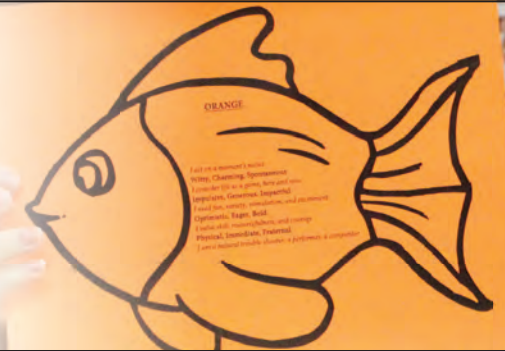




Read about  
local election  
candidates  
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What colors  
are your  
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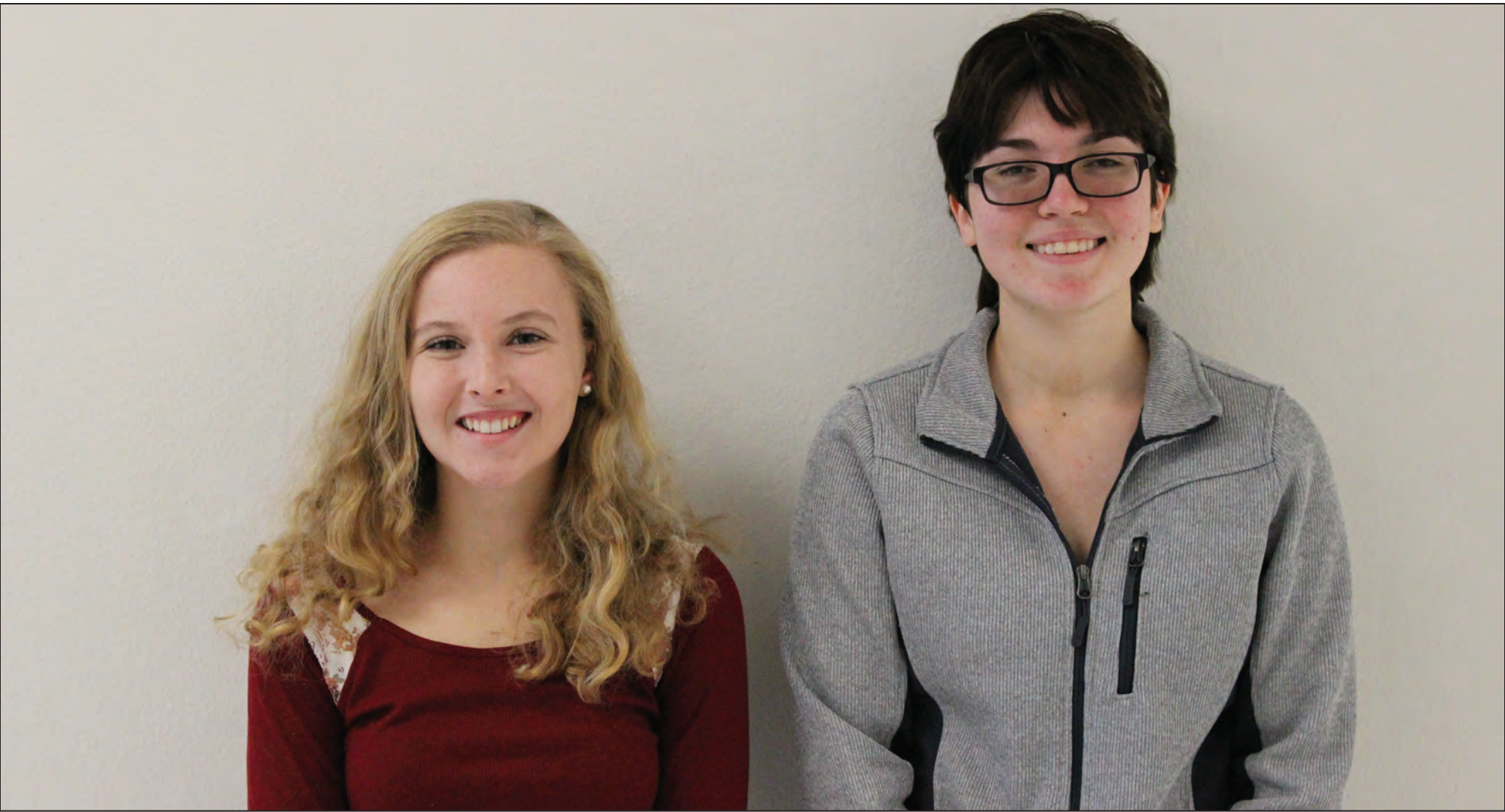
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1401 HIGH SCHOOL DRIVE

*On September 14, two East students were recognized as semifinalists in the National Merit Scholarship competition*



**Scholars** Seniors Kelly Speltz and Morgan Gallagher were named semifinalist in the National Merit Scholarship competition. “I’m so excited for this opportunity to be a National Merit Scholar finalist. I would like to thank all my teachers for helping me get here, and Bellevue East as a whole,” Speltz said. *Photo by: Briana Benak*

# East students named National Merit Semifinalists

**Samantha Collison**  
News Editor

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) named senior Kelly Speltz and senior Morgan Gallagher Semifinalists in the 2017 National Merit Scholarship Program on September 14.

“About a month ago, I got a note to go down to Dr. Wagner’s office and I was like, “oh gosh, what is this,” and he was like, ‘congratulations, you’re a national merit semi-finalist,’” Gallagher said

In order to qualify for the scholarship, students have to take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) during their junior year. Scores for the PSAT are released in the

spring following the test date, but the decision and announcements are not made until the following September

“To be a semifinalist, it’s just your PSAT score. They take the top 1 percent out of the state of Nebraska and at this time, that was the only qualification you had to meet to be a semi-finalist,” Gallagher said.

The NMSC states that the number of semifinalists or finalists in a school is not a measure of the effectiveness of education in that school. However, Gallagher and Speltz both find it exciting to have an unusually high number of students qualify at East.

“I think it’s awesome [that East has two semifinalists]; any

time a school has a semifinalist is a big thing. If you take a look at the number of schools throughout the metro area, Bellevue east having two is pretty good, especially since we’re a smaller school,” Principal Dr. Jeffrey Wagner said.

In order to make it to finalist status, semifinalists must take the SAT and report their scores to the NMSC as well as meet several other requirements.

“To become a finalist, the semifinalist and his or her high school must submit a detailed scholarship application, in which they provide information about the semifinalist’s academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities,

employment, and honors and awards received. A semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, write an essay, and earn SAT scores that confirm the student’s earlier performance on the qualifying test,” the NMSC website said.

According to the NMSC, approximately 15,000 of the 16,000 semifinalists are expected to make it to finalist status. Finalists will be notified in February.

“I’m a little bit nervous. I know that 90% of semi-finalists make it to finalist, and I have the SAT score to get me to finalist, so as long as I don’t mess up anything

else, I should be good,” Gallagher said.

Speltz is planning on studying biochemistry and pursuing a career in research; she has been accepted into UNL and is looking at selective colleges in the Northeast. Gallagher is planning on studying computer engineering; she would like to attend UNL or the University of Oklahoma, but her decision is dependent on what scholarship she receives from the NMSC.

“If you are an underclassman, you should definitely make the PSAT a priority, don’t just blow it off, because you can really good scholarships and opportunities if you become a semifinalist,” Speltz said.



# Leadership council works with principal to improve East

**Skyla Peter**  
Opinion Editor

The principal at Bellevue East High school, Jeffrey Wagner, has established a new leadership council for students to help create a better learning environment.

“The goal is to create some two way communication, so it is really hearing from students that represent a wide variety and a wide diversity of student interest in our building,” Wagner said.

Wagner wanted a cross section of students that had differ-

ent backgrounds from all grade levels. An online application was sent out to all students by email and about 87 students filled it out.

“We tried to get four students from each grade level and I think we ended up with four seniors, five juniors, four sophomores, and three freshmen,” Wagner said.

There has only been one meeting so far and they are planning on meeting once a month. Wagner wants each member to bring a friend to the meeting to hear what is happen-

ing at Bellevue East, like the new lunch area for students who have all C’s and above in all of their classes, good attendance and good behavior for a whole quarter.

“We just talked about some of those things with students and they get to hear some of my thoughts on it also, so that they have a clearer picture of why we are doing some of the things we are doing,” Wagner said.

This will help students that are not in the leadership council as well. If they have a friend in the council then they will be able

to share that information with them.

“I did not apply to be in it, but I feel like the leadership council will help East a lot,” junior Jacob McDowall said.

Besides that, the council will be looking into more project-based learning opportunities. Wagner is looking at putting a coffee shop in the library for different groups to learn how to run a business.

“The business classes would kind of run it; they would do the inventory, the accounting, the stocking, the purchase order,

the marketing, and all of that,” Wagner said.

The culinary classes would make some baked goods to be sold in the coffee shop. Wagner does not know if that will actually happen but is writing a proposal for some funding. Regardless of that, more opportunities like that will offer more real life experiences for high school students.

“It’s nice to think that I am going to help make East a more positive place and a better school,” member of the leadership council sophomore Paige Holbrook said.

# Students in HOSA participate in hands-on field trip

**Nia Booth**  
Video Editor in Chief

Bellevue East’s Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) members went to the Bryan Health Science Experience day hosted by Bryan College of Health Science. The field trip was held on Oct. 18 and was held to give students looking at going into healthcare the opportunity to explore different parts of the career.

“The purpose of [the Bryan Health Science Experiment Day] was to give students the experience to explore different career options in the medical field. They had opportunities to talk with different individuals in various professions and get some hands on experience,” HOSA sponor Jennifer Carda said.

The event held many different labs and lectures on different career fields that Bryan College offers courses in. One of the sessions that was held was about plastination.

“There were a lot of different seminars and demonstrations offered. I think some of the most popular were the plastinates, cadaver lab, sonogram demonstration, and birth simulation. My favorite part of the trip was learning about the plastinates. They’re dead bodies that have been dissected and preserved so they’ll never decay. One of them was cut in half and didn’t have any skin so I got to see his muscles and internal organs which was super neat,” junior Taylor Thompson said.

Mortuary Science was another session that was offered. Among those who attended, senior Alyssa Robinson had a positive experience.

“For my first break out session, I went to mortuary science. We learned about the entire process that happens post-death and how they preserve the bodies and help the families cope with death. It was my favorite because I learned the most interesting things in that session.

I had never really thought about this field or what they do before and the instructor in this session told us a lot of stories from personal experience and seemed the most emotionally involved in his work,” Robinson said.

Some of the students got to walk away with interesting facts from each session. Processing of the body post death was one of the sessions that had engaging information.

“One of the most interesting things I learned was from my mortuary science break out session. I learned that with the embalming fluid they use to preserve the body and also putting the body in a freezer, you can keep a person virtually similar to how they looked while alive for several months, and in some cases even years,” Robinson said.

Students were not the only ones to participate in the event. Carda was also able to participate in the function and go to sessions.

“I got to attend the anesthesiology session. So we got to look at the different drugs they use in anesthesiology and work with some professionals in that lab as well as go to the cadaver lab which is always an interesting experience,” Carda said.

The overall experience was successful, according to Carda, and HOSA plans to attend again next year. She feels it was very

beneficial to her students.

“Every year that they have this we plan on attending as well as any other events they come up with. I think most students really enjoyed it because they got to experience some different hands on things. For a lot of students it was the first time they got to experience certain professions as well as talk to those in the field,” Carda said.



Students across the Metro were invited to attended a Bryan Health experience sponsored by HOSA in Lincoln. Over 400 students were welcomed onto the East and West campuses for a look into the medical world, with different sessions available for students to attend. Students could take a sneak peak into brith simulations, nursing, mental health, mortuary science, and ultrasound/sonography.  
*Photos by Destiny Soto*





# Students given privilege of leaving campus for lunch

Brooklynn Anderson  
Reporter

Off-campus lunch is a privilege for seniors to eat lunch outside of the school during first and second semester.

“Open campus lunch is a great opportunity for students as long as they adhere to the rules,” Dean Tola Dada said.

Seniors that have off-campus lunch first semester got a proficient or above on all four of their NeSA tests last year. The students receive one quarter of open-campus lunch for each proficient score.

“We were thinking of a way to reward students and we thought that students would appreciate to be allowed to leave for lunch,” Dada said.

Some seniors go home or they have an occasional restaurant they go to for every lunch break. If the seniors do go to a restaurant, they have a item on the menu that they usually get.

“I usually go home and I go to Jimmy John’s once a week and I just get a simple sandwich,” senior Tim Trojanowski said.

Some seniors do not have off-campus lunch because of their test scores from the NeSA tests. Those seniors are still able to have off-campus lunch during second semester if they have good grades, attendance,

and good behavior. Seniors can get this privilege if they have an agreement with their parents and have a contract they sign with the deans.

“I would like to have off-campus lunch, especially when I’m really hungry and I want to get out for a while, I think that would be nice and just to get away and be back in 30 minutes and be energized to be back in school,” senior Julissa Barazza-Ramirez said.

Students that do not have off-campus lunch are still able to get rewarded for having good grades. The school recently decided to rope off the senior commons for only the students that have the gold sticker on the back of the student’s I.D. cards. In order to receive the sticker, the student has to have a C or better in their classes, less than 10 percent tardies and absences and no dean referrals.

“I can go in the senior commons, the only thing I really like about it now is that it’s not so packed. Yet, as a result of only certain people being allowed to be there during lunch, it makes the lunchroom really packed, which I dislike completely because you can’t eat in peace and there is too much going on and too many people,” Barazza-Ramirez said.



Ordering his lunch at McDonald’s, seniors Timothy Trojanowski and Cody Waring are two of many seniors with first semester off-campus lunch. Off-campus lunch was given to students who passed their NeSA tests junior year. For each test passed, students received a quarter of off-campus lunch. Students also had to receive a parent’s permission and maintain good attendance, grades and behavior. If students do not continue to meet these standards, or they develop a habit of being tardy after lunch, the privilege can be taken away. Photos by Bobby Storck



# Band places second despite weather

Megan Gallagher  
Guest Reporter

❖The Bellevue East Marching Chieftains competed alongside 18 other bands in the Starfest Competition at Morningside College on Sept. 24 and placed second, in spite of poor weather conditions and delays.

Bellevue East Marching Chieftains won 2nd place at their first competition, StarFest, held at Morningside College, despite problems with rain and lightning.

“We started warming up a few hours before our actual performance time. The band was tired from being in the uniforms for so long, but the energy kept coming and everyone had positive attitudes throughout the day,” band director Patrick McCarty said.

Starfest is an annual marching band competition that is usually held on the last Saturday of September. It is hosted by Sioux City North High School, but it is held on the Morningside College campus.

“This is the first StarFest festival I have attended, and everything went well except the weather kept getting in the way of things,” McCarty said.

This year was the 19th annual Marching Band Festival. 19 different high school bands performed in front of parents, judges, and fans.

“It’s always a little scary when you see so many people sitting on the bleachers watching and judging you,” drum major

junior Samantha Moore said.

The management team tried their best to keep everything on schedule and made sure it worked out well. Because finals were canceled, Bellevue East Marching Chieftains ended up heading home a few hours earlier than originally intended.

“The festival managers did a really good job dealing with the weather, but they kept giving us a delay and then OK, we’re back on’ and then another delay. Then they gave a schedule, ‘here’s the schedule, we’re going and we went, and it was like, ‘wait a minute, there’s another delay,’” McCarty said.

With all of the changes and problems during the day, the band still performed well based upon the results of the competition. Competing against almost 20 different bands, they placed second with the score of 82.6 out of 100.

“We worked pretty hard, we had lots of time to prepare ourselves and review things. A lot of the other bands didn’t get the time we did. I look forward to finals each competition so I was pretty upset when I found out they were cancelled,” section leader sophomore Marcos Labrado said.

The band was scheduled to perform at 2 p.m, but, due to the weather, they did not perform until seven. Therefore preliminary lasted most of the day and finals were cancelled.

“I felt a lot of energy from the band, which made us score better. It was one of our best runs of the show,” Moore said.

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# East poets speak ‘Louder Than a Bomb’

Maria Mwita  
Reporter

East has many different clubs, such as, Science Club, FCA, FBLA, HOSA and so much more. For those who love to write and express themselves, there is Poetry Club. Poetry Club meets every Friday, after school, in room B-13. It is a little different from other clubs because members can say whatever they feel, and freely express themselves and just be who they are.

“Usually, all we do is read off poetry. Sometimes they give us prompts, but we usually read off what we’ve written,” senior Caelum Lefevers said.

Lefevers has been in Poetry Club for sometime. He not only competes in Poetry Club, but also in forensics. The students in the club write their own pieces, which can be difficult, but it’s also a good challenge. Writing their own poetry allows them to write about what matters to them. They help from each other and get help their coach, Fernando Montejano.

“Fernando is pretty bomb. I like him a lot. He is super fun and is a great poet,” senior Emily Crook said.

Montejano is one of the main coaches for poetry club. He graduated from Bellevue East in 2010. Afterward, he continued poetry in college. He has a strong dedication to poetry and to the students.

“We are trying every week to not only better ourselves as writers, but to better ourselves as performers and people,” Montejano said.

Montejano is trying to get Poetry Club

more well known this year. They want to feature in this year’s showcase before winter break this year and showcase during pep rallies. They are proud of what they have been working on and want to show the school.

“Poetry Club leads into this huge competition called ‘Louder Than a Bomb,’” Montejano said.

Louder Than a Bomb started in Chicago by a group of poets who wanted to have an alternative to the violence for kids to indulge in. Louder Than a Bomb is the world’s largest youth poetry slam. Bellevue East has been and will continue to participate in this event.

“When it gets time to competition we’ll work on a group poem. There’s between 2-4 people on a stage, all reciting the same poem,” Crook said.

Poetry is not just one person on a stage speaking what they feel, there can also be multiple speaking at the same time. Doing that can be effective, but also a challenge.

“Poetry Club is very fun and laid back,” Crook said.

Poetry club is a very welcoming Club and has a very nice environment. Montejano and others that come to teach the students make sure of that. For those who don’t like competing in front of people they don’t have to. Some people can just come in and improve on their writing and performance.

“We welcome all types of people to come join and be part of the team,” Montejano said.



Senior Evan Simonsen recites his poem about mental disorders, loving yourself and finding the courage to stay strong. Simonsen wrote this poem for both Poetry Club and forensics, a speech class offered at East, and he will be performing this piece at the competition, Louder Than a Bomb, in March of 2017. Photo by Nate Zyla



Junior Elise Mayor jots down ideas at East’s Poetry Club for her next poem. Mayor joined the club about a year ago and has enjoyed it since. “I’ve learned so much about how people write and think and how emotions change people’s lives,” Mayor said. Photo by Nate Zyla

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# Color test characterizes Chieftains



Spanish instructor Piper Porras took the color test and is an orange.

Cailin Tomsu  
Editor in Chief

While sitting in class, a very quiet, intelligent student sits next to her best friend, the loud extrovert. The two together is quite the sight, and one would never think they would be friends. The personalities are opposites of each other, and yet they mesh very well together. The True Color Test, was created to explain the different personalities and help people understand others personalities as well.

“It is a great tool to know yourself better- both strengths and weaknesses. Also, it allows a person to better understand others in one’s professional world,” instructor Piper Porras said.



English instructor David Bossman took the color test and is a blue.

The True Color Test is a quiz that gives results in colors, green, gold, blue and orange. Each color has distinct characteristics that are supposed to help people understand themselves and others.

“It provides excellent descriptions of what these colors are generally like and how others perceive them which allows for good self-reflection. A person can learn how to clarify expectations, needs, etc. in both personal and professional relationships by means of understanding one’s tendencies, strengths and weaknesses,” Porras said.

There are different versions of the test available to be taken by anyone. This includes an on-line test available, that will have

a person answer approximately 20 questions and then give the percentages of the color scores. For example, a person may be 23 percent green and 4 percent gold. A print out copy is also available that will have the person tally up scores for certain questions, and from that the colors are determined.

“It helps to read over other colors’ tendencies, ways of seeing the world, strengths and weaknesses as a way not to alter my own personality in the classroom but to find ways to provide an outlet for all colors to shine brightly. For example, I could offer varied approaches to projects that tap into skill sets of all colors,” Porras said.

Each color has distinctive personality traits. A blue is usually the emotional friend of the group. Blues are very in tune with themselves and how they feel. Golds are the systematic, organized rule followers. They are the leaders of the group. The oranges are the comedians of the group. Oranges are the loud, spontaneous extroverted students in class. The final color is green. The greens are very logical and intelligent. They are the smarty pants of the group.

“I think it is very helpful to know your classmates colors so you know who would well to-

gether and you know why they behave certain ways,” junior Alexandria Welch said.

Instructor Ashley Bender, gives the True Color test to her Spanish IV students and was asked to give it to all the teachers and faculty members of the school at a staff meeting.

“The more students can learn about themselves and how everyone is different the more I hope to build empathy. It is also information I love having as a teacher. It really helps me get to know them better and understand their different behaviors in class,” Bender said.

Bender discovered the test while taking a graduate class over the summer. The class explained the colors and how it could help understanding in the classrooms and in life. Because Bender knows the colors of her students, she is able to accommodate her teaching to fit each personality.

“I have been focusing on each unit to have activities that speak to each color. Getting in touch with emotions and feelings about our world (Blue), allowing for creativity in a project (green/orange), letting students work in different areas such as the senior commons (orange), and projects and activities that have a clear deadline and list-

ed instructions (gold). We also talked a lot about left and right brained features so I do my best to teach to those as well,” Bender said.

Most people find the True Color test to be fairly accurate, however it does not one hundred percent match each individual person and may vary on descriptions. According to the creators of the test, everyone is made of the four core colors, but one is dominant in their personality. Research has been done since the 1980’s to study the correlation of a subject’s color, given by the test and the actual personality.

“I think we all have a dominate color that makes up a big part of our personality. However, it is the combination of the different colors that makes us all unique. The True Colors test is not black and white. Just because I received a score of 97 percent on Blue, doesn’t mean that every trait of that color pertains to me. And this is just one type of personality test; within each color I feel we are all slightly different as well and express the traits of our color differently,” Bender said.

Those interested in taking the True Color Test themselves can go to: <http://lonerwolf.com/true-colors-personality-test/>

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# Local, national elections:Perceptions and platforms

## Simple steps to vote

**Bobby Storck**  
Entertainment Editor

### Requirements to vote

You require:  
A valid Nebraska Drivers Licence or any other NE ID.  
To be at least 18 years of age on or before the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November of this year.



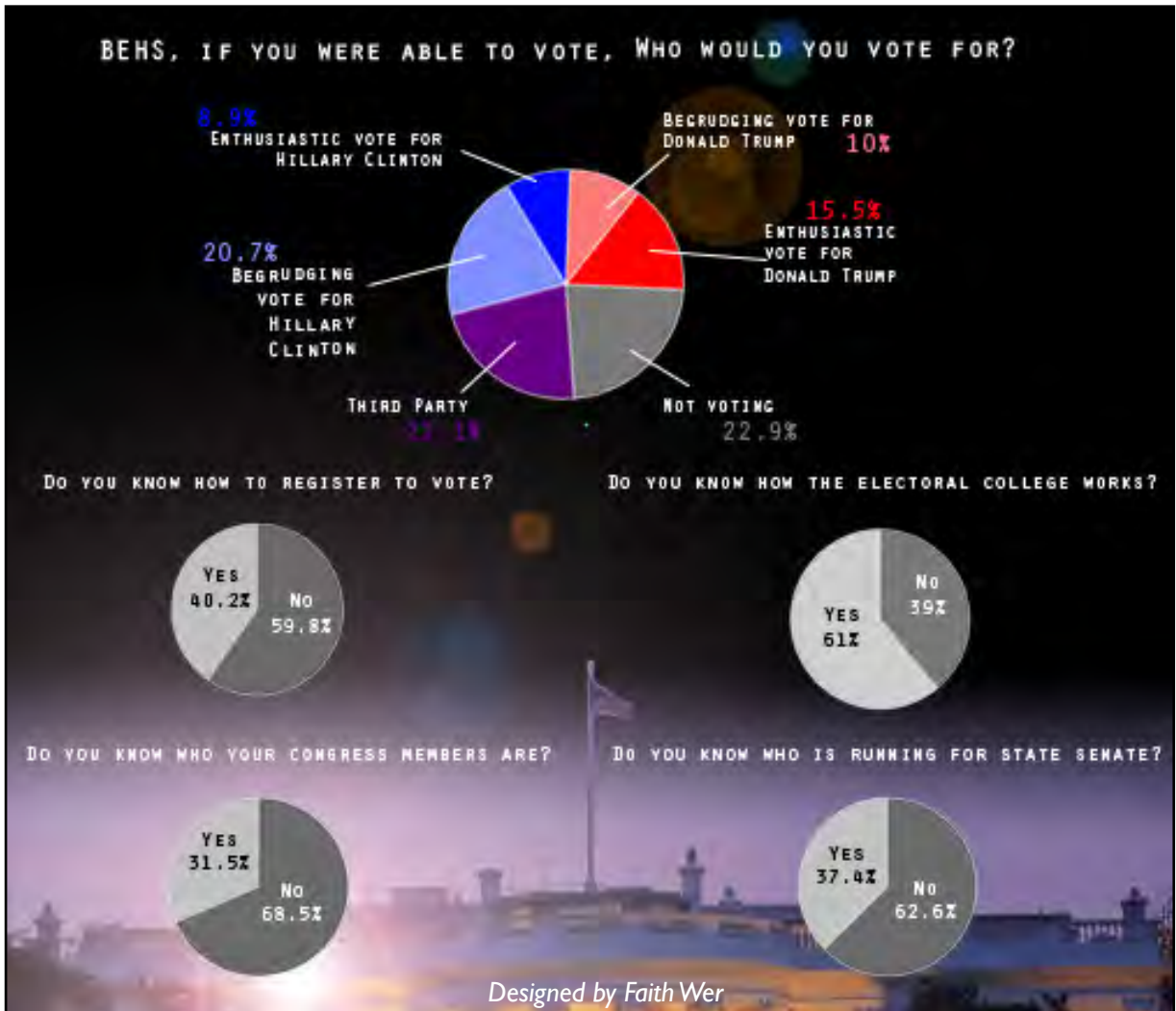
### When to go vote



Nov. 8 is standard voting day at your designated voting location.Hours are 8am-8pm. Sample ballots are online You do not have to vote for every item on the ballot.

### Voting early

Registered voters can find Nebraska Early Voting Ballot Application online and mail it to the county clerk (Sarpy County's is Deb Houghtaling). After it has been approved, the voter will receive a ballot in the mail. This must be filled out and submitted to the county clerk by November 8. (Sarpy County is 501 Olson Dr Papillion, NE 8:00AM-4:45PM Oct. 9-Nov. 7).



## Students share perspectives, thoughts

**Samantha Collison**  
News Editor

❖Many students at East feel, as though they do not know enough about the voting system and the candidates to make an educated decision on who should be the next President of the United States. Some students even feel like they should make the minimum voting age older, so that teenagers have more time to learn and are fully prepared to vote, and voice their opinion on something that will affect the country.

Several students at East are old enough to vote in the upcoming election on November 8, but those who could not vote also had opinions on the election.

“I’m voting so that the candidate that I do vote for has a better chance of actually getting through, because I can do some-

thing about it so why not,” senior Trevor Ratzburg said.

Other students who could vote said they were voting because it was their duty, while senior Alex Molnar said that he was voting to make a positive difference. However, students differed on how prepared for voting that they felt.

“I’ll probably vote just for president, because I don’t know about anything else,” senior Noah Hoefer said.

Molnar and Ratzburg felt inadequately educated on local politics, but plan on researching more between now and November 8. Senior Darren Brinkerhoff said that he has learned about local politics from the newspaper and from friends with family running for local offices. The students generally agreed on how much their vote matters.

“I feel like my vote matters because if I don’t vote then there could be that one vote that makes the difference, and

if people vote with that mindset, then the people that they want to win have a better chance of winning,” Ratzburg said.

Brinkerhoff felt like his vote mattered more further down the ballot because one vote really could be the difference. Molnar said that even if his vote doesn’t feel like it matters in the moment, it will matter in the long run. However, while the students who are 18 are excited to vote, they agree that the presidential candidates are not ideal.

“I’m not [enthusiastic] in the slightest; this election year is not the greatest from what I’ve heard and, obviously, from what I’ve seen. It’s not good at all,” Ratzburg said.

Senior Jennifer Hinman and junior Charity Williams are too young to vote and are not disappointed about it. They both feel that the minimum voting age should be higher than 18 and, while they feel like they will know enough by the next election, they

do not know enough to make an educated decision now. Senior Anthony Rutledge is also not old enough to vote in this election, but he disagrees.

“I do believe that I know enough to vote at my age, and I would absolutely know enough by the time I am old enough to vote. Local elections are a little trickier because they’re not as big and talked about, but I wouldn’t vote for any position that I didn’t know enough about the people. I honestly feel like they could get away with lowering the minimum voting age a year or two, but age 18 is a decent enough minimum,” Rutledge said.

While voting can be exciting, Molnar and Hinman urge their peers to take the responsibility of voting seriously.

“Vote seriously, don’t make this country a meme,” Molnar said.

**Compiled by Samantha Collison**  
News Editor

## Hear from city council, state senate, school board candidates

State Senate    City Council    City Council    City Council    City Council    School Board    School Board    School Board    School Board    School Board

District 45    Ward 1    Ward 1    Ward 3    Ward 5



**Sue Crawford**  
“The voices that vote get heard in a democracy. It is important to me that younger voters get out to vote so that their concerns and ideas can shape the future of our state. One of the critical questions that Nebraska faces right now is how to attract and keep young talent so that we can innovate and grow. We need young people involved to help us answer this question and move the state in a direction that helps us to attract and retain more young workers and families. Getting registered and voting is an important step, but I encourage students not to stop there. The Unicameral is very user-friendly and anyone can get involved in discussions of the bills that get debated each session,”



**Thomas Burns**  
“[Young voters] are very important, especially in this City Council election, because what happens in the next four years will determine Bellevue’s future for decades to come. I was inspired to get involved when I took Mr. Kessel’s Government course when I was at Bellevue East. We need a younger perspective and energy at City Hall and I think students realize that their vote is their voice.”



**Steven A. Carmichael**  
“I believe that the younger generation is just as important to this process as any. As our country and the world evolve, different perspectives on how to effectively perform these elected functions occur. To steal a line from an old movie, “it is the great circle of life”, in that we continually have the duty and opportunity to vote on those who we wish to represent us. That is why, in my humble opinion, there are never any losers or winners in an election, we simply choose, as voters, who it is that will represent us. The voting population are the winners because we have the right and opportunity to elect who we choose, unlike many areas of this world,”



**Paul Cook**  
“Young voters are very important to our city and me personally. Young adults are the future and will help define our city and country. I have two children in high school, and we frequently discuss current events, and the future of our great city and country. As a member of the Bellevue City Council, I have asked my own children and their friends for input on different events, which has had a great impact and helped me to formulate opinions on issues we face. I feel young voters should be active in our community and they play a big part in the direction and growth of our city,”



**Rob Klug**  
“I believe that young voters are extremely important. They will play an important role in being the workforce and leaders of tomorrow, while also helping our city grow. As a teacher and coach I have seen first hand the local impact students can have within our community as many participate in after school activities, work part time, or are involved in community service projects. Such examples have shown me what a fantastic city Bellevue is and will continue to be in the future and it is because of groups like the young people within our community.”



**Phil Davidson**  
“First and foremost young voters are extremely important to the school board race because they know what is working in the schools and what needs to be changed. I feel that we have taken some steps over the last year to ensure that the Bellevue Public Schools are moving in the right direction and I would appreciate the opportunity to serve the district for another 4 years! This could very well be an election that comes down to a matter of a few votes so voters still in high school or fresh out of difference could make a huge difference in the future of our school district”



**Doug Cook**  
“As a current School Board member, I always enjoy hearing from students.I wish we had regular attendance from students (especially student government members) and I would like to put volunteers on committees.The main goal of the Board is to give students the opportunity to receive the best education possible and to prepare them for the future.I feel we could do a better job if we had regular input from the students.Students are one of the stakeholders and should have a seat at the table where all decisions are made.Your many life experiences at home, work and school have been instrumental in forming your opinions which you will now express at the age of eighteen in the voting both”



**John Carozza**  
“As a career navy officer I dedicated most of my adult life to supporting and defending the Constitution of the United States which, among many other rights and freedoms, guarantees that every citizen 18 and over has a right to vote. Young voters possess some of the most current knowledge as to the strengths and weaknesses of our schools; their perspective is extremely valuable to me. I had the opportunity to speak with 40 Bellevue East student leaders last April during a Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program working lunch. I took three pages of notes and the superb insight I gained from those conversations has helped shape my perspectives and priorities,”



**Sarah Centineo**  
“Young voters are very important for many reasons. Unfortunately, voter participation among the 18 to 20-year-old population is too low. Young voters are important because they really have one of the biggest stakes in our community. Our community needs young people to be committed to staying here and helping to grow our city. The school board election is one where every single vote counts. If you look back at the last election, the race was decided by a relatively small number of votes. The young voters have the most recent direct experiences with the school system and can provide valuable regarding what is working and what is not working in the system,”



**Scott Eby**  
“Having children this age, I truly value this age group and think it is great the interest they have had in the upcoming election. These votes are extremely important. This younger demographic is the future of our community and bring a fresh perspective to many of the issues that we face. The viewpoint of the younger voters is very relevant since they are currently living it or recently just been involved,”

**The following candidates did not respond to interview requests: Michael Cook, Don Preister. Candidates Andy Mahoney, Pat Shannon, and Casey Putney were not contacted in time for publication.**



# Concussions create confusion for athletes

**Destiny Soto**  
Features Editor

Approximately 3.8 million concussions occur in United States every year. Each time an athlete gets a concussion, according to HeadCase, a company dedicated solely to helping protect student athletes, the chance of catastrophic head injury leading to permanent neurologic disability increases by 39 percent.

In 2012, 3.8 million concussions were reported, double what was reported in 2002. Concussions have proven to be dangerous, and according to Bellevue East's Athletic Trainer Rick Nelson, if proper precautions are not taken, severe concussions can lead to severe brain or spinal injury.

"Second Impact Syndrome can be very dangerous. That's when someone gets more than one concussion in a certain amount of time and then suffers severe complications because of the concussions. The first hit does damage, but it's the second hit that gives you the problems. You can get brain bleeds, memory loss or worse," Nelson said.

HeadCase research states that possible complications from a second blow to the head include post-concussion syndrome, which is characterized by dizziness, headaches, irritability, problems with memory and attention. Dangerous and even fatal brain swelling can occur in some instances. Concussion management is a critical component to ensuring a young athlete's safety so that they can engage in play safely now and in the future. Junior Noah Kuzepka played football for 9 years and has recently had to stop because of a severe concussion.

"I've had nine concussions, all from football. My doctors said that this last one might be permanent. Some of the symptoms that I have are memory loss, dizziness, and my doctor said I have a really high chance for Alzheimer's now," junior Noah Kuzepka said.

According to Medical News Today, older athletes who suffered from concussions may have symptoms similar to Parkinson's. Multiple concussions can cause brain damage that can last well over 10 years.

Bellevue East's school nurse, Lu Schorle, said some symptoms of concussions are temporary loss of cognitive, physical and emotional control. Confusion, vomiting, headache, nausea, depression, disturbed sleep, moodiness, and amnesia may occur

as results of severe head trauma.

"One of the ways to tell if a student has a concussions is by looking at their pupils. Your eyes are really the windows to your soul. We look for pupils that are equally reactive to light. If someone has any kind of head injury, pupils would not constrict or dilate like they're supposed to. The next thing you'd want them to do is hold your hand. This is testing their grasp and also seeing that they can follow directions and that both sides of their brain are working the same. Next, you'd asses their speech, and if they have slurred speech or can't find their words or are having trouble naming objects, those would be indications that you would look for. If their walking is off or if they are tending to lean to one side, that's also an indication. Then we'd ask them to count backwards to see if they can process that, then we do a little bit with memory," Schorle said.

Senior Tyler Newbold plays soccer for Bellevue East's varsity team and has suffered several concussions from kicks and punches to the head during soccer season. He has done his own research on concussions and knows the potential injuries that could come with a concussion.

"I have done research on concussions and there's this thing call post concussion syndrome. It makes you really tired and confused and you can get dizzy. I've taken a lot of hits to the head which have lead to the three concussions I've had. I think getting a concussion is kind of a serious thing even though people don't make a very big deal out of it. Everyone thinks that they could just come back from it, but it isn't that easy. It's something that affects you your entire life. Recovering from a concussion is a long process," Newbold said.

The BPS Concussion Protocol states that there are nine steps in the road to recovery for athletes that have suffered concussions. Step one is to have the concussions medically confirmed by a health care provider.

Step two is contacting and notifying appropriate persons (teachers, school nurse, athletic trainer, coaches, etc.) of the concussed student and specific accommodations from health care providers, if available.

Steps three through nine deal with observing and documenting the concussed student's physical, cognitive, behavioral and emotional symptoms. According to the protocol, the student should be closely monitored by teachers and par-



In the first game of the season, junior Noah Kuzepka plays on the offensive line for East's varsity football team. He is no longer able to play due to his ninth concussion that has caused cognitive damage. *Photo by Destiny Soto*

ents. To return to the classroom, the student should have no learning difficulties whatsoever. The student must complete the "Return to Learn" process before they can start "Return to Play," which is the protocol in place to help make an athlete's full and safe recovery to their sport.

"We have this process called 'Return to Learn' that we follow. So, when a student gets a concussion, they'll come to me, I'll notify the school nurse and from there, she then lets all of that student's teachers know. That student would have to have no problems in the classroom, and to keep track of that, teachers will have to fill out a form everyday on that student. What we don't want are the effects of a concussion to reflect negatively on the student's grades, because it's not their fault. Maybe they'll need a little extra time on tests and maybe they'll need breaks throughout the day, but our goal is to make sure that the student recovers fully," Nelson said.

Recovering from a concussion can take a long time and can affect a student's learning abilities. The "Return to Learn" protocol has helped prevent concus-

sions from lowering students academic scores. This is in place to allow a full recovery without any negative effects from the lack of cognitive function. Kuzepka is in the "Return to Learn" process and is in a low recovery from his concussions.

"I can't read my book for my English class anymore. It's really difficult; I have to follow every word with my finger because I can't read in a straight line anymore. I can't play football anymore, or any other sports. I'm limited to what I can do in class. I'm supposed to take it easy, so I can't do much homework," Kuzepka said.

According to Nelson, concussion prevention is not completely possible, but being safe when playing any contact sports is crucial. Taking the proper steps to make sure that athletes are safe can be very important.

"In contact sports, concussion prevention is tough. Part of avoiding a concussion is technique and the other part is luck. We teach football players not to hit with their head down, it's always head up. Sometimes a kid just gets hit bad or hard enough that there is nothing we can do about it and it's tough," Nelson said.

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# Plattview swims with Bellevue East

# Dynamic duo: Boys rank first for East

**Bobby Storck**  
Entertainment Editor

♦Bellevue East and West were both offered the opportunity to host swimmers from Plattview, but East was selected. Plattview will be swimming at East because they do not have a pool.

Platteview High School's swim team will be competing alongside Bellevue East's swim team for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. Growing interest in a swim team, but the lack of a pool at Platteview has resulted in an agreement with Bellevue East, where Platteview swimmers will practice together at Bellevue East and participate at the same meets and on the same teams as their East counterparts.

"Platteview does not have a pool or a swim program. More interest this year than in previous years prompted their [athletic director] to pursue a co-op with another high school swim team. I'm confident that the team will be better together with swimmers from both high schools," Bellevue East Swimming coach Gregg Beeman said.

Being about a half an hour from East, Platteview swimmers would have to rush to make it in time for practices. This could result in a loss of practice for the incoming swimmers, but Beeman doesn't think this will affect their practice too much though.

"Given their drive distance and their school day, Platteview swimmers will be arriving around 4 p.m. each practice day toward the end of the dry-land exercises. They should be able to enter the water at the same time as the East swimmers," Beeman said.

Both Bellevue East and Bellevue West were offered the opportunity to host Platteview's swimmers as both Bellevue schools have the space and facilities to take in the new swimmers. Out of the two, East was selected to host the new swimmers.

"The [Nebraska School Activities Association] rules allow a school that doesn't offer a specific athletic program, to seek a cooperative sponsorship in order to give their students an opportunity to participate. Within those guidelines we are required to first request from school districts that are contiguous

(boundaries touching) our district. Those districts are Gretna, Millard, Papillion - La Vista and Bellevue. Bellevue indicated interest in joining into a co-op agreement, and the two school districts then worked out the terms of the agreement and submitted it to the NSAA. Bellevue Public schools had the right to determine which school they would accept our students into, and Bellevue East was their designated program," Platteview Athletic Director Steve Joekel said.

The financial responsibilities of the agreement also fall on Bellevue East and BPS. Platteview, however, will give Bellevue East a set amount of money each season to pay for the additional swimmers.

"Platteview students may start this season, with the first day of official practice is Nov. 14. Under the agreement, Bellevue East and Bellevue Public Schools is responsible for any of the costs of the program, which includes coaches, transportation, entry fees, equipment, pool maintenance, etc. Platteview then pays an agreed upon set amount fee to Bellevue East/ BPS for each season. Students are considered part of Bellevue East's swim team and will wear their uniform colors, mascot, etc. Our students also may participate in any pre-season workout opportunities offered to East students," Joekel said.

New experiences will not be the only gain Platteview students will get from this new deal. They will also be able to make friends with East swimmers, and be able to receive varsity letters from Platteview if Coach Beeman recommends them.

"Upon the recommendation of the Bellevue East head coach, Platteview students may earn a varsity letter 'P' award from Platteview. We supply their letter and any bars, pins and certificates that they earn with that," Joekel said.

Socially, this may create problems as many swimmers in one school do not know the swimmers in the other. Fortunately for the team, veterans like senior Logan Wood do not think their differences will affect anything, and he will be looking forward to a new season with new friends.

"For all intents and purposes, they will be one of us. Just because they are from a different school, that won't affect anything. Even if they are good or not, that doesn't matter, the more the merrier," Wood said.

**Megan Miller**  
Sports Editor

He bounces the green tennis ball, preparing to serve. He takes a step forward and throws the ball into the air. It thumps against the racket and swishes over the net. Junior Austin Slie is one of the top boys varsity doubles tennis players for East.

"My favorite moment of this year would have to be when Jack and I defeated Omaha Central in the championship for number one doubles at the Lincoln invite. It was a really great experience and gave me a great feeling after receiving our first place medals," Slie said.

Juniors Jack Hansen-Reed and Austin Slie have ranked above their teammates in doubles for East this year.

"Their record at number 1 doubles was 21 wins and 9 losses. This is outstanding for their first year playing at this spot for the team. They were seeded number 5 at Metro and number 12 at State," coach Andrew Werner said.

Slie and Hansen-Reed have both played tennis for three years. They started playing their freshman year of high school.

"Separately, we both signed up for tennis and we were already friends, so before our freshmen year we played tennis in the summer to get ready for tennis season," Hansen-Reed said.

Hansen-Reed and Slie have proven that they work well together. They won

many matches and invitationals.

"Right now we are 21-9, and I think we're doing pretty well. We won an invite and we got third in another one. We're seated at state which is pretty darn good," Hansen-Reed said.

At the beginning of the season, they thought that it was going to be a year for training and improving.

"Our coach expected this to be a learning year for us, to get ready for next year, so he didn't expect us to do really good, but we got seated at state and that's a big deal," Slie said.

Hansen-Reed and Slie enjoyed playing together. They have great chemistry, keep each other positive and work hard together to achieve their goals.

"I think we have great chemistry, so we know what each other are going to do and that creates unspoken communications that helps us a lot. It makes tennis a lot more fun," Hansen-Reed said.

They have both improved over this past season. They worked hard and practiced so that they could improve upon their skills.

"They faced harder opponents each time out and learned a lot. Their tennis skills have improved tremendously due to their hard work and time spent outside of East practicing. Most of all, they have improved with the mental aspect of the sport. They learned about the tough mindset they need to have in the face of adversity and to never back down from a challenge," Werner said.

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# BELLEVUE EAST TOM TOM

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Nia Booth Co- Editor in Chief  
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## All students should be allowed to graduate early

### Staff Editorial

As young eager high school students who work hard and try to go above and beyond the standards set forth by the school, when we are told we cannot graduate early, even if we have enough credits, it is annoying.

We, as the Tom Tom staff think that students who work hard and have enough credits at the end of their junior year or after some semesters in their senior year should be able to graduate early. Graduation is something that is and should be celebrated. It is an exciting time for students and parents alike. It marks the beginning of a new time in a student's life. But why, if that student has done well in school and succeeded by all means, can that student not graduate early, to get a quick start on this new exciting life?

The requirements for East to graduate is to obtain 46 Credits, and four years of English. Usually, these students take the fourth year of English their senior year. However, if students are so far ahead and have the credits, why not allow them to take it over the summer and graduate early? Students who have failed and not shown up to school are allowed to take all of their missing credit in a computerized version in Project Recovery.

When they finish, regardless if whether or not the school year is done, they are allowed to graduate. Graduation from high school should be a praised privilege, one that is given to those who have worked hard and put forth effort. It is quite discouraging if a student with straight A's and more than enough credits cannot graduate early, compared to a student that failed the majority of classes and now has to take them in an alternative setting.

Project Recovery is a program for students who have failed one or more

courses that they need to graduate, and helps those struggling students graduate, which is a very good thing for our district to have. They take all their classes on a computer with teacher supervision. Students catch up on their work after school from September to May and during the summer.

All the information about Project Recovery on the Bellevue public school district website is about letting seniors know that if they begin taking a class after the 12th week of second semester, they will not receive credit until the end of the summer and will not be able to participate in the graduation ceremonies. In the course registration guide, it says that students who are completing a Project Recovery course will receive a pass or fail grade. However, they should not be able to graduate early if students who work hard to go above and beyond the standards set by the school do not have the same opportunity. If students find out that they can do less work and graduate early then it encourages students to not work to their fullest potential.

East does have more opportunities for students who do go above and beyond when it comes to their school work. There are programs like National Honors Society, Leadership Academy, and opportunities to get scholarships to go to a great college and start a successful career.

If a student like that has all their credits by junior or senior year, they should be able to graduate early and get a head start on the exciting life that lays ahead of them. This would make more sense rather than having other students who fail all their classes and make it up very quickly can graduate early. For some reason it does not make sense to give that privilege to students who do not work as hard rather than to students who exceed the standards of the school.

## Senior commons VIP lunch not necessary



Callin Tomsu  
Editor in Chief

There have been some major changes at East, some for the better and some for the worst. One of the worst being the senior commons lunch. Students that have all C grades or higher and less than 10 percent unexcused absences get a “VIP” sticker on the back of their student ID that allows them into the senior commons for lunch. I, however, appreciate the start of positive reinforcement, but do not like this new change.

Not allowing certain people into the senior commons, only increases the crowding in the lunchroom, especially since many people may have the VIP pass but already have seats in the cafeteria. Some students may also have friends that they sit with that did not gain the right to sit in the senior commons and so they don't want to leave them in the cafeteria alone. The senior commons is very empty now compared to when everyone was allowed in there.

As for me personally, I do not want to sit in the senior commons because there are no real tables and chairs. It is a choice between the floor in the pit and standing to eat at the long black tables. Not only is there no set tables, but it is a longer commute that I would have to carry my food, and let us be honest, the less I have to walk, the better.

I appreciate what the administration was trying to do with the senior commons idea. Positive reinforcement is something we should see more of. How-

ever, I think they went about it all wrong. Changing people's lunch schedules and routines affected more students than just the ones not allowed to sit in the senior commons. The first day this system was put into place a group of students had taken my lunch table resulting in me and my friends having to find somewhere else to eat. Students are lined up on the walls of the cafeteria because there are no more tables available.

Instead of only allowing some students into the senior commons, the administration should have given a different award. They could have allowed juniors and seniors GPS out or maybe even off-campus lunch.

To the underclassmen, they could have received a different privilege such as free homework passes in a class or a free drawing slip for prizes in the library, something that was significant to them.

The senior commons has also been a “right” to the seniors, too, hence the name. It almost breaks tradition to not allow all of the seniors into the commons, and instead allowing students of all grade levels. It is also an inconvenient change because it is happening after everyone has their lunch schedules down.

I think that the administration should try to find different ways to give rewards to students without excluding the other students and making sure it doesn't interfere with routines already set in place.

Positive reinforcement is wonderful and it is definitely needed in schools, however a lot of students don't even like this new system, even those that are allowed in the senior commons. It cuts off students from others and is harder to sit with all of your friends.

It makes the cafeteria much more crowded. Rewards would be a much more beneficial way to encourage the students to have better grades, and better behavior. The administration should add something special rather than take away something.

I think that the senior commons lunch was a good idea, but is not doing what it was intended for.

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### EDITORIAL POLICY

The role of the Tom Tom is not only to promote the accomplishments and highlights of the school, but also to inform the Bellevue East community of events and issues that will affect the students, faculty, staff, administration, and community. Its primary focus is to serve Bellevue East High School and cover issues that affect teenagers today. The Tom Tom does not necessarily represent views of the Bellevue Public Schools and strives to support itself through advertising. In order to achieve the optimum learning situation, as well as serve its audience to the best of its ability, the staff believes that the decisions should rest primarily with the adviser and editors, according to standards of journalism. Material judged to cause significant psychological harm, or that violates the privacy of a person, or that is libelous will not be printed. Obscenity or profanity will not be printed in the Tom Tom. Stories in the Tom Tom will be based on substantial facts with quotes clearly attributed to named sources whenever possible. The Tom Tom will not run gossip or stories or columns founded on rumor without facts. Any student appearing at a public event such as a sports event or music concert may be photographed, and that photo may be published without violating the privacy of that individual.



# Make like a leaf and fall into autumn

Skyla Peter  
Opinion Editor

Autum is the time of year when the leaves are turning beautiful colors before falling from the trees. The temperature is becoming cooler so students bring out their fall outfits and go do fun activities with their friends and family. Bellevue East junior Patrick Karl loves to sit around the warmth of a campfire with his friends to tell their favorite ghost stories while make s'mores and drink hot chocolate as the cool air surrounds them. The dark and chilling atmosphere makes the stories more interesting which is perfect for Karl and his friends who like to be scared around Halloween and enjoy the cooler weather.

"Fall is my favorite because the weather is perfect for hot chocolate and hot apple cider," Karl said.

During fall, students have a lot of trouble trying to figure out what to do. Different people enjoy doing different things, but there are so many options for what to do, like going to Vala's Pumpkin Patch, the Bellevue Berry Farm, haunted houses, and even just hanging out with friends while eating some of your favorite fall foods.

"I like to, of course, visit the pumpkin patches because I have little kids so, we always go to Vala's," instructor Nora Boyd said.

For people who have siblings, it is fun to go to the Berry Farm or one of the pumpkin patches to have a fun, fall experience. As fun as that may sound

there are other options to do instead.

"I just like fall for the football, chilli, pot roast and poutine, as well as the hot chocolate and I like to get creamers like the pumpkin spice creamers," Boyd said.

Many people enjoy being outdoors around this time because they can have a warm drink and watch the beautiful leaves fall from the trees. However some people do not enjoy the cooler temperatures though, which makes it a little more enjoyable for people who do enjoy being outdoors during fall to not be around a crowd.

"I like to go camping in the fall because there is not as many people at the campgrounds and it is really pretty," Boyd said.

Besides doing fun things with friends and enjoying the fall weather, there are many fall items that people can buy. Pumpkin Spice products are a really big trend this year, such as pumpkin spice cereals, candles, and many other items.

"I am not really into the pumpkin spice latte though, I think that is overdone, when you go to target and you see that whole wall of pumpkin spice everything, that is too much," Boyd said.

Overall though there are many options for people to do during the fall. The idea is to just pick some of your favorite things to do, put on your favorite fall outfit, hang out with some of your friends and go from there.

"I like to go to haunted houses, watch scary movies, and watch football around this time of year," junior Eric Heronimus said.



Senior Noah Triggs throws his arms open in joy as he approaches the pumpkin patch at Vala's. "I've been waiting all year to visit the pumpkin patch," Triggs said. Photo by: Briana Benak



Junior Jenna Bond looks out at the campsites as she thinks about past trips to Vala's with her family. "I thought about how my sisters and I would roast marshmallows around the fire and we would talk about our highs and lows of the day at Vala's," Bond said. Photo by: Briana Benak




Who says we have to grow up so soon? Junior Hannah Pederson plays on an old tractor near the bonfire pits in Vala's. "I was happy because I knew I would get a funnel cake right before we left," Pederson said. Photo by: Briana Benak



**Fall is coming!** Junior Makayla Schaffer enjoys the outdoors with her dog before the weather gets to cold. "I like to take hikes around this time of the year before the weather gets to cold," Schaffer said. Photo by: Briana Benak

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# Festive folks find fitting fall fashions



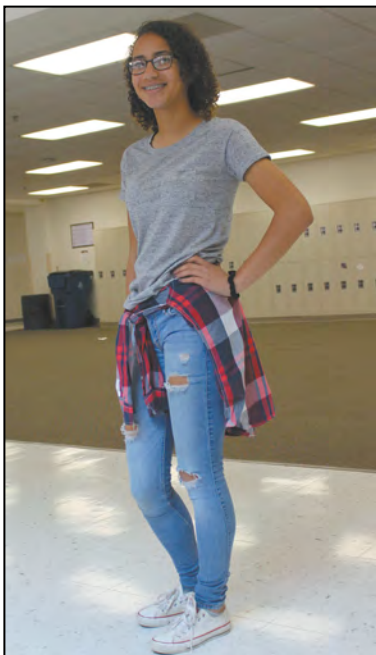
“ I am wearing a sweater from American Eagle, black leggings and sandals with no socks,” Kaitlyn Williams said. *Photo by Nathan Zyla*



“I was wearing multicolored leggings with a beige sweater I got from Forever 21,” Pheny Gramza said. *Photo by Nathan Zyla*



“I am wearing red Converse, jeans that I rolled up, a red flannel and a Golf Wang shirt that Tyler, the creator, gave me,” Christopher Duron said. *Photo by Nathan Zyla*



“ I was wearing some light ripped jeans, a tied flannel around my waist, a grey pocket tee and some fresh Converse,” Kelani Kennedy said. *Photo by Nathan Zyla*



“ I am wearing white capris, blue ankle socks, black combat boots, a blue and white striped shirt with a maroon scarf,” Chelsea Cross said. *Photo by Nathan Zyla*

Brooklyn Anderson  
Reporter

It's fall time and it's time to cozy up by the fire with a pump-kin spice latte and cuddle with your favorite blanket if you're single like me. Otherwise, you can cuddle up with your favorite person in the world which can be anyone, not that I'm judging. Fall fashions are always a trendy thing during fall because of the Uggs and the cozy items from a clothing store.

“I don't think I'm that into fashion now,” instructor Kristina Sonntag said, a teacher known

for her fashion tastes, despite her denial.

It seems has their own taste in clothing or they don't care about what they wear to the public. Ladies that do love fashion have to put away their shorts and dig up their pants in a quick change because of the weather. The fashion that girls do wear is flannels, jeans, leggings, boots, and sometimes even wedges.

“I like all different types of fashion so I like creating my own style,” sophomore Breana Henderson said.

The types of clothing items

that everyone usually ends up to is a sweatshirt with some jeans to go out to a haunted house or even to just go out. When shopping, look for some inspiration by trying on cozy items and say 'I look so good right now' or just walk around with trendy clothes on.

“If I feel confident and covered and comfortable, then my outfit is complete,” Sonntag said.

There are tons of stores that have really good clothes, but it can be really expensive. That is why thrift stores are my favorite places to go to for cheap

clothes. That's the place to bring \$10 and be able to get a lot of nice clothes.

“My top stores to go to is Kohl's, JcPennys, and Victoria's Secret PINK,” Henderson said.

Men's fashion is somewhat similar to women's fashion, just without the leggings and the UGGS. Gentlemen can wear a lot of flannels just because it looks good with almost every style with nice shoes or some boots.

“I like flannels because they are comfy and the colors pop on certain ones,” sophomore Jayden Buffinton said.

The key for fall fashion is to be stylish and warm at the same time. Wear whatever is comfortable for you and your kind of style. If somebody does not like your looks and how you dress, keep walking and tell yourself that it you look amazing in your clothes.

“I don't care what other people think about my clothes because they are my clothes and if people don't like them then they don't like them,” Buffinton said.

## Local restaurant brings homestyle food to the table



Megan Miller  
Sports Editor

Everyone likes having a good, home cooked meal, but sometimes it's a hassle to cook. A good place to find a meal that is home cooked without cooking it yourself is The Special Restaurant off of Fort Crook road. I had heard a lot about it, so I decided to give it a try.

I was not disappointed by The Special Restaurant. It was a good restaurant not only be-

cause of the excellent food, but also because of the wide variety of menu items and the great atmosphere of the restaurant.

The best part of going to a restaurant was the food. They have BLT's, burgers, lemon pepper chicken, steak, fried chicken, and a lot more.

I had a bacon cheeseburger, which had bacon, lettuce, melted cheese, tomatoes and pickles. The burger was cooked perfectly, was juicy and had a great flavor.

The food was not the only good part about the restaurant. It also had a great atmosphere. It was a quiet, friendly place to eat. The employees were friendly and helpful.

The eating area was clean. There were not too many people there, and the service was fast. I got my food fairly quickly. The portion sizes were good and the prices were fair.

One thing that was not up to par was their website. It had the menu up, but that was about it. They still had filler text in the part that was supposed to be the bio. It was hard to learn anything about the restaurant because the website was not finished.

Overall, I give The Special Restaurant an A- because it had good home-cooked food. The restaurant was a new, local place that has great food and a friendly atmosphere. It is a great restaurant that I would recommend to anyone.

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