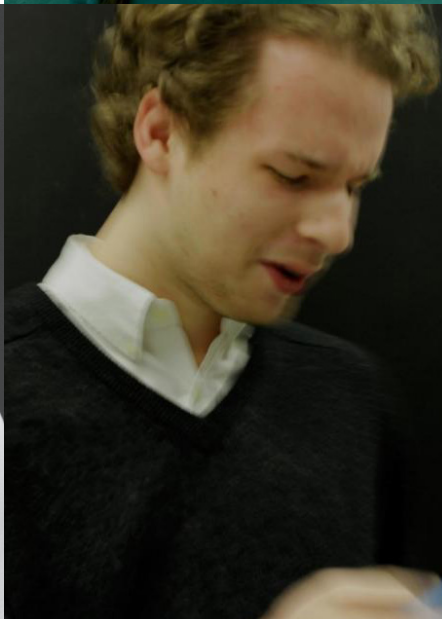
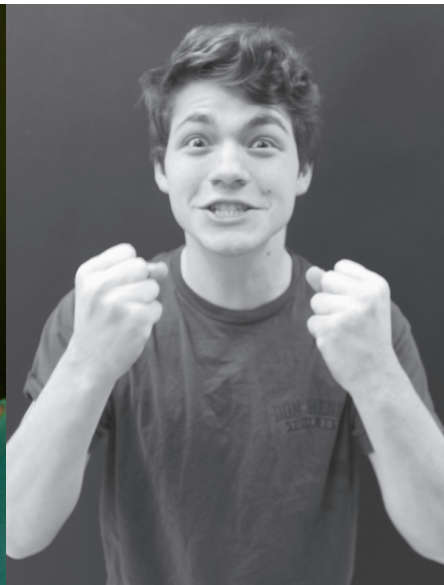
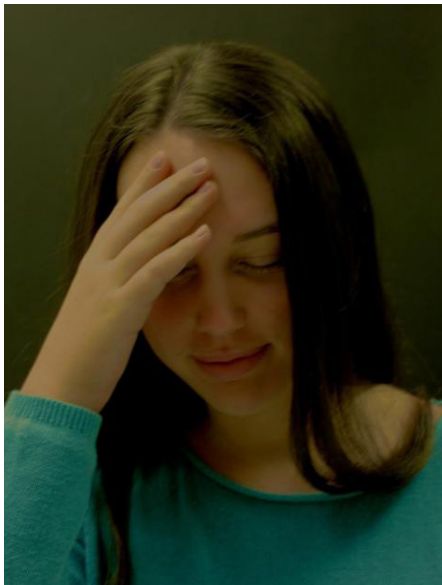


THE WIRE

Volume 32 Issue 3
March 2017
WEST POTOMAC
HIGH SCHOOL



EMOTIONS

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***The Wire* is a publication whose aim is to inform, educate, and entertain the student body. An open forum for discussion, *The Wire* will not print any material that is libelous or obscene, or will invade any person's right to privacy. The ideas expressed in unsigned editorials reflect the opinions of the newspaper staff; however, letters to the Editor do not.**

This issue's cover was created using Adobe InDesign. The images used for the cover and table of contents were taken by Claudia Santa Anna and Whitney Huntington.

The QR Codes

The QR codes are a special feature for this issue. Just snap a pic of the code on a spread and it will take you to a playlist designed for that emotion.

Letter from the Editors:

Nina Raneses & Hugh Moffitt

Welcome to the February 2017 "Emotions" themed issue of *The Wire*! First, we'd like to thank our readers, patrons and everyone involved in the production and ongoing support of our student-run publication. In this issue, we take a look at the vast spectrum of human emotion. What makes us jump for joy, what makes us pull our hair out? What makes us sob uncontrollably, or exude our pride and confidence for all the world to see? Human emotion is anything but black and white, and we intend to shed light on everything in between. We chose to focus on stress, sadness, nostalgia, happiness, frustration, confidence, pride and anger and how these emotions influence the lives of our student body.

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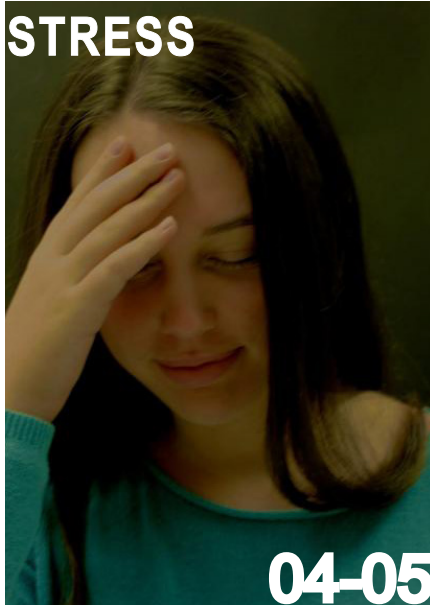
In this issue, The West Potomac Wire has used Aurasma to connect videos into our print issue.

1. Download the app from the App Store or Google Play Store
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3. Quickly create an account.
4. At the top of the home page type "WPnewspaper" into the "Discover Auras"
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6. Point the camera at a picture in this issue that has the Aurasma logo on it.
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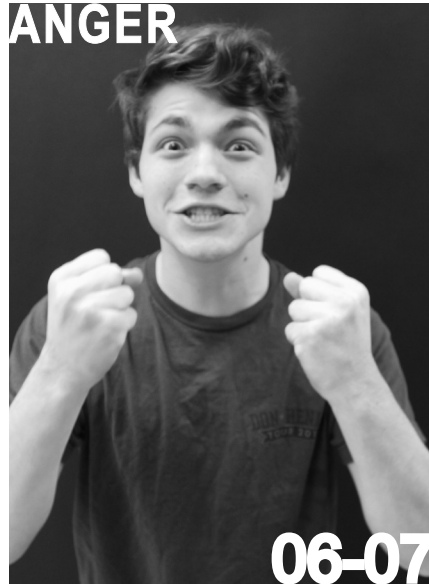


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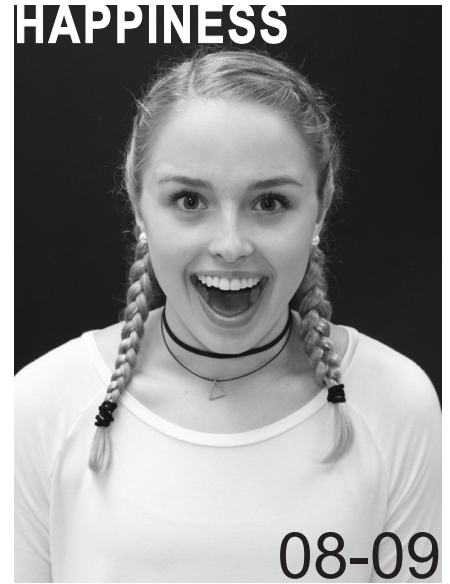
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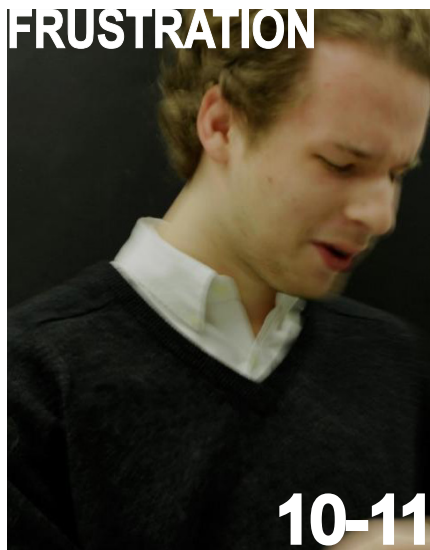
Coping with Stress



How Angry Are You?



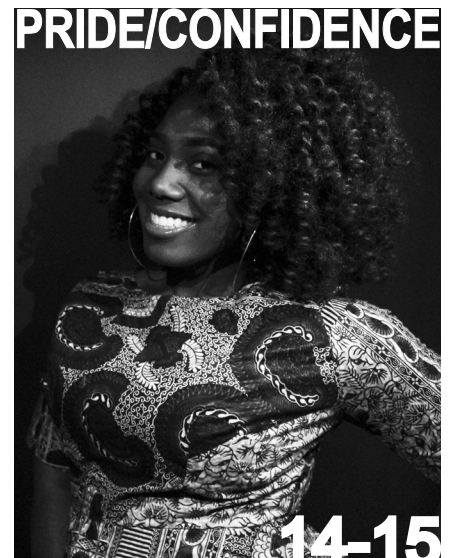
Motivational Mondays



Crowding in the Hallways



Loss



Social Media and Confidence

How Do Students Cope with Stress?

“I think the number one thing for me is listening to music; it just kind of calms me down. [I feel stressed] sometimes, but I can get through it. [I stress about] homework to do after school, tests to take, and basically the workload that we have.”

- Giselle Cabrera, 11th

*“Listen to music.”
- Marta Ramos, 9th*

“Sleep, eat, or read. [I get stressed out about] not having time to relax. I make sure I have everything done on time.”

- Fiteroy Johnson, 10th

“I like watching a movie. [I stress about] everyday life... like I have to do that!” -nMaryam Ali, 11th

“You just got to breathe, look around you and realize that the stress is miniscule. Stay focused and you will succeed.”

- Emma Clark, 11th

“I play sports, so I usually just go out and play a sport, and then just relax” - Oscar Cruz, 12th

*“I just like to like take a moment and calm down, or like for one day, I just won't do anything. I won't do the things that stress me out like schoolwork, and I'll just do something fun, like have a fun day.”
- Morghan Gray, 12th*

“I make a list of everything I need to do to organize and bring my responsibilities into perspective.” - Juliette Burcham, 12th

*“I read, listen to music, or paint my nails.”
-Alex Brinley, 11th*

*“I watch a little bit of T.V. throughout the day, but then I go back to work. I like take breaks. [What stresses me is] usually schoolwork and midterms coming up.” -
Emily Deaton, 10th*

“I FIGHT PEOPLE...(IN SCHOOL OR OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL) IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER. ALL OF THAT...(SCHOOL...PEOPLE)... EVERYTHING (STRESSES ME OUT). I GET STRESSED OUT EASILY.”
- ANDREA ANDRADE, 9TH

“I cope with stress by sleeping, probably, and relaxing” -Asher Boyd, 10th

STRESS

By Nina Raneses, Spencer Bao, Madison Davis, Fabiola Castro, Camille Santa Anna

Stress in High School

Ever felt like your teachers assign too much work? A big game versus hometown rivals? Or dreaded working shifts? This feeling of discomfort and distress is called stress.

What is Stress?

Stress is a physical response the body gives when it believes it is under attack. The body releases hormones such as adrenaline, cortisol and norepinephrine. These hormones gives us surges of energy and makes the heart beat fast.

Effects of Stress?

Stress can be could useful when in physical danger. The central nervous system in the brain has a “fight or flight” instinct that allows people to react to situations immediately. Stress raises awareness and helps us avoid danger such as slamming on the brakes before hitting another car.

However, stress can be unhealthy in emotional situations because there is no outlet for the additional energy.

Therefore, the energy is usually released through anger, anxiety or depression.

Sources of stress for the typical high school student include homework, sports and part-time jobs.

“Homework is pretty stressful,” senior Kayla Congleton said. “I’m in AP classes so it is pretty stressful to make sure I understand it now so I am ready for the AP test and make sure I know or remember everything from the beginning of the school year. So having to look back, making sure I know everything. It is really time-consuming, I guess. I feel like I have to study or focus most of my time on those classes and I cannot focus on my other classes.”

Extracurricular activities add an additional layer of stress.

“Limited amount of time to do homework after doing a sport,”

freshman Luke Garden said. “I’m in wrestling so our practices go till 6 p.m. and it is hard to complete homework in that time. ”

Too much stress can lead to physical symptoms. The rush of hormones and elevated blood pressure can lead to problems in the digestive system and headaches.

“When I’m stressed out, my head starts hurting and I overthink everything,” freshman Jenny Gonzales said.

Making time to relax is essential because stress can build up over time. Relaxation is a good way to help lower stress symptoms by improving concentration and mood.

Five Ways to Deal With Stress I Learned From a Mental Hospital

IT IS OKAY TO TAKE A BREAK OR SOME ALONE TIME.

Needing to take a breath and decompress is perfectly natural. Taking time can help you relax and clear your mind before returning back to work that may stress you out.

ESTABLISH PEOPLE WHO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING TO ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS.

Finding a person who will listen to your problems is extremely important for a couple of reasons. One, the venting process can be beneficial to work out the things that are stressing you out. Two, it is good to have someone looking out for you and making sure you are safe.

TRY TO USE THE WORD “STRESS” LESS.

Stress is all about perspective. Research has shown that a person’s anxiety tends to fall, when they stop saying the word stress. It forces you to look at challenges differently and with a more open perspective.

FIND A HEALTHY ACTIVITY TO HELP YOU DE-STRESS.

Activities like sports or music are a great way to take your mind off of things. They can boost self esteem, and allow you to take time off of something that could potentially be harmful to your mental health.

DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP.

This is probably the most important way to deal

with stress. Open communication is extremely crucial. If someone is doing something that is giving you a lot of anxiety, tell them. Or if you are having a really rough day tell a trusted adult or faculty at the school, and they should be more than willing to help.



Top 5 Things That Anger Student Drivers: Opinion

By Cooper Rosenberg

1) Tailgating

Getting tailgated is arguably one of the most uncomfortable and aggravating things you can encounter when driving. It makes you constantly on edge and feeling like at any moment you could get rear ended. Tailgating is one of the most dangerous things to do while driving, because it lowers the amount of time you have to react if something you aren't expecting happens. Do not tailgate, and if you do get tailgated, pull over and let them pass you. It's better than getting rear ended and possibly hurt.

2) When people don't use their turn signals

Even though it's actually illegal to not use turn signals, the sheer number of drivers who either forget to or just refuse to use turn signals is baffling.

"Nothing's worse than being at a four way stop, and the person who pulls up at the same time as you just doesn't

use their turn signal," senior and student driver Ben Hamer said. "The lack of common courtesy with some drivers really angers me."

3) Bikers who ride in the middle of the road

To get by these inconsiderate road-hogs you have to go around them by shifting into the other lane, and when on a two-lane road you're forced to move into the lane with oncoming traffic. If the road is busy, too bad, you have to just wait behind a biker going 15 in a 35 until the traffic clears. The worst, though, is that sometimes there will be a bike path right next to the road and the biker still chooses to ride in the lane with vehicle traffic.

4) Left lane hogging

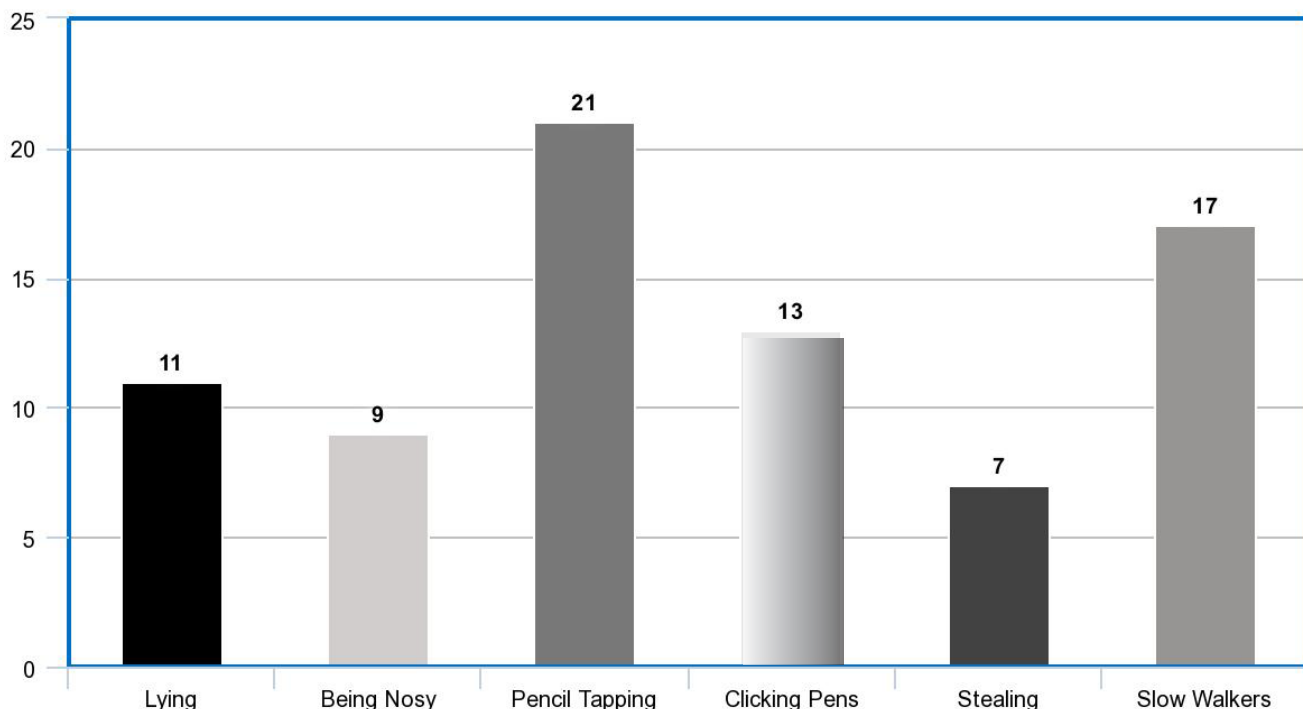
It's common knowledge for drivers that the left lane is the fast lane. It's mainly used by people who are passing. But many drivers will hog the left lane and go really slow, resulting in no one being

able to pass people in the right lane, and backups on the road. A simple look in the rear view mirror and a left lane hog will realize they are holding up people behind them, but sometimes they don't realize for a very long time, and before they know it, there's 20 cars behind them all waiting to pass.

5) When parents go into the senior lot to pick up/drop off their kids

The kiss and ride is for the parents picking up and dropping off their kids, the parking lots are for staff and students. When parents use the parking lots to bypass traffic in the kiss and ride, it creates unnecessary traffic for the students and staff, exacerbating an already clogged commute.

Top Things that Make Students Angry



Are You an Angry Person?

1) You are walking in the hall and a group of people in front of you are walking really slow, taking up the entire hallway space. You have only 30 seconds to get to your next class. What do you do?

- A) Yell at them to move faster
- B) Talk under your breath
- C) Silently try to walk around them

4) You have 30 seconds to get to your next class. Your class is just around the corner. As you're about to turn, there's a group of people just standing in that corner blocking your way. What do you do?

- A) Insult them and tell them to get out of the way
- B) Sarcastically mutter under your breath
- C) Silently try your best to get through

Mostly A's- Enraged Person

You find it difficult to keep your cool. You often flip your lid at a moment's notice. Although you can be a bit volatile, people appreciate how you are true in expressing yourself.

2) You're wearing your low top shoes and you're going to class. The hallway is crowded and somebody behind you steps on the back of your shoe and it comes off. How do you react?

- A) Turn around and insult them
- B) Turn around and make a gesture
- C) Fix your shoe

5) The quarter is going to end soon and you are looking at your grades. You notice you have a 69.8% in math class. You talk to your teacher and ask if they can round up your grade to 70%. He politely tells you no. How would you react?

- A) You throw a tantrum
- B) You leave the class angry
- C) Just accept that you won't get a C-

Mostly B's-Controlled Burn

Occasionally you get a little "hot under the collar," but you're able to bring it back down. Although you don't always stay cool those moments when you start to lose it, you always keep it in check.

ANGER

by Hugh Moffit, Cooper Rosenberg,
Stanley Aleman, Diana Mendes

3) You're in class one day. The teacher is starting the lesson on the new material. You're not able to hear the teacher because somebody in your class is talking loudly about something irrelevant. What would you do?

- A) Yell at them to shut up
- B) Ask the teacher to tell them to be quiet
- C) Try to ignore it and continue to learn

6) You come home and realize that your siblings have finished the cheesecake you were hiding. Everyone knew you wanted to eat that cheesecake, but they betrayed you anyway. What do you do?

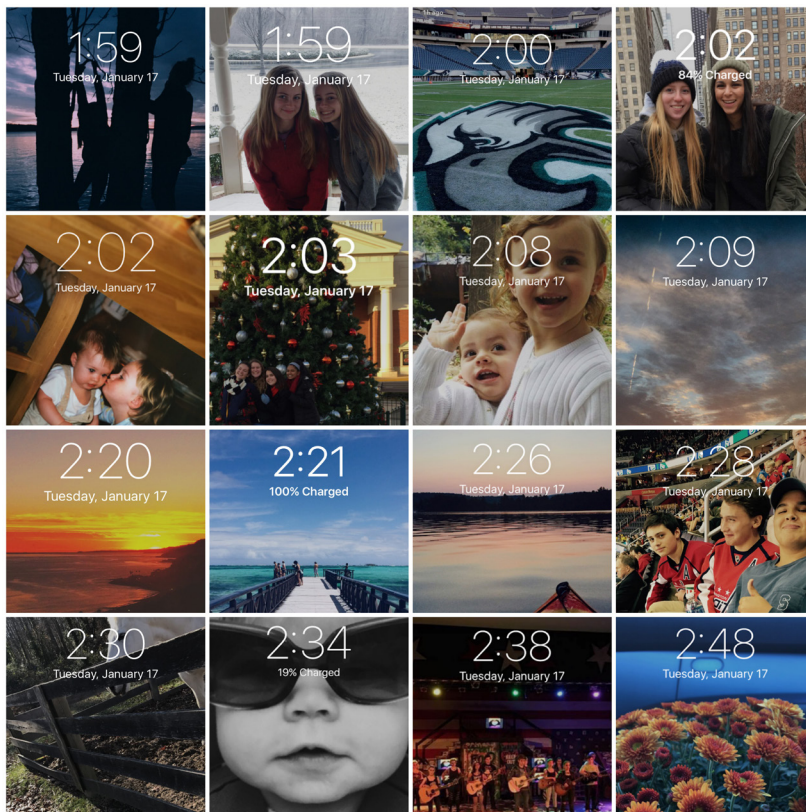
- A) You eat their favorite snacks for revenge
- B) You leave a passive aggressive note
- C) Buy a new cheesecake

Mostly C's- Ice Ice Baby

You are the definition of zen. Keep on keepin' it chill. Your friends often see you as easy going and appreciate your go-with-the-flow attitude.



Phone Backgrounds



West Potomac Students place what makes them happy on what's in front of them all of the time, their phone backgrounds. Students put pictures of family, friends, places, and anything else that makes them happy. Phone backgrounds are a constant reminder of good times and they're only a lock button away.

How Does Food Make Students Happy?

"It makes me feel great and helps me feel me better about myself." - Parker Blonden, 9th

"When I'm at work, it keeps me focused and I don't have to think about other things when I'm hungry." - Shawn Opoku, 9th

"Food makes me relaxed and prevents me from being angry." - Chidera Ubochi, 12th

"If my mood is down, I eat. It makes me feel better."
- Gerson Hernandez, 9th

"When I have food for lunch I'm happier and it makes me more excited for lunch."
- Kate Meyer, 9th

"When I eat, there's less to worry about."
- Christian Alonso, 11th

"Food gives me energy and helps me get ready for school. It's a great motivation."
- Brian Dixon, 12th

"The food I like to eat is lasagna." -Alba Benitez, 10th

"When I eat food I get happy because it makes me want to go to sleep."
- Shannon Harrigan, 10th

"Food makes me happy because it makes my taste buds happy."
- Michael Monney, 9th

"If I eat breakfast, then I get a lot of energy."
- Aine McCuin, 9th

"IT MAKES ME HAPPY WHEN I GET REALLY TIRED AFTERWARDS. IT MAKES ME REALLY LAZY."
- NADIA JALLOH, 11TH

Motivational Mondays

West Potomac's administration has executed a new system designed to educate students and open dialogue about issues faced by high schoolers today. For students who are not motivated in school, "Motivational Monday" can inspire them to achieve, as well as putting a good message in front of them on a weekly basis.

During wolverine time, third period teachers share a Harbor TV video from Jostens Renaissance Education and a corresponding slideshow with interactive questions regarding the topic of the video. Jostens Renaissance Education is an initiative that helps improve academic performance, behavior, student engagement and overall school spirit.

English teacher and PBA (Positive Behavior Approaches) coach Melinda Hedenberg offers a lot of support for renaissance education. She has been the driving factor for the implementation of Motivational Mondays, which share many lessons, improving the students happiness and ultimately the school climate.

"The whole idea behind the Motivational Mondays is a few different pieces," she said. "One, to teach behavior expectations and teach the student body what it means to show spirit and what it means to be a Wolverine. The second part is to build relationships within wolverine time. We are hoping it builds relationships between the teacher and student. The third part is - because it is a school-wide initiative and every single wolverine time teacher is delivering the same lesson - it creates a sense of unity that we are all sharing in this one experience together, and we are all talking about these same things. When you hang out with your friends from different classes, you can build upon the discussions that you had in your own class."

"IT IS CREATING A MINI FAMILY IN YOUR WOLVERINE TIME."

Creating a stronger relationship within the community is a big part of why the school started the program this year.

"It is creating a mini family [in your wolverine time] and then a big family with the whole school," Hedenberg said.

Personal finance teacher Daryl Mackey is a very active participant in the motivation and inspiration movement at West Potomac.

"We are going down a positive road with the Motivational Mondays," he said. "I think it is a great opportunity for people to dive into what makes them tick. When you look at others and you look outside of the box, I think the school collectively has put together a system that can create a spark to get people excited about life."

Students and teachers actively participate in the videos, and share the values taught in the videos throughout their day.

"If there is a positive out of all this, it is that there are a lot of people contributing and working together to make sure every student can experience this and have access to it," said Hedenberg. "Even for our students who are not English speaking yet."

Positivity and happiness are associated with these videos because of the messages they send. They can be interpreted in many ways, and students can take the message in whichever way is best for them.

"I think the message behind the video helps motivate the students to do good things, and to go out and give and give back," said Mackey. "You can have the same message played over and over again, but the messenger and delivery adds value to how it is received by the audience. If teachers click, and go through the slides, without any energy or buy in, they are just doing the job. The true job comes from each individual valuing the information in ways that are relevant to them."

Hedenberg brought the positive 'renaissance' initiative from her former school. Hedenberg said it was extremely successful.

"[At Mount Vernon] we reduced behavioral incidents by 60 percent, increased attendance and timeliness to class by 30 percent, and improved the graduation rate from 88 to 93 percent, which was the highest graduation rate increase in Fairfax County," she said. "I can't say it was all because of me, all the renaissance [programming], everything I did, because there were so many different pieces to the program and other things going on in the school, but over the course of six years, and having collected that data on the behaviors, attendance, and

graduation, those three things improved at the exact same time that all the renaissance initiatives were put in place."

For her work with the renaissance program at Mount Vernon, Hedenberg was named the 2015 Educator of the Year at the Jostens Renaissance Education convention. She believes Motivational Mondays have particularly increased the positivity and happiness among the student body. Mackey also believed in the movement to improve the school's atmosphere and spread the positivity.

"I FELT INVISIBLE, LIKE IT MADE THE THINGS [I DID RIGHT] NOT MATTER"

"We can start scratching the surface to redirect their mindset," Mackey said. "It is almost like some of the bad habits that people have are hard to change, so you don't want to focus. We are trying to shift in terms of resources, to create new habits. It is a shift from doing what you normally do, to adding more value to your day, it has been more positive. I think the videos have encouraged staff members to put this whole system in place that we can tap into. I've always looked outside of the box and now they have made my life a little easier."

Hedenberg was a major part in installing the videos and spreading the positivity throughout the school. Throughout her life, she said she has always been an advocate for school spirit and it has continued into her career.

"I think the whole reason I got into doing this is because nobody did it for me," she said. "There was nobody at my high school doing any of this. There were a couple times in my high school career where I needed more support than I got. I felt invisible, like it made those things [I did right] not matter. I guess the whole purpose for me personally is to give the schools that I am at what I didn't have as a student."

Motivational Mondays have already begun to impact the school. By next school year, it is likely we will get the actual data on how the initiative and renaissance education system has affected our school. Keeping active with the Motivational Mondays and continuing to be positive will really make West Potomac the "World's Greatest High School."

FRUSTRATION

By Jimmy Figiola, Jasmine McGee, Bill Didden, Fatima Zia, Grant Benick, Matthew Hanley, Saira Rodriguez, Evelyn Dibell



Students fill the hallways of Gunston while leaving 7th period

School Traffic

Traffic is a pest that we all have to deal with; especially when you're trying to get to school on a Monday morning. It is a hassle and is especially frustrating when you are running late in the morning. Quander Road becomes so populated with cars, buses, and trucks that it comes to a standstill at the traffic lights. Juniors and seniors trying to get to their parking spaces are sometimes stuck on Quander Rd when the student line gets too full and holds the rest of the traffic behind it making students and parents alike very frustrated.

Steven Winkleman, senior, said that it takes him roughly 20 minutes to get to school and that he waits in 5 to 15 minutes of traffic.

However, not every student has the same experience.

Liam Armstrong, junior, said it takes him 5 to 10 minutes to get to school and doesn't experience much traffic in the morning. This difference is due to their location and the varying roads taken to get to school.

Once the school day ends and students begin to go home, getting out of the senior parking lot can also be a hassle if you're not quick enough to get to your car. The senior parking lot has two entrances/exits but when school ends, only one of the two are open and this creates chaos among the students trying to leave school grounds before the buses. The result, a backup of hundreds of students attempting to file out of one exit rather than two.

Arriving to school on time is crucial if you want to avoid three write ups and receive a "tutorial."

Internet Issues

With students experiencing problems such as slow internet, app blocking, and over usage, accessing anything internet-based while on campus causes frustration.

Senior Thaddeus Lawson, is one of the many students experiencing the frustration of the FCPS Wi-Fi.

"Whenever I try and use the internet it is always so slow, I think it is because so many people use the internet," said Lawson.

Thad is experiencing a phenomenon common for users of the FCPS Wi-Fi. The masses of people using the internet will often cause the Wifi to slow down. Given the large student body the

Crowding in the Halls

West Potomac High School is 20% over capacity and the overpopulation has led to crowded classrooms and hallways. This school year, an additional four classroom trailers have been added to accommodate for the influx of students. Throughout the school, on any given day, a student will be faced with the hallway traffic. Certain spots such as the connector between Gunston and Quander are packed with students emerging from all directions.

“Back when I was a freshman, hallway traffic wasn’t as bad as it is now,” senior Alejandra Puskar-Beckett said. “What causes the most hallway traffic are kids who hang around and talk or walk really slow and wait for their friends.”

A big cause of hallway traffic is stationary students who block the paths of others.

Ninth grader, Nicolette Christensen said, “The crowded hallways makes it really difficult to get to class on time, the size of the hallways don’t balance out with the amount of students.”

The halls in Gunston are smaller than the rest of the school because it used to be a separate standing building that served as a middle school. On rainy days, the hallways are busier because students don’t want to be out in the rain while going to class.

Another issue that causes hallway traffic is people walking opposite of the flow of traffic. These bodies feed into the already confined hallways.

“Instead of people having their conversations in the middle of the hallways,” Christensen suggested, “they could walk and talk to where they need to be so no one gets stuck waiting in the middle of the hallway.”

Lots of students face the same problem as Christensen. It has come to student’s attention that something needs to be done. One student thought of some ideas that they think can help keep the flow of traffic moving.

“I think that certain classes should release

students a little earlier than other classes so they can get to a certain point at the same time as the other classes are getting to a certain point”, said Puskar-Beckett. “Also, security needs to enforce the flow of traffic so students keep moving instead of socializing and blocking the hallways.”

The number of students each year at is only projected to rise. The class of 2017 is a mere 570 students while the class of 2020 has 724 students. The class of 2021 is expected to be 1,000 or more students. Without proper renovations, West Potomac will be using more of the building that doesn’t exist. If only four trailers were added this year, how many more will need to be added for the next?

occurrence happens all too often. Another problem caused by the Wi-fi is a blockage of apps and websites that student try and reach during their free time.

“Its frustrating that they blocked Snapchat.” said Lawson.

In a recent poll, The Wire found Snapchat to be the most used app by our student body. While neither is officially blocked, they

The Wi-Fi’s failure to accommodate the students needs has been met by uproar and frustration, but there is little the school administration can do as the hardware is universal throughout the county.

SIS Shutting Down

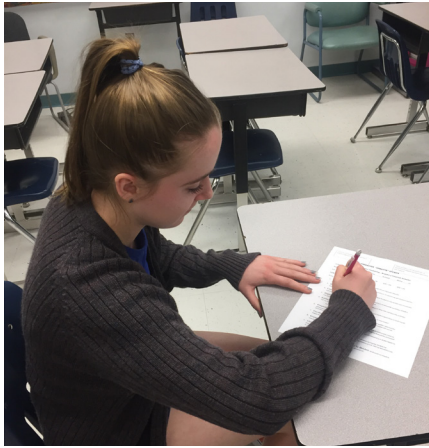
When the quarter ends, students rush to bring up their grades. Lots of students check SIS, a website/app that allows teachers to insert their grades electronically, allowing students and parents to view them. By the end of the quarter, most students that want to change their grades talk to their teachers about missing assignments, retaking tests and quizzes. This school year left a lot of students in awe. SIS shut down their system November 2 through November 9, 2016. Not one parent or student could see their updated grades whatsoever.

Our school based technology specialist, Ms Zina Facemire said, “This is the grading window for the county (fairfax county).”

This caused frustration for many students

and their families wondering what their grades were in any given class. Students were required to go up to their teachers and ask them what their updated grade was. This caused teachers frustration and distraction from their teaching. Relevant to the ending of the third quarter, students should now be prepared for the shutdown, learning from last quarter’s mistakes. The third quarter ends on April 7 and SIS will shut down from the 5th to the 19th.





Routine

Julianne Joyce

Some think that a student's life isn't the most exciting thing in the world. Students don't have the time or money for big adventures every week. Boredom strikes, and routine sets in.

"On school days you know that nothing spectacular is going to happen, and that often makes me sad," junior Julianne Joyce said.

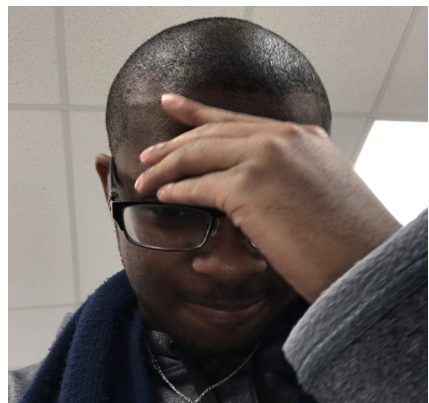
Joyce considers school more stressful than spectacular.

"I don't dislike all aspects of school and sometimes I find myself really looking

forward to it," Joyce said. "But the monotony of the work and the tests is just very stressful."

When routine gets old, she focuses on her future.

"I'm super excited for independence, that's what I am working for. It's all about having options," said Joyce. "You need to do your work to have options in the future and I keep that in mind. I know that my future can be great, but at the moment it kind of sucks."



Expectations

Brian Dixon

With grades being constantly available through SIS, students often fall under a lot of pressure, whether it's from their parents or themselves.

Senior Brian Dixon has a unique experience with studying -- rather than his parents forcing him to study, he motivates himself.

"The determination to graduate high school makes me want to study."

However, his parents aren't completely out of his academic life.

"When I get a bad grade, they tell me to do better," said Dixon. "They encourage me to study and say 'You have to graduate, so study.'"

As students, it's hard to accept a parent's constant involvement and SIS-checking, but Dixon's parents have their reasons.

"My parents care because they see potential in me and want me to be successful," said Dixon.



Sacrifice

Hope Larrick, Pino Gibson

Before high school, life is usually simple and unscheduled. But things get hectic when schoolwork and extracurriculars start piling up, and something has to give.

"With my schedule being too busy and dance taking up a lot of my time, I have had to give up going to school sports games with friends,"
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said freshman Hope Larrick.

This was a hard decision for Larrick, but she recognized where her priorities were.

"I thought about it and realized that I made a commitment to the team and to my school work," said Larrick.

Larrick made her choice, but senior Pino Gibson's choice was made for him.

"I had to give up my grades and much of my social life because I got pneumonia and Steven Johnson's syndrome," Gibson said. "Unfortunately, I had no choice."

Although the decision-making process was difficult, Larrick took pride in her choice.

"I don't go to the games with them, but I have

been able to keep up with my friendships," Larrick said. "I think about it a lot, but I always come to the conclusion that it was the right decision."

Even though Gibson was in a tough situation, he was able to learn from the experience.

"I feel very bad about what happened but I shouldn't have waited until the last minute to fix my grades in the first place," said Gibson. "I wouldn't want this to happen to anyone else."



SADNESS

Loss

From the loss of a pet to a loss of a friendship, students experience loss on different levels and have different ways of coping with it.

"I lost a good friend of mine a few weeks ago because I wasn't able to balance hanging out with him and one of my other friends," junior Joey Haggerty said. "I just miss being able to hang out and talk about almost anything with him."

Haggerty has only had a few weeks to cope, but senior Dira Hawkins' feeling of loss hasn't faded over the years.

"I lost my dad 12 years ago, and it's been pretty hard growing up without him in my life," Hawkins said. "I miss how funny he was and how he always knew what to say to cheer me up."



Hawkins' Father

Although some students have never experienced the loss of a human family member, students like junior Emma Melvin have lost a beloved pet, who often feels like a member of the family.



Emma Melvin, her brother and Theo throughout the years

"I lost my dog Theo in May of 2014," she said. "It was awful since Theo had been in my life since I was a baby. He was such a gentle and loving dog so it really stung."

Junior Nelika Rolon had to say goodbye to her home in order to come to the United States with her family.

"I was born here but raised in Puerto Rico. I came back at the end of my eighth grade year," she said. "I've gotten used to it because I have made friends here, but I definitely miss having my close group of friends that I could always go out with. I'm still sad because when I do see them hanging out together it makes me feel not included, but I can't do anything about it."

Rolon and Haggerty share this realistic approach to and acceptance of loss.

"It kind of hurt because I lost someone important in my life, but I have to move on from it," Haggerty said.

Despite the distance, Rolon still

managed to hold onto her old friends while also appreciating her new life.

"I kind of lost touch with some of my friends, but we talk on the important holidays. I just talked to one of my best friends that I haven't talked to in such a long time and it was very nice," she said. "Honestly, I feel like it would have been the same [if I stayed in Puerto Rico] and we would've just gotten older and met new people, but I wouldn't have had as many opportunities as I've had here."



Rolon with her friends in Puerto Rico



By Claire Callahan, Bella DeMaso, Drew Taylor, Armaghan Faisal

LGBT Pride

Hope Kyoto
Senior

Was it easy for you to come out?

I didn't feel it was necessary to come out, I felt like this is something that's a part of me and if other people want to accept it, then they will. I feel like coming out is up to the person and I feel like society makes everyone feel like oh being gay isn't normal

Would you say it's hard coming out to family?

My parents are a bit homophobic so I haven't come out to them but people in my generation are more accepting. People in this generation you don't really have to come out to,

What Makes You Confident?

"The motivation from the people around me, just to keep going" -Malika Biwott, 10th

What makes me feel confident is dressing my best -- you know I'm dressed to impress. I just remember when I look good, I feel good." -Matt Fannon, 12th



By Shahtaj Ali, Andrea Lugo, Joseph Chromey, Maliah Hawkins, Omar Rahim, Joey Castrilli

it's kinda just a part of you. I think coming out is more [of] an issue with my parents.

So would you say this generation is more open and accepting?

Yeah. I have a funny story: I came out to my friend and she was like 'that's it?' It was obvious to her - I wear denim jackets everyday.

What would you consider yourself within the LGBT community?

I would consider myself bi if I were to label myself.

Would you consider yourself an 'activist' within the LGBT

community, or more of a member?

I feel like everyone is a member as long as you're sure of yourself. People might be pressured to join in these clubs and parades and set up outside of school organizations but you don't have to, it's just feeling pride within yourself and carrying the fact that you are a LGBT member like a medal of honor.

"My friends make me feel confident, mainly because I'm comfortable around them." -Nora Mousa, 12th

When we beat South County, I felt confident because we hadn't beaten them in a while."
-Marquis Davin, 12th

"Well, my self confidence gives me confidence. Other than that, it's also my upbringing, my mother giving me some responsibility when I was growing and trusting in me." - Tyrone Strother, teacher

PRIDE & CONFIDENCE

Social Media and Confidence

Social media has become one of the most controversial issues of our day. Whether it aids and abets in the perceived rise of bullying and teenagers with low self-esteem, or if it's doing just the opposite. The Pew Research Center reports that 92% of teens (age 13-17) go on the Internet daily and 71% of teens use more than one social media network.

It's clear that teenagers use social media regularly. What's not so clear is if it's helping or hurting its younger users. Experts are split over the issue, with many claiming that it magnifies the insecurities of teens, makes them vapid and attention-obsessed, and allows online harassment to run rampant.

Recently, researchers have begun to claim that the issue has been oversimplified. The hype surrounding the rise around social media and its usage led to increased media attention. Many reports had negative slants to them, as they were written to address the fears of worried parents who may not have been social media users themselves. What these reports didn't take into account was the positive effects of social media.

A 2012 report by the nonprofit Common Sense Media reported that 5% of social media users said that social networking makes them feel more depressed, while 10% reported that they feel less depressed. What's most telling,

however, is that 83% reported there was no difference. The same goes for feeling confident, happy, or shy. Most will report that there has been no difference in how they feel.

With social media, the issue can't be black or white. It's difficult to quantify the effect it will have on younger users if they don't experience the extreme. One user's experience can't speak for all, but it's clear that there are trends. Just like there was an influx of reports concerning cyberbullying with social media's initial rise, there have been recent "positivity" or "confidence" movements on social media.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE USED TO ISOLATE AND HARASS PEOPLE, BUT IT CAN ALSO BE USED TO ENCOURAGE AND LIFT OTHERS UP

These movements gained traction on the microblogging site Twitter, with hashtags like #DisabledAndCute #BlackGirlMagic and #EffYourBeautyStandards encouraging people to post pictures of themselves. The posts were often met with positive comments and encouragement from their peers, allowing people to take pride in their appearance.

Devendra Manu, a senior who had used hashtags like #AfricansBreakTheInternet among others, in the past to celebrate her heritage. Although Manu wouldn't

say that her social media use has made her more confident, she feels as though it's given her an opportunity to showcase her heritage.

"I'm glad these hashtags have gotten really popular, people are paying attention to cultures they didn't really before," said Manu.

Although social media can be used to isolate and harass people, it can also be used to encourage and lift others up. Tyler Rulapaugh, a sophomore, used social media to help get his singing career off the ground. He won a "Voice of the Ocean" competition on a cruise he was on and then began posting videos of himself singing on Instagram. Although Rulapaugh had been singing since he was young, he was now sharing this side of himself with many of peers for the first time.

" [I posted it] to show people what I am, because I think people think I'm this athletic guy so I just tried to show the other side. I posted it two weeks after I got out of the cruise, I've gotten some negative and some positive [reactions]," said Rulapaugh.

Rulapaugh feels some of his peers reacted negatively to his videos because they weren't used to this side of him, but the encouragement he's received and the confidence he has in himself outweighs that.

NOSTALGIA

What makes you nostalgic?



Oliver
DiCaprio
Junior

"[I would define nostalgia as] looking back overly fondly at childhood memories. I don't remember my childhood [much]. I was an anti-social gremlin in my childhood... I

don't miss it. Honestly, [nostalgia is] not a big thing for me, because I wasn't exposed to all the commercial things that people generally feel nostalgic for. I miss when my life wasn't a mess... I don't know if that's nostalgia. I miss being close with my father. I guess that's one thing I miss, because my life has improved in a lot of ways since my childhood, at least as I remember it, [but] I haven't been able to get as close to my dad again, and I doubt that'll ever happen."



Kwabena
McGaney-
Osei
Freshman

"Let's see... Replay, by Akon, I think, I'm not sure that's the artist. And A Series of Unfortunate Events, Happy Feet, Super Mario brothers..."

They all gave me a sense of joy when I was younger and free of responsibility, they gave me a sense of happiness. Those were the 'things to do' when I had nothing better to do. To me, it [nostalgia] is something that reminds you of when you were young and free of that responsibility."

*Osei was half-right: Replay, released in 2009, was made by IYAZ, featuring Akon.



Juliette
Flowers
Sophomore

"I think one of the biggest things that makes me feel nostalgic is music. My parents and older siblings would always share their music taste with me when I was younger so sometimes I'll hear a song or a

particular artist and it makes me think of memories from before I was even in school. Specifically White Flag by Dido and American Boy by Estelle. I know they seem different but that's just the contrast between my sister and mother at the time. They were really the songs of my childhood.

I also get nostalgic when I look at some of the old pictures we have in our house. It's really interesting to see all the pictures of me with my grandmother especially. She has Alzheimer's now so most of my real memories with her are from when I was young. It's remember all the good times I had with her and my cousins and siblings."



Vera
Abankwa
Senior

"When I hear the song 'Sexy Back' by Justin Timberlake, it reminds me of middle school, like eighth grade, because that's when I took Spanish. There was this conjugating thing— it

was the song 'Sexy Back' and the remix. It was so much fun. That song reminds me of Spanish class.

Every time I hear that song, I can't sing the actual song. I sing it the way it was when we learned it in Spanish, with all the conjugated verbs."

