How has the vaping epidemic affected East?

Found out more in the in-depth pgs. 4-5





Does the new burger joint meet its high expectations?

See Cora Bennett's review on pg. 8



LEVUE EAST TOM TOM



BELLEVUE EAST HIGH SCHOOL

1401 HIGH SCHOOL DRIVE

BELLEVUE, NE

FEBRUARY 2020

VOLUME 69



The old hot water heaters which heat different areas of the school were recently replaced with improved ones. "The new HVAC system requires additional hot water heaters and the existing hot water heaters were old and needed to be replaced," Rippe said. Photo by McKenzie Gandy

East gets needed upgrades, repairs

Madie Ybay Co-Editor in Chief

East will receive repairs and replacements to the roof, water heater, and auditorium as the Bellevue Public Schools Board of Education decided at the end of last

On December 9, the Bellevue Public School Board of Education unanimously agreed to accept bids from Ray Martin Company for replacements of the school's water heater and from Mejia Roofing for roof replacements in the auditorium

"It's always nice to get new things and sometimes it's hard for school districts to get the funds together to make these things happen, so I feel very thankful that we're able to get these updates to our facility," theatrer director Joseph Hamik said.

The Board of Education decided

to approve of these projects, which will be paid for through the bond. The specific projects of the new roofing and water heaters are planned to happen in the near future.

"The hot water heaters are currently being replaced and should be done shortly," Superintendent Jeff Rippe said. "The roof will be replaced when the weather permits it to be replaced."

The repairs and replacements are needed because the new HVAC system required more water heaters and the old water heaters were in need of replacement. The roof replacements are needed because of age.

"The reason East needs improvements is for the fact that the school is just getting old," head custodian John Dengel said. "Not only old, but the building just gets a lot of wear and tear. Things wear out; they become obsolete and then need to be upgraded."

Other repairs and replacements are already completed. auditorium has a new sound system, curtains and choir risers. There are also new projection systems and the television screens that were added in the beginning of the school year.

"The new improvements have been just fantastic. The new HVAC in itself has satisfied the majority of the people in the building." Dengel said. "The consistency and reliability is a godsend. The new improvements to the pool were well overdue."

More improvements expected in the future, the roof in the entrance of the auditorium. In addition to the new roofing. a concert shell will be added to the stage so it is also going to be

"It's great to see improvements being made to the auditorium and the school. I'm excited to see the end product when it's all finished." Hamik said.

Physical intervention bill could create policy in BPS

Emily Nelson

News Editor

legislative session, an amendment to the Student Discipline Act made its way onto the floor accompanied by a 3-hour

Legislative Bill 147 was introduced last year by Senator Mike Groene in conjunction with the school board and administrators associations, and the Nebraska Education Association (NSEA). Amendment 1803 to the original bill went up for debate this year. Groene said he introduced this bill so that every parent who drops their child off at the front door of school can leave assured that their child is safe.

"It is a very good bill," Groene said. "It clears up a lot of errors in local school districts that do not have a good, solid policy. In actuality, it is color blind, academic achievement blind, so we treat all children the same."

If passed, BPS would create a policy to outline physical intervention use in the district, abiding by the law.

"We already have teachers who are restraining students when need be; it is not like Bellevue has had a huge issue with this," Superintendent Jeff Rippe said. "I would hope that teachers would say the same, that we support when they do need to restrain a student, obviously in an appropriate way."

The bill states that teachers and other school personnel may use reasonable physical intervention to safely manage the behavior of a student to protect all students, teachers, or other school personnel from physical injury.

"Nobody has the right to harm someone else; there is no excuse for

that," Groene said. "So if you are harming someone else, there should be an adult in the room protecting you from yourself and the person you are harming."

NSEA president Jenni Benson said she also wants every other avenue to be used in deescalation, including working with students to build relationships in and out of the

"What we have found across the state is that we have some very diverse rules in different districts and some are 'completely no matter what happens, hands off," Benson said. "In the meantime, people are getting seriously injured."

Push back on the bill came from not only activist groups concerned for students and teachers who may be affected negatively by this bill, but also specifically from a group of parents who travelled to the capitol to protest LB 147.

"The biggest problem with LB 147 is the blanket immunity that is granted to teachers," Community activist Schmeeka Simpson said. "It says there are no administrative or legal consequences if a teacher reasonably restrains a child."

Simpson cited section four of the bill where no teacher or other school personnel will receive professional or administrative discipline, or be held criminally or civilly liable for the use of physical intervention if such physical intervention was reasonable.

"I believe the only reason LB 147 is up for debate is because of the immunity piece," Simpson said. "I do not feel that there is a legislative change that can be made because LB 147 is strictly there to grant immunity."

Read the rest online at thechieftainspear.org



A brand new 2020 Ford Utility Hybrid waits in the parking lot of the Bellevue Police Department to be outfitted with lights, equipment and decals. "I like the way they look. I was a little skeptical, or should I say, I guess skeptical of the whole hybrid type of vehicle and I still am," Bellevue Police Ofc. Shaun Manning said. Photo by Silas Chisam

BPD purchases 13 new cruisers

Silas Chisam

Entertainment Editor

The Bellevue Police Department has 90 sworn law enforcement officers and about 50 cruisers that serve about 53,000 citizens and 16.73 square miles.

As the department uses their older vehicles and their miles rack up, it becomes time to purchase new vehicles and equipment. This is where the 2020 Ford Utility Hybrid rolls in.

"As older cruisers mile out, new ones are needed. We try and replace our vehicles between 80,000 and 100,000 miles," Bellevue Police Capt. Tom Dargy said. "Our vehicles idle more than a normal vehicle so the wear and tear is much greater on these vehicles. For every 1 hour of idle time, it equals 33 miles of driving."

One cruiser has 4,090 idling hours which equals 134,970 additional miles of driving for that cruiser. That wear and tear alone is a good reason to be replacing the old cars with new ones.

"I go over the mileage sheet of our cruisers every few months and if needed shift officers to other cruisers to adjust. Once a cruiser is identified as being close to our mileage threshold, it is placed on a list. That list is then turned into a budget request to the city on our Capitol Improvement Project," Dargy said. "Once that is approved, I then prepare a detailed report and supporting documentation to the City Council asking them to approve the request. Once they approve it, I then order the vehicles from the dealer, which is affiliated with the State Bid."

The number of marked units the department has available can fluctuate depending on vehicle maintenance, accidents and when the department trades out cruisers.

"We try to maintain 50 marked units which provides enough cars for 4 full Shifts, K-9, School Resource Officers, Supervisors, Traffic Unit and our Special Services Unit," Dargy said.

One of the 13 new cruisers is unmarked and is used by the Bellevue Police's Special Services Unit. This unmarked variant of the cruiser blends in with traffic and assists the department with

enforcement.

"The new Ford SUV that I drive is great. There are so many SUV's on the road it blends in very well," Bellevue Police Ofc. Chris Abbott said. "With it being unmarked, it has been a great asset to curbing traffic violations."

The Bellevue Police try to reuse as much equipment as possible in their newer cars in an attempt to reduce the overall cost for the cars.

"As we move from Dodge Chargers and Ford Crown Victoria's to the new Fords Utilities, equipment such as prisoner transport cages are not able to be used, so that must be purchased new. Each piece of equipment is closely scrutinized and we try to carry over as much equipment as possible," Dargy said.

If the equipment cannot be moved from one vehicle to another they find a replacement. All of the police vehicles have the same technology inside.

"The new cruisers have the same equipment as all the other cruisers. This includes: radar, computer, E-ticket, shotgun, PBT,

and Watch Guard cruiser video with body camera," Abbott said.

The new cruisers were a purchase that was approved by the Bellevue City Council back in January of 2019 and were expected to be delivered by July of 2019. This was before Ford ran into problems fulfilling their order pushing back the delivery date.

"The vehicle we ordered was the Ford Utility Hybrid which is basically the Police version of the Ford Explorer. The order was part of the State of Nebraska Bid on pricing. The vehicles were purchased for \$34,371.00 each." Dargy said. "The average cost for upfitting the car with a cruiser camera, computer tablet and emergency equipment, radios, prisoner cage, etc., is approximately \$20,000.00."

The Ford Utility Hybrid uses its Hybrid technology to save power and fuel. When the car detects that it is not going fast enough or doing enough to justify using the engine, for instance at a stop light, it will shut off, running on only battery power, much like many other Hybrid cars on the road.

"The engines will shut off after when you come up to a stop light, if you're breaking, it'll shut off and if you're just driving around a parking lot, it just runs on battery power," Bellevue Police Ofc. Shaun Manning said. "It's like a golf cart. And when you actually get on, it it kicks on; it takes some getting used to."

This version of the Ford Explorer has several perks when compared to the civilian version of the Ford Explorer. These perks are in place to help aid the department to saving more money.

"The new vehicles are the Hybrids which is estimated by Ford to save roughly \$3,800 a year per vehicle on gas based on \$3.00 a gallon. The bigger value for the department is the additional battery power these give us," Dargy said. "We currently have cruiser video cameras and computers that can quickly draw down a normal car battery. Our non-hybrid vehicles currently have two car batteries in them and we still experience battery failure, especially in the winter months."





East facilitates new bilingual program

McKayla Vermeer Co-Editor in Chief

The sounds of many voices fill the air as the bright light shines on the many students in the room. There's definitely an age difference between the two groups of students here, but all show the same

As a part of their curriculum, the Spanish V students at East work to teach a younger group of students basics of Spanish.

"When the class became AP and dual enrollment, I thought that there needs to be a community component because it's college level and all of my college level courses had a community activism or outreach," Spanish instructor Piper Porras said. "As a teacher, I

we can do in the community literacy."

East Spanish V students in conjunction with the Early Childhood Center (ECC), have been working to help teach children aged 3 to 5 basic level Spanish. Earlier in the year, parents were given the opportunity to sign their children up for this class.

"I just thought kids need that, and the earlier you expose a kid, the better their language skills are in either language. You could even expose them to nine languages and they'd be fine," Porras said. "The window starts to close at age seven for second language learning, and that doesn't mean you won't learn it, but you'll always have an accent. I just felt passionately about community outreach because it's

just thought that there's something AP and that's a good college skill, and literacy can just change your

> The Spanish V class travels from East to the ECC every Wednesday during second hour in order to go teach the children. The experience can vary from week to week, but generally it is positive and fast

> "I see all children young and old learning from each other new vocabulary and it is so much fun to see how they come in the morning and start greeting everyone. The interactions and conversations are priceless to build lifelong relationships," bilingual paraprofessional at the ECC Raquel Ramirez said.

> Currently, the Spanish V students are assigned into groups of four or five and they all work

together to help teach groups of two to five preschool aged children the basics of Spanish. Each Tuesday the high school students get in their groups and lesson plan for the following day. The high school students teach only very basic Spanish to the children, which can range from colors, numbers, and other simple vocabulary words based on whatever book they are reading that week.

The idea of Spanish V students going on to work with teaching younger students basic Spanish is not unique to just this year. In past years, the high school students had the opportunity to work with elementary school students instead. Due to scheduling conflicts this year, it was decided to instead take the opportunity to students at the ECC.

"This program is a great opportunity to introduce a second language to children and also a benefit for hispanic families to maintain their native language skills and an opportunity to learn English," Ramirez said. "This is a wonderful opportunity for children and adults to connect cultures and respect each other to build greater communities all around the world."

Having the opportunity to teach and connect with the younger students can be very valuable to the high school students. This class provides experiences for the students in and out of the classroom.

"I also think it helps people see how easily you can have purpose. Like there are things that you can do in any class that can give you a sense of purpose and worth," Porras said.



Seniors Caitlyn George, Ryan McCully and Ian Leon-Martinez speak with the students in their group and help teach them Spanish. Photo courtesty of Piper Porras

Senior Ayden Johnson and junior Andrea Garcia review different colors with the preschool students. Photo courtesy of Piper Porras

East welcomes a new SRO to the school

McKenzie Gandy Photography Editor

School resource officers are law enforcement officers who are responsible for the safety and crime prevention in schools. Sgt. Howard Banks became the new SRO after Officer Anthony Orsi moved on to a different profession in Millard. Banks was a former Bellevue East student before he started his police

"I graduated from here years ago and coached football here and then I came to be a school resource officer here from 2008 to 2012," Bank said. "Then I got promoted and had to go back to nights to supervise."

After Orsi left East, a new SRO had to fill the position, but with the police department down 15 to 18 officers, Banks said he had to fill the position.

Dean Mary Trowbridge warmly welcomed Banks back into the Bellevue East family. Given that Banks was enrolled at East a long time ago, he formed ties with former instructors which makes transitioning as the SRO smoother.

"Officer Banks was actually a student of mine way back in the day, so I love having Officer Banks, and he was here as an SRO before so he has super good relationships with students which makes him the best of the best," Trowbridge said.

With having a job, there are parts of the work that people enjoy. Sgt. Howard Banks briefly explained his favorite part about being an SRO at Bellevue East, even in the past.

"I love interacting with the kids, since I have to do double duty I can not do as much as I would like to, but there would be times I would get out and run passes, come to classrooms, and take part in the pep rallies just so I could interact with the kids," Banks said.

A SRO is a person who takes on the responsibility of protecting a school environment in case anything happens. Dean John Siegel is another dean alongside Trowbridge who understands how important a SRO is to the schools every day.

"The School Resource Officer provides extra security within the school and is a great resource of information for students and families," Siegel said.

Banks has his own plan to make sure East improves over time, from handling violence in schools, to the improving students' grades and their futures. He says that the main priority for his plan includes keping everyone in the building safe.



Sgt. Howard Bank assists sophomore Meadoe Anderson with her homework assignment. Banks became the new SRO at East after Officer Anthony Orsi left, and the position gives him many opportunities to interact and build relationships with students. Photo by McKenzie Gandy.

"Eventually, the plan is going to be to select another School Resource Officer for the school, but I will more than likely be here

for the rest of the year, possibly summer and next year," Banks said. "My overall plan for just the kids in general is that they are safe

and the staff is safe and that we can hopefully reduce the number of fights and to see the graduation rate increase."

PAGE 4 TOM TOM **INDEPTH** Bellevue East High School

boidemic L-(Igarette

Co-Editor in Chief

As vaping has started to become popular in the past few years, it has become more of a oroblem at East as well.

Not only are students vaping in classrooms and bathrooms, but also students are selling and distributing JUULpods. JUULpods are e-cigarettes that are made to look more discrete and like a USB.

"I don't support vaping because I believe it is bad for your health, not to mention a lot of people get addicted to it which is another problem in itself. Vaping just causes multiple problems," Abigail Secrist said.

Since it has become such an ssue at East, during the first semester of the 2019-2020 school year, vaping became a bigger topic of discussion in the school. Posters were hung around the school to inform students about the dangers of vaping as many advertisements tell students that vapes are better than regular cigarettes which is not the case. JUULpods contain about the same amount of nicotine as 20 cigarettes.

"My main encounter is people vaping in the restroom especially during passing periods causing people to be late and not be able to use the restroom. I have seen up to around 10 people in the restroom just standing and vaping," Secrist said.

Also in the first semester, dangers of vaping, informative signs were implemented into bathrooms that state "STOP: Two or more students in a stall at any time will result in a SEARCH by school personnel." This means that if there are two students in one stall and a staff member has reasonable suspicion then they are allowed to search a student's belongings.

"Reasonable suspicion is suspicion of wrongdoing based on specific facts and not on a mere hunch or rumor. For example, if the principal wants to search you because he or she thinks you 'look like a drug dealer,' that isn't good enough.' Nebraska American Liberties Union said.

Since putting signs and posters up around the school, the amount of students vaping not decreased. continuously find students in bathrooms vaping. The staff also are finding more and more students that are addicted to nicotine and refuse or are unable to quit.

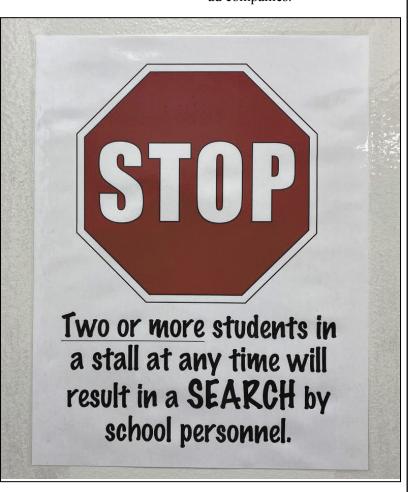
"Students that vape are given consequences ranging from ISS to OSS depending on different circumstances such as repeat offenses, etc. They are also required to take a mini course on the dangers of vaping while they are suspended," Dean Colin

the problem. This includes education in the classroom on the

posters, and frequent dean and staff checks of the restrooms. The intent is for students to be aware of the dangers of vaping and getting addicted to nicotine.

"I believe that educating (not simply scare tactics) students

and parents, who could be supplying the student based on misinformation, on the negative side effects of vaping," instructor Elizabeth Beman said. "It could also be a teachable moment on how consumers are targeted by ad companies."



The district is coming up A sign (above) is placed outside of all of the restrooms at East. The with new ways to help solve signs were put up early in the school year and warn students of being searched by school personnel. Photo by Jacob Kriewald

Vaping affects East students Vaping brings negative effects to teens, young adults

12.6%

Marijuana

McKayla Vermeer Co-Editor in Chief

The widespread use of e-cigarettes has caused many health issues and effects to many people in the United States, including teenagers and young

E-cigarettes and vapes were originally created as

From 2019

12%

What Students are Vaping

9.6%

8th Grade 10th Grade 12th Grade

recover. However, a large consequences because it's in up vaping which has led to an matter right now." increase in health effects.

to vape because they think it's nicotine, as the Center for cool and it's just another way Disease Control and Prevention to hang out with their friends,"

19.9%

Nicotine

an alternative to smoking to senior Jordan Goble said. "They e-cigarettes that they tested 2018, about 25.7% of high that peaked in September of help those addicted to nicotine don't really think about the number of teenagers have taken the future and it doesn't really

The majority of e-cigarettes "I think most teens continue that are produced contain (CDC) found that 99% of Drug Abuse reports that in

3.9%

contained nicotine.

According to the CDC, "some e-cigarette labels do not disclose that they contain nicotine, and some e-cigarettes marketed as containing 0% nicotine have been found to contain nicotine."

The National Institute of more health effects.

14%

school seniors believe they are 2019, but that number has been vaping "just flavoring" which contradicts with the CDC's findings. Students' potential lack of knowledge about what is contained in e-cigarettes can lead to unknowingly causing

Nicotine in itself can cause health issues specifically to youths and young adults. The CDC reports that studies from National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine shows nicotine can cause significant harm to a growing brain. The human brain continues to develop until around age 25, so using nicotine products in adolescence can affect parts of the brain that control factors like attention, mood, and impulse control. Additionally, it is reported that using nicotine products could potentially lead to future drug addiction.

"Each time a new memory is created or a new skill is learned, stronger connections or synapses – are built between brain cells," according to the CDC. "Young people's brains build synapses faster than adult brains. Nicotine changes the way these synapses are formed."

The CDC has coined the term EVALI, which stands for e-cigarette or vaping product use-associated lung to describe the various lung effects that have been caused In August of 2019, there was a sharp increase in the amount of EVALI cases in the United States

consistently declining since

Even with the decline in cases, the CDC reported that as of February 4, 2020, there has been 2,758 hospitalized EVALI cases in the U.S. with 64 resulting in death across 28 states and the District of Columbia.

"In the United States, e-cigarette use among youth has exploded into what the Surgeon General and the Food & Drug Administration have called 'epidemic' levels - with Juul and its imitators being the primary cause," the organization Tobacco Free Kids reports. "With all of the major multinational tobacco companies launching their own e-cigarettes or buying established brands, and e-cigarette brands setting up shop in new countries, there is concern that the youth e-cigarette epidemic in the United States will soon spread to other countries."

A report from the National Institute of Drug Abuse states that in 2019, approximately one in every four high school seniors has vaped a substance that includes nicotine in the past month. Even with this being a relatively large amount of high school seniors, there are still some that are against vaping due to the potential consequences on their health.

"I don't see the point in vaping. It's just flavored chemicals going into your body that harms you the more you vape," Goble said.

In a study done by the National Institute of Drug Abuse in 2019, students at different grade levels from middle school to high school were asked about whether or not they had vaped nicotine or marijuana products in the past month. Graphic created by McKayla Vermeer

Substance

25.5%

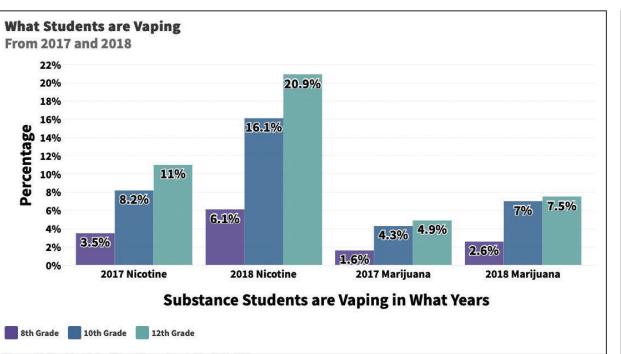
Resources available to combat vaping



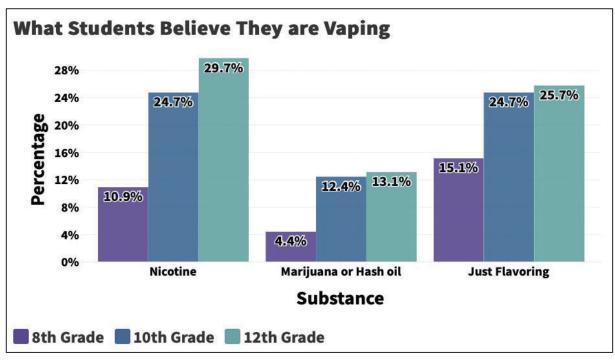
The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has an organization called Tobacco Free Nebraska which provides a toll free number that can be called in otder to help quit smoking or vaping. The can be contacted at 800-784-8669 or via email at dhhs.tfn@nebraska.gov. More information can be found at dhhs.ne.gov.



Tobacco Free Kids is an organization that helps prevent smoking and vaping in adolescents. They offer many resources and studies to help aid in quitting smoking and vaping. More information can be found online at tobaccofreekids.



Studies done by the National Institute of Drug Abuse show an icrease in the amount of students that are vaping from 2017 to 2018. Research they collected shows that vaping of both nicotine and marijuana increased over that one year span. When compared to the 2019 graph (above), it is shown that vaping has continued to grow among teenage students. Graphic created by McKayla Vermeer.



The 2018 study done by the National Institute of Drug Abuse shows what substances students believe that they are vaping. The percentage of students that believe they are vaping nicotine is the highest amount compared to the other categories. The percentage of students that believe they are vaping just flavoring is high, but the CDC reports that 99% of vapes contain nicotine. Graphic created by McKayla

Being a teacher Soccer readies for is fun and games another season

Emily Nelson

News Editor

Contrary to popular belief, teachers actually do not live at school and many have hobbies that do not reflect their day jobs. For life outside the classroom of teacher Chas Busch, it is Ultimate Frisbee.

Busch started playing Ultimate in college

at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. This year marked his tenth year of playing, five of those as a player at UNO and five as a coach there. "I liked how accessible the sport was. I

had only played in gym a couple of times in high school, but that was the case for most of the people at the first practice," Busch said. "I fell in love with the sport and its community, played all through college and

As for the structure of the sport, Busch said Ultimate Frisbee has five levels. Pickup teams have games that are roughly organized where anyone can play and the rules are loosely enforced, league teams are local organizations that have captains who draft teams for weekly scheduled games with specific rules, colleges or university teams that practice on a weekly basis and travel to compete in tournaments across the country, club teams that travel to play in tournaments across the country, and semi-professional teams that travel to play in single games against other teams in their division culminating in a championship weekend.

"In Omaha we run a fall, winter and summer league," Busch said. "I have played in every season of league since I started. I have captained for the past 7 years and helped organize the league for the past 5 years." On Jan. 11, Busch traveled to Madison,

Ultimate Frisbee team. This was his third year trying out, but he did not make the team this year. "This was a rough year for me at tryouts, I have not done as much training this year as

in years past," Busch said. "I think I played

well in that I did not make many mistakes,

Wisconsin to try out for their professional

but my overall fitness was not at the level that it was last year." If Busch makes the team, he will play one or two games a week starting in late May. While the school year is in session, he will travel up to Madison on the weekends to

practice with the team. Once the school year

is over he will move there for the summer. "I have always strived to get better at the sport and play at the highest level," Busch said. "I love the competition. Professional Ultimate is not a lucrative venture, but the level of play, organization and exposure is appealing."

Jacob Kriewald Sports Editor

With the soccer season quickly coming up, the teams are preparing to tackle this year head on and kick it off just right.

With the weather slowly getting better, the soccer season is getting ready to begin, with the first game Mar. 18 at home, so the players are having to get ready. "Right now we've mainly doing

conditioning type training, like long distance, sprints, stairs, and weight room," sophomore Mara Parker said.

The game is always progressing and changing, and so is the team. The team has been practicing and conditioning indoors since the end of last season preparing for this upcoming season.

"We have been preparing since last season finished. We compete in a Summer League, we do off season conditioning and strength training in both the summer and winter, and we also participate in an indoor league during the winter season," girls varsity head coach Sara Fjell said.

In athletics, one of the things to being successful is having a bond with the team. If a team is constantly fighting at practice and off the field, that will transfer onto the field and will cause issues.

"A lot of our players are friends on and off the field, and also participate in other activities and sports with each other. They all have a similar passion for getting better each time we are on the field and at practice and are good motivators for each other," Fiell said.

As Bellevue East soccer fans, they are always ready to see the changes and new things coach Fjell has implemented and what it will do for the team. Also exciting is the "returning 10 of our 11 starters from last season," Fjell said. The team will be looking to just continue their development as a team instead of having to rebuild new players and put them into the lineup with little experience.

"Our fans should expect improvement all over the field. WIth so many girls coming back, and with the addition of some pretty talented kids, we have the potential to almost double our wins this season,"

The boys team has also been undergoing some changes as well. The team has had three coaches over the past year: Jeremy Lenz, Daniel Vasquez Gutierrez, and currently Luis Vasquesz. Through it all, the team has stuck together through it all.

"So far the team has improved on communication. We have been practicing and playing individually together where we do drills where we recreate scenarios from previous games," sophomore player Hamza Mberwa said.

Powerlifing raises bar to prepare for state meet

Jacob Kriewald

Sports Editor

With a quarter of a ton of weight on the bar, the pressure is on to lift the weight off the ground and win that medal. Powerlifting is a winter sport that does not get as much recognition as others such as basketball and wrestling. But that does not mean they do not put in just as much work.

The powerlifting team has been competing since January and has the state tournament coming up soon. There are two different state meets, one where you are only allowed to use a belt and wrist wraps.

The other, which is coming up, is where

other equipment that can help your lifts.

"The team has shown steady improvement throughout the season. Our number of lifters varies from meet to meet, but I'm happy with our progress," powerlifting coach Tobin Higgs said.

Powerlifting is a winter sport where athletes male or female compete in their own weight class to try to lift the most weight. There are individual weight classes for people to compete in. The athletes have to weigh in before the meets.

"Coach has us lifters do high weight, low rep lifts that allow us to gain strength and mass at higher rate," junior Aden Perry said.

There are three different lifts that the lifters compete in.

"The lifts consist of bench press, squat, and deadlift," Perry said.

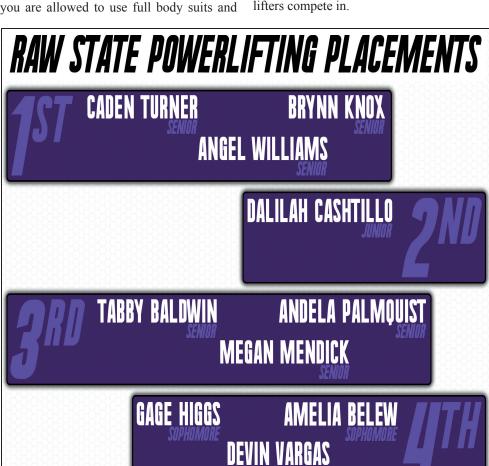
They had their meets on the weekends and completed all around the state. The team practices all week with Higgs, varying the lifts from day to day to better the athletes so when the meets come on the weekends, Higgs strives to have the team be as successful as possible and will continue to better them so they can do their best at state and other big meets.

"Lifts vary from week to week, but we usually focus mainly on the 3 basic lifts and a few variations of them. Getting stronger and better at the lifts under meet conditions are the main goals right now," Higgs said.

Some of the lifters at East lift close to if

not more than a quarter of a ton which is the equivalent to 500 pounds. It takes a toll on your body so there are companies that make equipment to help these athletes lift heavier weight. There are multiple different pieces of equipment ranging from a wrist wraps that help you with your grip and stabilize your wrists, to a compression shirt that helps your bench press to increase it almost 20 pounds.

"Lifting is often more of a mental challenge than a physical one. The most important things to remember each day are to: A.) warm-up well, B.) lift the bar with good technique, C.) breathe correctly and D.) challenge yourself and others to get a little better each workout / practice," Higgs said.





Sophomore Gage Higgs lifts 405 pounds at his practice for the upcoming state meet. "I'm only as good as my last broken record; I have been doing this for so long that powerlifting has become more than a sport to me - it's a lifestyle," Higgs said. Photo by Jacob Kriewald

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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 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. The policy of the Bellevue opportunity for all students: to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, physical or mental handicap, marital status and political affiliation; and through affirmative action to promote the full realization of equal opportunity. Registration practices will demonstrate full adherence to the letter and intent of federal and state government policy guaranteeing equal opportunity for all students.

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Bad behavior brings rewards



Cora Bennett Features Editor

Every other district in the metro area (except for Bellevue Public Schools) allows their seniors the option to graduate at semester. Why does Bellevue Public Schools not give their seniors this option? If you complete and pass all of your classes for your freshman through junior year then you should be ahead of your credits for your nenior year.

If I have already met my requirements for graduation, then why do I have to go to school for an entire extra semester? There are multiple benefits to graduating early. I could get a head start on college, or pick up some extra hours at a job. School may just not be a place where some people thrive, but they still want to try their hardest to get in and get out. Our school system is doing a disservice to its students by not allowing them the opportunity of early graduation.

What irritates me even more is that students in the Chieftain Center are allowed to work ahead in their classes and are allowed to finish early. They have the potential to finish an entire semester's worth of classes in less than a month if they actually try. Why am I coming to school

everyday, doing my homework and paying attention in class when I can miss days of school at a time then go to the Chieftain Center and work ahead? It's a contradiction to give kids that are not even doing the bare minimum the privilege

of finishing their classes early and graduating before everyone else. If you are going to give some kids that option, you need to give it to all of them.

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Lack of psychologists calls for action

Tom Tom Staff Editorial

At East, we have two school psychologists named Sarah Shaw, and Dr. Kimberly Rausch. Although they do a wonderful job, they are the only school psychologists working at East. According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), for every 500-700 students there should be one school psychologist. There are 1463 students assigned to East which is just over the amount a school psychologist should be able to manage, yet there are still only the two psychologists managing all 1463 students.

This is important because students spend most of their day at school. School psychologists are also able to help parents of students as well. In fact many school psychologists are those who go to many different schools at once. If a school psychologist is working

between two schools who exceed the required number, they are overworked and will not have time to visit with the students that may need them. Even if teachers needed to see and talk to the psychologist, there would not be enough time to see them. A school psychologist is thoroughly and extensively trained to support students and teachers. School psychologists are sent to many different seminars a year and are thoroughly trained in cognitivebehavioral evidence interventions. This creates a safe and healthy environment them to be able to help change the mindset of a student from a negative mindset to a positive mindset.

Shaw and many other school psychologists may not be able to tend to students as their caseload is severely overloaded. Most shortages around the nation are mostly due to budget shortages. Nationwide the average salary for a school psychologist is \$77,430, according to the NASP, and public schools all across America are at a shortage of school psychologists ranging from 35,000 and 63,000 short. For our nation's school system to meet the NASP's requirements a year, it would cost between \$2.3 billion to \$4.9 billion. That may seem like a lot of money however, the NASP says that it would only be raised the education funding in America by .45% to .8%. Not all the issues are coming from the budget shortages, but there are also a low amount of people wanting to be a school psychologist. According to the American Psychology Association, these shortages cause more stress on the teachers when there are not enough psychologists because they feel pressure to perform a job they are not trained to do. This shortage creates stress on students, teachers, and the psychologists.

However it is tough to have a clear, concise solution. Raising

funds for all of America is just not reasonable, just like making students go into school psychology is unrealistic. Something that can help is raising awareness for not only this shortage, but to show that mental health is important. Mental health greatly affects how students can perform at school which is why a school psychologist is necessary.

However, when it comes to taking care of the physical and mental health of students, people only tend to focus on the physical side of things. In the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, there does not include anything to account for a child's mental health. Starting a conversation can raise awareness about mental health and the lack of school psychologists to help take care of students mental health. Through raising awareness, school education boards can start to see the importance of having enough school psychologists to help everyone in the building.

Spreading fake news through social media



Emily Nelson News Editor

In the growing digital age, it is becoming increasingly hard to pick out truth and to slow roll rumors once they begin. In situations of danger, rumors circulating on the internet are specifically meant to provoke shock and mass hysteria.

It is imperative to see where the information you are about to repost is coming from, rather than reading headline and immediately

clicking share. False information typically spreads faster because it is shocking. Our society has a true or not, seen by a large number of people. Recently the Iran missile launch in Iraq caused mass hysteria on social media platforms while America waited for information back home. Not long after the attack started, false information about casualties started to surface including a random report of 30 dead U.S. soldiers.As the information gained popularity on the internet, it became increasingly started to panic.

dangerous as worried families Not long after, the tragedy of Kobe Bryant happened, false information started flooding in including a report that all four of his daughters were on the

helicopter with him. Consumers

are not the only problem then it is

information.

media outlets to ensure they have the correct information before they report. It is paramount that instead of wanting to be the first, news stations should focus on being the most accurate.

Adding to the consequences of rumors on social media, the spread of false threats is gaining popularity more than ever in public schools. A post from an anonymous user is almost always randomly spotted, provoking panic in students and parents. Investigation after investigation, the threat is either not credible or is addressed and the perpetrator is taken care of, yet the fear still lingers.

With the increasing amount of school shootings, the possibility of that happening is always in the

also the media outlets sharing the back of student's minds. When parents hear of these rumors, as From the panic of getting the they have passed through the tendency to drag situations out and breaking news out first, it has grapevine multiple times, they make the most horrific information, become less important for some almost always have exaggerations added to them. It is almost as if the story needs to be more shocking, and there is a sense of disappointment when it turns out to be nothing as the story continues to grow. The consequences of false information, fake news, or simply just rumors circulating faster than the truth is something our society as a whole needs to be consciously aware of and work to end. It hurts families, quality news outlets, and others involved.

As people scroll through social media, they need to be conscious consumers and verify if the information is credible or not. We need to be immune to the clickbait and shock factor so factual information gets out first and deliver the news as it should

Pitting Netflix, Disney+ against each other

McKayla Vermeer Co-Editor in Chief

In my family, we have always taken Netflix pretty seriously. Long before its current streaming platform base, my family started with Netflix when it was simply an online DVD rental service.

We're basically die hard fans of Netflix, and I maintain that. For years I have spent my homework time simultaneously doing my actual work and working my way through many, many shows and movies.

This is all well and good, but then other streaming services started popping up. Platforms like Hulu and Amazon Prime Video came around and offered some competition, but nothing really caught my attention - that is, until Disney+.

Here's the thing: Netflix is great and all,

but when you give me so many shows from my childhood with the opportunity to watch all seasons of it within the course of like two weeks, then obviously that is going to hold a special place in my heart. Let me break it down a little more, though.

Netflix has a lot to offer in terms of variety and quality of content. There are so many different types of shows and movies in addition to numerous Netflix original shows.

Because of the popularity of so many of

have Netflix solely to watch their favorite original series.

While I am not one of those people myself, it's hard to deny that the popularity of shows

these originals, there are some people that

what makes Netflix great.

In addition to the show selection, the format of Netflix is also very favorable.

like "Stranger Things" is a big influence on

Netflix has been a streaming service for a long time which means that is has had plenty of time to perfect how it works on both televisions and mobile app versions. There really is no flaw in how to navigate Netflix, and that's part of the beauty of it.

When talking about Disney+ it is important to note the selection of shows and movies it has. I frequently forget just how many other companies Disney owns so I am frequently surprised by just how many different types of shows there are.

Of course, my favorites and my go-to shows are all Disney channel shows from the early 2000s, but I know that if I ever decided to watch literally anything else (unlikely) then I would have that option.

Where Disney+ falls flat is probably in the format. Having both the app version on my phone and the television version, I can say that the app version is so much better and I can definitely tell that the intention of Disney+ was to be an app. The app is easy to navigate and has a very similar function and layout to Netflix which makes it easy to get used to and adapt to.

When watching Disney+ on my TV is where I run into problems. For me at least, I have a recurring problem of my shows not starting on the episode I ended on.

When I click on my show in the "Continue Watching" category, it frequently will start me back a few episodes from where I was. While it's not a huge problem, it's just a little irritating.

Overall, while Netflix will continue to be my top choice due to it's unfailable format and great original series, Disney+ provides some stiff competition and I look forward to seeing how both improve in the future.

Reviewing new restaurant Sickie's Garage

Cora Bennett
Features Editor

Sickie's Garage is a new burger joint that opened earlier this year. The new building is off of Cornhusker Rd. where the old Summer Kitchen Cafe used to be. Sickie's currently has six locations across North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and now there is one in Nebraska.

I went on a Tuesday right after school and it was not very busy at all. My party of two was seated fairly quickly, although the hosts did seem like they were a bit reluctant to take us to our seats.

It took our server about 10 minutes from the time we were seated for our server to notice and come acknowledge the fact that we were there. Later on we found out that it was actually our server's first day out of training, so I suppose I can give her some leeway on that.

The overall atmosphere was very laid back. Workers were just wearing jeans, a T-shirt and regular everyday shoes. All the workers did have personalized name tags which I thought were a cute touch.

Also, I give them props for having a pretty diverse staff. There were multiple different races, ages, genders and sizes that I saw working while I was there.

The food overall was okay. The prices were fair, each burger seemed to be around \$10. Each meal came with a side. I tried to stick to things that I know I like so that I could give it a fair rating.

I had the "Hot Rod," which is a burger



The "Hot Rod" is one of the many burgers that is available for purchase at Sickie's Garage. Sickie's is a burger joint that is new to Bellevue. They have a wide variety of food on their menu. *Photo by Cora Bennett*

that has sliced jalapeños, spicy mayo, buffalo sauce, and pepper jack cheese. It was surprisingly good.

My only complaint is the burger was a little over done so it was kind of tough and they couldn't even bother to spread the buffalo sauce over the whole bun they just put a dab of it in the middle and threw it on the burger.

Other than those things, the flavor was definitely there. I chose to have fries for my side and I got the "Rusty Bucket" seasoning

put on them. The seasoning really just tasted like Lawry's. One thing that I thought was really weird was that they brought out my sister's food a solid ten minutes before they brought out mine.

Usually whenever I go out to eat they bring everybody's food out at the same time or within a couple seconds of each other. It kind of made the setting awkward, my sister was just there enjoying her food and I was just chillin there watching her.

The restaurant itself was very dark.

They seemed to rely mostly on natural light coming in from the windows, even then it was still pretty dark. I couldn't imagine going while it was dark outside.

It smelled like vinegar which was kind of off putting, but they had music playing which was pretty nice. I also really enjoyed the setup; you pretty much can see a window from any table which was cool.

I would recommned this restaurant to anyone and would rate Sickie's a 3 out of 5





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