanted was elected and she finds out the traffic jam was all her fault. Then she went to the mayor's house to apologize to him. He said "It is OK." It is an amazing book and funny, too. If you want to know more, you can read the book!

Entertaining adventures of a Girl Spy

BY NATALIE MAYNARD
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Nancy Clancy Super Sleuth is an awesome book! It is an awesome book because it is about a little girl who is a spy. She is very mad at her friend Ronda because she thinks she has an evil plan to destroy Nancy and her project. So now Nancy has no choice but to spy on Rhonda or else she will have to change schools so that she will not have to deal with it.

I think that the words in this book can be a little more challenging so that the older kids that used to like Nancy will get a chance to read these books again without reading it in an hour. You should read this book if you never did!

Harry Potter Book #6 Half-Blood Prince

BY JAMES MACIEL-ANDREWS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Harry Potter Series by J.K. Rowling continues as Voldemort roams the Wizarding World killing innocent wizards and witches with his Dark Arts club called the "Death Eaters." Death tolls rise in London and tighter security is directed for every house. Harry Potter takes shelter in his friend Ron's house called "The Burrow." He has to take private protection classes from his headmaster who is also a powerful and famous wizard, Albus Dumbledore. In this thrilling sequel, Harry find out who he really is and hopefully finds out what seems to be the only way to stop Voldemort.

Berenstain Lesson: Don't play soccer indoors

BY ANSHUL AND RAVI PATEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The Berenstain Bears and the Truth is a book by Stan and Jan Berenstain. We think that it is a good book because it is funny and it reminds us not to lie, so it also has an important lesson for kids. Here is a summary of the story.

Once upon a time there were a family of bears who were happy but...there was a problem. The brother and sister were planning to play soccer outside. But they played inside. That's how the problem started. Then, they broke mom's favorite lamp. Brother and sister lied to mom when she came back from shopping. They lied about a bird knocking the lamp down. Mom told them to tell the truth but they did not listen. When mom was going to yell at them a phone call came. Dad picked up the phone. It was grandma's phone and she had to talk to mom. Papa suddenly thought of gluing the lamp together. It worked!!!!!!!!!!!!

The story is exciting because you do not know what they will do. You should read this book.

Chocolate Fever: Book & Movie

BY ARYANA SNEDEKER
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

You should watch the movie after the book because the book has more details. This movie is about a boy named Henry Green and he gets brown spots all over and they call it chocolate fever. The movie is good because Henry goes on an adventure. The adventure Henry goes on is crazy. I want to tell you about it. He went to a schoolyard with boys. When he gets away, he gets a ride from his neighbor, Mac. Then they get hijacked. Then get the pills Henry needs. Then Henry is back home in bed. The book has amazing details!



Aryana Snedeker

Detective Judy Moody: Book or Movie?

BY MELANIE CONTRERAS
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Judy Moody: Girl Detective is about a girl that always gets into trouble. Judy's little brother always follows her. Judy never gets along with her brother Stink.

In this book Judy is trying to find the mystery of Big Foot without her brother. The Judy Moody movie is better than the book because Judy admits that she is going to find Big Foot. Stink got so excited. I will recommend the movie to a friend so they could not get bored and read all the words in the book.

BROWNSVILLE REVIEWS FROM PAGE 11

BY PAULETTE JARA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Tray was the big brother looking for his little sister who was lost until he found her sitting in the rain. Tray gave her his sweater, and they started talking about the little sister's play. The little sister said that she was a tree, and the other ones were swans. The brother said "That's messed up," then she started crying. They went home, and then the scene ended.

BY CHELSEA CORONEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The play was very detailed. The actors acted like we weren't there, and they made sure they had our attention. They were super focused, and they made the play feel like it was real life.

BY RAVI PATEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The actor who played Tray was good at dancing and acting. They made a lot of jokes. Anthony Martinez-Briggs, the actor who is Tray's friend, was cool with his cap.

BY ANGIE TAFOYA
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The actors were focused on what the story was about instead of the students. If I were up there, I would've been smiling and laughing. But the actors were able to stay in character the whole time. I was so impressed, and I loved when Tray danced.

BY DIERDRE LAWSON
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

I liked the dramatic scenes especially like when Tray was looking for Devine. I enjoyed when Tray pretended to be a tree because it was funny. Everyone in the audience was laughing, and we felt more connected to the play. Tray also pretended to fight Devine!

BY AKSHITHA KODURU
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

The thing I like about the play is that Tray was very funny when he was looking for D. Humor is important because it makes the audience enjoy the play more.

BY KAITLYN KRONBERG
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Tray's dance was super funny. I love how the girl (Tray's sister) said she was a tree because it made her unique among the other kids. Also, he said, "What, why are you a tree? That's weird!" but ended up supporting his sister anyway. He loves her a lot.



Tray, played by Curtiss Cook Jr., pretends to be a tree.

SUMMER & FUN



MAKE SUMMER COUNT!

BY ANSHUL PATEL, ALEC SAMSEL, JULIANA SNEDEKER, RICKY CASTILLO, MADISON WIELIESZ
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF
EDITED BY AISHWARYA VIJAY

What are you doing this summer?

Some students will go to school. Even though kids may complain, teachers see it differently.

"It's for people who need some extra time with schoolwork," says Ms. Erin Salzano, a third grade teacher at East Rock Community Magnet School. "It's a good way to keep kids busy and keep them learning so that they don't forget what they learned the year before," said Ms. Katherine Werth, another third grade teacher.

"Summer programs are helpful because parents work," said Ms. Dineen DeNuzzo, a first grade teacher. "It is a way to keep a child not only busy, but also learning, instead of home alone."

It's important to learn during the summer, but that can happen outside of school, too.

You can attend camps. Some are free, like the Horizons program at Foote School. The Morse Summer Music Program, sponsored by the Yale School of Music, lets students learn to sing and play instruments. It is also free! Some programs are low-cost. Yale Sprout, a three-week program on Saturdays, has classes taught by Yale students. It costs \$30 for the program, plus \$5 for lunch.

Common Ground High School Summer Camp gives 4 to 13 year-olds the chance to learn about farming and animal breeding. But it costs \$685.

The Peabody Museum of Natural History offers many classes like "Wetlands Safari," "The Art of Nature," "Bug Hunters" or "Junior Zoologists." They cost \$310 for a week of classes.

If none of these interest you, visit family or play in the park or read. Just stay busy — and have fun. "That's the most important rule of summer," said second grader Anshul Patel.

Water balloons!

BY JULIANA SNEDEKER
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

In the summer I throw water balloons at my sister and we go to Markham Meadows in East Hampton. My grandparents bring me, my sister, my aunt and my uncle. We wear bathing suits and pack clothes for the day. We swim. We do activities like making jewelry, painting and cooking.

Bikes and baseball

BY ALEC SAMSEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

In summer I ride my white and red bike. In summer I play a lot of baseball with my dad. My dad and I go in the garage and get our gloves. My glove is brown and it is soft from using it. At first we throw easy and then we throw hard. We also go on vacation to Disneyland. There we go on a roller coaster that goes very fast. It makes me swing my arms. I visit my friends. We play with toy guns at the park. We eat hot dogs with chips.

Summer is for cricket!

BY ANSHUL PATEL
EAST ROCK RECORD STAFF

Imagine waking up and not going to school. What will you do? Well you should get out of bed and have your Froot Loops with the tasty milk you make.

It's summer so get out and go play! In the middle of the red and black brick apartment buildings where I live there is a backyard that becomes a field for a game no Americans know about called cricket. Cricket is sort of a baseball game. It is mainly about hitting the ball. Whoever scores the most runs wins. There are ten wickets in total. There is also a certain amount of balls.

My dad gave me a cricket bat on my birthday and I named it SIXER! It also had his name on it. I play with my friends, all with the last name Patel. I also share my bat with them. This is a game that everybody can play. We have even teams, not always but usually we have even teams. We have a lot of fun and sometimes our dads play with us. Sometimes my dad plays with the big Patels. He tells the big Patels to let me play with them. We use crates for cricket stumps. So why don't you try this great game in the sunny summer?



Anshul Patel



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EDITORIAL & OPINION

Letter from Principal Pelley

Greetings East Rock Record Readers!

Spring is here at last! We are looking forward to extending our learning outdoors to the beautiful green areas that our building has to offer. This year we were chosen as a 2014-2015 partner school in the New Haven Schoolyard Habitat Program. Our garden expansion has begun! The fruits of our labor from the planning and design phase are coming to life as we work diligently to build and utilize our habitat. This effort is a partnership with Common Ground, Audubon CT, Peabody Museum, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The habitat will allow us to expand the East Rock Community Garden to include a wildlife habitat to maximize student, parent, staff, and community involvement in an "outdoor classroom." Our goal is to have a lasting impact on the local environment.

Spring is a wonderful time to find a cozy spot outdoors and get lost in a book. The East Rock Principal's Spring Reading Challenge is in full swing, and encourages students to read 5 books by May 4th. Motivational incentives include dances for younger students and picnics at East Rock Park for older students. Stay tuned for information about the East Rock Principal's Summer Reading Challenge. Please visit our website to keep abreast of all school functions. We look forward to congratulating our 8th grade students on their first nine years of formal education. Our 8th grade promotion ceremony is Friday, June 19th at 9am in our cafeteria. This will be bittersweet as we acknowledge the accomplishments of our scholars and wish them well as they prepare to begin a new chapter in their lives. It has been an absolute pleasure to witness the growth of this talented group of young people. Congratulations to our budding young journalists as they produce yet another successful edition of The East Rock Record. Our school newspaper is a wonderful example of the dedication, commitment, and positive spirit of our students. I trust that you will thoroughly enjoy the 2nd edition of the 2014-2015 East Rock Record. Special thanks to nationally recognized journalist Laura Pappano, student mentors from Yale University, and East Rock staff and parents for providing students with this amazing opportunity to have their voices heard.

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

Best wishes,

Peggy Pelley, Principal, East Rock Community Magnet School

MORE CHOICE OF ACTIVITY NEEDED IN P.E. CLASS

Many younger children are not enjoying physical education but older kids are. It's all the same boring activities year after year. Some of the children think this way, but older kids enjoy it a little more because they play some of their favorite sports. It's not fair for younger children because they don't enjoy gym. It is better if everybody has a choice about what kind of activity they want to do.

—Crystal Rodriguez, East Rock Record Opinion

—Isabel Faustino, East Rock Record Opinion

We must be able to afford college!

If you are dedicated to going to college, you will try harder to get better grades. But it is also expensive to pay for college. Everyone who works hard enough should be able to go and achieve their goals. College helps you have opportunities to get into internships and jobs. It's very good that President Obama wants to make community college free because then more people will be able to go. In a survey of students at East Rock, 94 percent said that they were planning to attend college, but 24 percent said cost would be the biggest challenge. I want to go to college to become a police officer, medical doctor, soccer player, basketball player, baseball player, or President.

—Victory Klutsey, East Rock Record Opinion

Less PE for grades 3, 4 is unfair

It is unfair that third and fourth graders get less P.E. than the other grades. I am in third grade and I want to spend more time in P.E. class. It gets all my energy out so I can focus better in class. Kids need six hours of running around or playing games outside for five days. Kids in my class would be healthier if we did more P.E. We should have after school P.E. programs for kids in kindergarten up to grade five including soccer, basketball, volleyball, and tennis. If they had after school programs, I would play soccer and basketball.

—Daniel Bedoya, East Rock Record Opinion

The East Rock Record

East Rock Community Magnet School
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WHY REAL NEWS MATTERS

Journalism is an ever-changing business that has evolved drastically in recent years. People are choosing entertainment over news. Citizens sometimes seem unaware of what is happening in the world until it makes it onto Instagram or Twitter. This fast news is useful, but it is not deep. People need to be informed about a range of events, from a murder to bills before legislators and information about candidates running for office. Mark Pazniokas, a reporter at CT Mirror, has worked in



the Connecticut State Capitol for years covering important issues such as the impeachment of former Governor John Rowland and Linda McMahon's \$100 million race for the U.S. Senate. Although he

wanted to be a reporter his whole life, Mr. Pazniokas says there are more attractive ways of writing and earning a better paycheck. But he is making an important difference, not just tweeting out what's happening, but helping us understand why it matters.

—Marc Gonzalez, East Rock Record Opinion

P.E. centers provide fun, variety

P.E. is fun. You can stretch. Gym class has centers all around the gym that you go to to play. There are several centers: 1 is soccer, 2 is dribbling, 3 is passing, and 4 is bouncing. You can pick a center you want but sometimes the gym teacher puts you in a group of three or four. There are eight centers in all. I am in Center 3. P.E. is in the afternoon. My favorite thing to do is dribbling a basketball around cones.

—By Juliana Snedeker, East Rock Record Opinion

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OPINION

RACIAL PROFILING PROBLEM IN CT, US

The world is buzzing especially on social media, about the 50-year-old African American man Walter Scott in South Carolina who was shot in the back eight times by a police officer at a traffic stop for a broken tail light. The fact that in this case, what had happened was caught on tape, changes EVERYTHING!

Many cases with racial profiling were not caught on video. They relied on just eyewitnesses, the police officer, or the victim. (If he survived.) We obviously have a huge problem with police officers and black men. Especially during traffic stops. When my reporting team and I went to the Capitol in Hartford on April 7th, the state had just issued a report called "Traffic Stop Data Analysis and Findings, 2013-14."

As the result of the Alvin Penn act passed in 1999 to fight racial profiling, the report collected information about traffic stops about cities and towns across the state during daytime hours (so officers could see the race of the driver). They also recorded the race of the population in each community during the daytime. The study shows that certain communities including Darien and Hamden tend to stop more drivers who are black or Hispanic.

What does this mean for our state? The video of Mr. Scott's shooting tells us that terrible things can happen after traffic stops. We should use this report and this latest shooting as a strong message that we need to do something about racial profiling. —Analys Rivera, *East Rock Record Opinion*

KIDS: Let's work harder!

You wouldn't expect it but many high school seniors are not meeting the New Haven Promise eligibility criteria. Only 81 percent were continuously enrolled, only 68 percent missed fewer than 72 days of high school, and just 44 percent had a grade point average of 3.0 or higher. The result? Only 36 percent of students met all three requirements. That is crazy! New Haven Promise is a great way to help pay for college. This data is from the Class of 2013 and is sadly lower than I expected. COME ON, PEOPLE, WE AREN'T WORKING HARD ENOUGH!! Kids don't see how important education is and how far it will get you. I know it may be hard now, but in the future the things you want will not be handed to you on a silver platter! Ask any kid how they would get those new \$250 Air Jordans on display on Foot Locker? "My parents would buy it for me." But what if you're older and you don't have a job and there's no money and your parents won't buy you them for you? Their response will be "cricket nose*" If you don't have a job, you don't have money, and you can't get the things you want and need. SO PLEASE GET YOUR GRADES UP TO BE SUCCESSFUL!! —Analys Rivera, *East Rock Record Opinion*

Grades a poor measure

Every six weeks at East Rock Magnet School, we receive report cards. Every parent wants to see good grades from their children. These expectations put an extraordinary amount of pressure on students, and can lead to strained relationships between parents and their children. Sometimes tests are hard, and it's difficult to do well even if you study. Just because you get good grades doesn't mean that you're perfect. Life is more than grades. Having free time and the ability to make meaningful relationships is more important than grades. If students get bad grades, instead of being motivated to do better, they feel badly and don't want to study. People compare themselves to others because of their grades. That is bad because they can get hurt or mad. —Nisha Brown, *East Rock Record*

Getting Fit Prevents Sore Muscles: I know!

In addition to reading and working, we should start exercising in school. We already have gym class, but the games we play are sports games instead of exercises. Exercise is important because you need to be fit in order to run around and play games with friends. Exercise helps your legs and it gives your brain a break so that it can focus better when you are working. One time we went to Lake Quassy Amusement Park, and after I ran around all day I was sore. That's when I knew it was important to start exercising so that I would be fit and able to run around without being sore or getting hurt. I started playing tennis, and I've been playing for three years. If more kids exercised instead of lying around and watching TV, maybe fewer kids would get sore when they do exercise. If you lie around too much, your legs, thighs, and hips can start to get stiff and you won't feel good.

—Osiana Brown, *East Rock Record Opinion*

Rewards don't fill PE gap

When several of us were reporting on physical education at East Rock, we discovered that kids are not getting enough minutes in gym class. We also found out that third and fourth graders are getting the least amount of time per week. As a fourth grader, I don't think it's fair that other students get more gym than I do. We need more gym class. More time in gym would make school more fun, and I would be able to focus better in class.

One way that students at East Rock can get more physical activity is by earning it. RTI is a reading class that all grades above third grade have. Students are separated into groups based on reading scores. In the groups, students read books and talk about them with one another. RTI is always before gym class. Sometimes, if the group finishes the chapters of the book they were meant to read that day early, they get free time to play in the gym. At the end of a book, students take a test about the book. Those who get a 100 percent get free time to play while other kids work.

So some students get extra physical activity if their reading group is fast and if they can complete the tests perfectly. The free time motivates students to read better because they want to play. Even if some students try their best, they have a hard time getting 100 percent on the quizzes.

Another way students can earn more gym time is by behaving well at lunch. If you do what you are supposed to do, like if somebody says that you have to be quiet so that someone can speak at lunch, you get quiet. Or if we are too loud and you settle down when someone tells you to settle down. Then you can get free time to play.

Still, both free time for RTI and free time that is rewarded when you are good at lunch do not make up for the minutes that student are not getting in gym class. We should have more gym class and physical education activities for everyone so that no matter if you get free time in RTI or for being good at lunch, you get enough exercise in the school week.

—Nellie Jackson, *East Rock Record Opinion*



Reporters with New Haven Mayor Toni Harp at Long Wharf Theatre event on gun violence.

Youth mentors could help stem violence

During the "Violence In our Community: A Conversation" between New Haven Mayor Toni Harp and Dr. Khalilah L. Brown—Dean, the Mayor said that we "need mentors" and shared her belief that what children "need is one tender, loving parent that spends fifteen-twenty minutes with them" but that so many children do not have even that. This stood out to me, because I know what it means to have a loving and supportive parent and I also know children in our community who do not have that support. I agree with Mayor Harp that more can be done for the children in our community if there are more people who are willing to be involved. Mentors can help children and adolescents discover new interests, focus on their education, and lead better lives. But mentors do not have to be adults; they can be children or adolescents. I believe that children and adolescents can be empathetic because they understand their peers' circumstances. (It takes one-to-know-one.) With adult supervision, I think that New Haven's youth could truly bring change to violence in our community. I know students in my school who want to become mentors, if given the chance and support. These students could be trained and take their knowledge back to their neighborhoods to help prevent violence. The search for understanding and empathy could benefit from including New Haven's youth. The video testimonials shown at the event at Long Wharf Theatre were a clear example of how people's lives were tragically changed by the violence of teens in our community. This needs to stop. Children and adolescents in poverty-stricken neighborhoods need positive experiences and examples in their lives, like love, protection, education, and mentorship. This event with so many people who attended, makes me believe and hope that peace in the community can be achieved. —James Maciel-Andrews, *East Rock Record Opinion*

We see a brighter future for the health of communities too.

Health care doesn't stand alone. At Yale New Haven Health, we believe we are an integral part of the communities we serve. Not just from the standpoint of health and well-being. But also in our commitment to bringing positive change to those communities. That commitment is evident in efforts like H.O.M.E. – Home Ownership Made Easy – a loan program that helps our employees purchase a home in New Haven. It's also evident in the nursing training and scholarship programs we support. And in the wellness programs that help thousands of individuals and families across Connecticut develop healthier lifestyles. These are just a few of the ways Yale New Haven Health is making a difference beyond the treatment room. As the needs of communities grow, we'll grow with them. Because there's nothing more vital to the well-being of a community than the well-being of the people who live there.

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