



The Drumbeat



“What’s in it for you?”
Parsippany High School

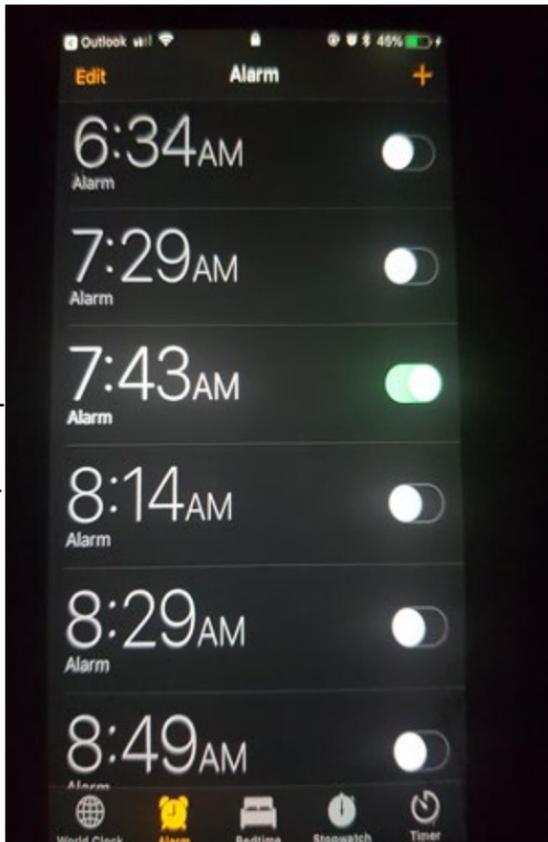
September/October 2020

Vol. 1

Where is Your Mind?

By Emily Adawi

You wake up to the blaring beeping and buzzing that comes from your phone’s alarm telling you to “get up for class”. Rubbing your eyes to look at your screen and turn it off, you make your way to your computer and open it up for your first period google meet. After you finish all your meetings for the day you get back in bed to sleep, that’s an average day for high school students. In the year 2020, we know everyone can vouch for the fact that there have been many changes. A major change that has affected many of us is the cancellation of in person schooling, especially in the high school grades. Most schools in the U. S. entered the 20-21 school year as “hybrid learning”, where school is partially online and partially in person, with the exception of students choosing all remote learning. Student morale is amongst one of many things that has taken a toll as a result of the school year changes.



A group of thirty nine students (grades 11 and 12) were sent a survey on how they are going through this school year so far. Roughly 70% of students have chosen completely remote learning for the year, as well as majority of the students expressing their liking for staying at home because they manage their time well and get more work done. It has been reported that half of the students surveyed felt they’re not quite ready for college yet, whereas college application deadlines are coming up rapidly. Colleges have done their own changes in order to adjust for their incoming students next year; for example many colleges such as Clemson University and Penn State University.

A question asked in the survey, “How is your motivation this year?”, where only four of the thirty nine students expressed they were very motivated to do well in the school year. However twenty two of the thirty nine students showed they were enjoying this school year so far.

The Black Lives Matter movement: A new generation

By Mya O’Brien

On July 13, 2013 a social movement for protests and advocacy was founded by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi that is currently known as the black lives matter movement or BLM movement. After unarmed Trayvon Martin was killed by George Zimmerman, a neighbourhood watch who felt Trayvon, walking home after buying a pack of Skittles at a nearby service station, was “out of place”: in the middle-class area, a movement sparked across the nation.

Social media was flooded with information and thousands of petitions on how you could help. Candles were lit, vigils were taking place everywhere. To this day, it is still active and constantly updating the people about the daily killings of people of color. Throughout the history of the United
continued on page 2: BLM

A Pandemic Doesn’t Discriminate

By Peter McMaster

A pandemic doesn’t discriminate, “COVID-19 will affect all sports” Says Athletics Director Mr Di.Bernard. Parsippany High School is back in session for the 2020-2021 school year. However, unlike any other year, we are currently in the middle of an unprecedented pandemic. Due to this, many of the sports student’s follow, and love to attend will be changed immensely to favor safety.

Mr.DiBernard, director of athletics at Parsippany High School for what will be 3 years in November, believes that “any games we play is a bonus”, and that we shouldn’t worry about finishing the season. However, in order to fulfill a whole season “Everyone must do their part to follow protocols on the field and off it as well”. One sport that’s suffering especially is volleyball, Mr.DiBernard says, this is due to “their season not running in its normal time slot”. One thing students and teachers alike can both do, to help guarantee Parsippany High School’s student athletes shine is to wear a mask, socially distance yourselves, and to try and prevent the spread as much as possible. But October is here, and so far we have done a fine job.

If you are ever interested in coming out to support your team, the capacity is limited to “500 person capacity and students can attend home games but must social distance and wear masks”. Due to the unnatural year we are having, and many seasons being cut short last year due to COVID-19 as well, Mr.Dibernard exclaimed he was excited “ to see every sport play because so many student athletes lost so much last spring. The student athletes have a chance to play the sports they love and seeing their passion about the game is incredible”.



However, in order for any season to start, us as a school and community must do a good job, to make sure we keep the spread of COVID-19 as low as possible.

Obviously, if we maintained the same sports schedule as last year, this wouldn’t be possible, instead the sports department will put “Daily screenings in place, social distancing and wearing masks are part of the regular protocols. Additionally, we are only playing a limited number of games in small pods in order to limit the teams and our travel”.

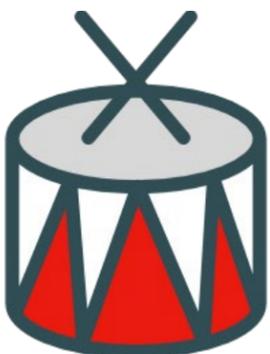
But just because there are a smaller number of games, doesn’t mean that the students, and Mr.DiBernard aren’t ready for sports to commence; “We have a lot of excellent players back from last year’s team and a lot of players looking to step up. It will come to execution and I think the teams are poised for success”. So everyone is excited, everyone is taking precautions, and everyone is safe, so what are we worried about? Well, “we prepare for one thing and then the obstacles change” Mr.DiBernard explained, “We continue to adapt”. As we get closer, and closer to sports starting, the situation is ever-evolving, and tough for even the most prepared to persevere. So if any sports, or games do get canceled, maybe we should all take a page out of Mr.DiBernard’s book and take each game as a bonus.

BLM from page 1

States, there have been thousands of organizations and protests against many different causes. The New York Times Magazine says, "Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in the U.S. History." Furthermore, the website Mediakix shows that, "TikTok reported 12 billion views for the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, 24 million #BlackoutTuesday posts were shared on Instagram, #sharethemicnow reached 300 million followers on Instagram, YouTube pledged \$100 million to support Black creators and artists, Twitter set the record (677k) for most app downloads in a day, #BlackLivesMatter was used 48 million times between May 26 and June 7." With over 12 billion views on just one singular app, the hashtag made its way around the country. Not only have statistics proven that the hashtag has taken over social media, but it has also started protests around the world. The New York Times Magazine elaborates on how, "...About 15 million to 26 million people in the United States have participated in demonstrations over the death of George Floyd and others in recent weeks." George Floyd is another black male killed due to police officers. Wikipedia says that, "A white



police officer named Derek Chauvin knelt on Floyd's neck for a period initially reported to be 8 minutes and 46 seconds." Not only were there protests, but CNN claims that "Militias and other nonstate actors also intervened in demonstrations, with the authors writing that such groups were 'Becoming more active and assertive.'" As well as stating that, "Nonstate actors engaged in more than 100 demonstrations, mostly in response to Black Lives Matter protests, the report states. Those actors include militias and groups from the right and left, such as Antifa, the Proud Boys, the Boogaloo Bois and the Ku Klux Klan." Along with protests, there have been riots. This has sparked rumours that BLM is a hate organization and that this is a coverup to kill police officers. A statement from the NYPOST says, "With another two police officers shot at the Black Lives Matter riot in Louisville on Wednesday, it's time to lift the veil on the whole movement: It's a haven for unrepentant cop-killers." They also came out with another statement in the same article stating, "Those chilling words echo the rhetoric we hear from BLM founders and members, who make clear that a prime objective of BLM is to 'Kill Cops.'" Up until now, this has been kept well enough under wraps to deceive major corporations, professional sports leagues and countless well-meaning Americans." In the end, the movement is becoming more and more popular. Will it strike controversy or will more people start to side with the movement?



Small Business Feels the COVID Crunch

By Jui Amin

As COVID-19 continues this year, many things have been severely impacted, such as the people and the economy. Small businesses, which are included in this list of things, make up 44% of all the U.S economy according to the U.S Business Administration Office of Advocacy. Many small businesses have struggled and many had to change plans.

Small businesses have been going through a rough patch since the coronavirus has put a lot more restrictions for safety reasons. More than 100,000 businesses have closed since March according to the Washington Post. Many smaller restaurants have also shut down, about 3% according to the NRA (National Business Association). This can be because many people are taking precautions and eating out would be dangerous. Some restaurants do not do take-outs either, so they would not have any options. James Hammond, the chief executive of the New Generation Research, says that "We are going to see a level of bankruptcy activity that nobody in business has seen in their lifetime." Another major problem for owners is rent and other other payments. 34% of small business owners have reported that they are paying reduced rent or cannot pay rent on time and are delaying it. Overall, many small businesses have been either quitting or barely keeping up.



Similar to many jobs and schools, small business owners have been switching up things to continue running their business and selling products. Making websites and using delivery services are some of the methods people have been trying out. Based on the reports the U.S Chamber of Commerce has been getting, about 19% of owners have been updating their social media profiles to get help from others online. Others have been using the virus as almost an advantage and helping out by selling materials related to it. For example, the Cathead Distillery are starting to produce hand sanitizer instead of their regular products. Clothing companies are doing something similar with hospital gowns and masks. Other owners are coming with innovative new products, such as Wheelhaus, who is coming up with home offices for backyards. So despite COVID posing as a huge obstacle for many, owners are still able to use creative techniques to save their business.

As the pandemic continues, many small businesses have temporarily closed (about 85% according to the U.S Chamber of Commerce). However several of these business owners have already considered reopening and many have reopened. In the month of July, 86% of small businesses said that they are reopening. While they have struggled, reopening is highly possible because of the new ideas owners have come up with. Since the second wave could pose more issues for small businesses, owners can only hope to manage with the pandemic-related problems.

Anxiety x COVID

Since the start of the pandemic, have you tried making plans but just couldn't follow through? Are you paralyzed by all the possibilities of things that could go wrong? Or the amount of things you could say that could be taken the wrong way, or the possible ways you could trip and everyone watches you, or how you are absolutely positive that the reason everybody is laughing is because you did something wrong? This is sadly the reality for many teens.

Samantha Yi is a 14 year old girl who has severe social anxiety and lives her life in constant fear, but is somehow still able to push through. She was finally starting to piece together her loud mind when the fatal pandemic hit and her mind went silent. As if she was training for the Olympics and was finally able to master all her tricks when the world stops and she forgets all she's been practicing up to this moment and is now back to where she started. She explains how she has had social anxiety ever since seventh grade, but it has never been this bad.

The novel coronavirus has taken things away from billions of people. Whether it be a family member, a friend, neighbor, coworker, or in this case the ability to hangout with people. Samantha describes the moment when she realized her anxiety had taken a turn for the worse during this pandemic, "I think when we were finally able to hangout and I was horrified and that had never happened to me before as bad." She also elaborated on how she was actually quite delighted by the quarantine. "I was more relieved at that time, but I didn't know the other consequences that came with it." She elaborated on what the effects of quarantine did to her. "It was pretty bad and I think it got a lot worse. Especially when school started.

"I think quarantine really set me up for disaster because suddenly I was without people and then suddenly with them." She states that quarantine "set her up for disaster". Like

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September was suicide prevention month, but working on your mental health is an everyday issue.

You Matter

By Krishna Parikh

If we were to think of an ideal version of ourselves, one thing we might imagine is the inability to experience negative emotions such as anxiousness, sadness, and nervousness. The butterflies while getting up on stage, feeling down in the dumps after an unexpected bad grade, or panic upon remembering that assignment with a deadline much too close, are not pleasant feelings. However, they may not always be as bad as they feel.

Stress can be a motivator, sadness is a normal emotion, and nervousness may indicate a desire to be well. This does not in any way mean that these cannot be harmful. How can one draw the line between a healthy and unhealthy amount of stress? When is sadness too much? When is nervousness actually anxiety? These are difficult questions to answer because of how different mental illnesses are from person to person.

This is why it is important to self-reflect every now and then, and educate ourselves on when to get help and how to get help using reliable resources. Mental illnesses can have many causes. They can be hereditary, a result of a traumatic experience, a stressful environment, a big life change, or even a result of health issues like chemical imbalances or bodily illness.

Some disorders are also very common. 40 million adults in the US have anxiety. Depression affects about 3.3 million American adults in a given year. However, not all the people who need help are able to get it or do get it. One of the causes is the stigma and misconceptions surrounding any given illness.

This is a harmful mindset, and it is important to be supportive of yourself and those who you know need help. Taking care of our mental health is just as important as taking care of our physical health, and having an illness doesn't indicate

weakness.

Putting off getting help can be dangerous to ourselves and others. It is important to reach out and take action when we start noticing our emotions being out of place. No help needed is invalid, even if it does not cross the line into being an illness. Resources for help and healthy coping mechanisms are easily accessible on the internet.

There are sites such as 7 Cups of Tea that provide listeners for free. Endless articles from credible sources provide both short-term and long-term ways to cope. There are always people to talk to. Scout a trusted family member, friend, or a school counselor. If your emotions are getting too difficult to manage, or you think you have a mental illness, it is important to consult your doctor.

If you (or someone else) are at immediate risk of harming yourself or others, or in a crisis, get help immediately. Crisis hotlines and calling 911 are both options. Nothing about taking care of our mental well-being is shameful. We need to look after and be kind to ourselves and others. Your feelings matter, your concerns matter, you matter.

Some online resources:

Suicide Hotline (texting also available): 800-273-8255
www.crisistextline.org --> For a variety of crisis, texting also available
www.thetrevorproject.org --> For self harm resources
<https://youmatter.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> --> Various articles on mental health
[www.https://www.7cups.com/](http://www.7cups.com/) --> For free listeners (not for crises)

Test Prep Corner

with Mr. Murphy

Get prepped for your test day with these tips!

All sections - Answer questions as asked according to the ink on the page. Be brutally literal.

Reading - Do the questions that tell you where to look first. Save the ones that don't for your second pass when you know more about the passage.

Writing & Language - Make sure you always have complete sentences and that everything flows nicely.

Math - Write more so you're right more. There's no bonus for not writing work; there's no penalty for writing work. All that matters is that you have the right answers.

Can you answer these questions?

Choose the best option:

$|3(-2)+4|=?$
 A. -2
 B. 2
 C. 5
 D. 9
 E. 10

Crowds of people mill about, moseying _____costumed characters and colorful booths.

A. they're way past
 B. they're way passed
 C. their way passed
 D. their way past

Journey Across the World

By Arezzo Ahmadi & Emily Adawi



The beauty hidden behind all of the war in Afghanistan.

Middle eastern countries are usually overlooked for their beauty and judged for the war, they did not ask for. Before war broke out in Afghanistan and Lebanon, Farid Ahmadi and Hani Adawi were just two young men starting their lives. We took a glimpse of what it was like to live in such a time, making the tough decisions that led up to their arrival in the United States.

“Life was good at that time. We had a peaceful country. Business was good, schools were opened and everybody was busy with their own lives. Afghanistan is a mountainous country. There’s gold, oil and gas there from all of the mines. Any resources you can get from nature, we had,” Farid Ahmadi bragged about the rich life in his homeland.

Which made the invasion even more of a surprise for the people of Afghanistan.



The Soviet army rounded up Afghan civilians as they invaded the cities.

From December 25, 1979 until February 15, 1989 the Soviets had taken over Afghanistan. Shot down in the streets, then tossed into graves—some still alive—the ground shook from their screams. Horrific rape of women and the slaughter of those all ages is what took over that night. The communist Soviet Union tried to force their ideals on the Afghans, which many did not stand for. At the age of 22, Farid had to leave everything behind and run for his life, “we left the country in December of 1980. 100,00 Russian troops invaded with helicopters and tanks, that’s when we knew we had to leave. We didn’t want to be under their control,” he shared.



Known as the longest river in Afghanistan, the Helmand River is 714.6 miles long and is about 3-5 km long.



Traveling with just 50 people from his family alone, they took off on foot, beginning their journey. With an average low temperature of 24 degrees Fahrenheit, most of the trek they walked, but every now and then they would get lucky from a bus passing by. Days later the group had come to a bump in that road, known as the Helmand River by the border of Iran. “It was during the springtime, so the river was flooded, with a heavy current. We had to cross the river with another 100 people from a different group that were being smuggled, as well. The women and children were on a float that all of us men made, which we used to push them through. 13 people were swept away and drowned from that river,” including Farid’s youngest brother and aunt, who were saved just in time. The whole thing was surreal, “people were crying and screaming, ‘Where is my wife?! Where is my daughter?!’” What’s tragic is that they had to keep moving, because if they stop, they will be caught and killed. Whenever an elder came into the group, Farid and his family looked after them. They provided them with some tea and sugar or offered up something to eat. Everyone sympathized with one another because they were all experiencing and going through this struggle together.



The Afghan/Iranian border with each country's flag flying high.

While trying to smuggle themselves through the border in Iran, the group came across another road bump. "I remember being at the border of Iran with their military pointing machine guns at us," Farid stated, "They thought we were the bad guys, that we were the Russians. I had to explain our situation to them and it was after that, that they knew we were just trying to flee, and allowed us to pass through". Had they been rejected at the border, the hardships of the group would've only progressively gotten worse. Finally, after weeks and months of fleeing to safety, they made it to Pakistan. While Farid has visited these countries before and had traveled his way through Europe, this would be the first time he's come seeking refuge, rather than for sights. Farid's older brother had come to America earlier than the rest of them, to get settled and aid his family with the process. When Farid had got to Pakistan, his brother sent him a letter, which he then took to the embassy to get paperwork filled out, and got approved to voyage to America. All of that anxiety and sadness and grief was now overcome by relief, that they were finally free. But he couldn't help but wonder, "Why did I have to leave my home for this? Why were we forced to endure this?". While Farid believes that life in America causes more stress and pressure on you, compared to Afghanistan where it was more smooth sailing, he understands that, "the most important thing is security. They help us here. America accepted us as refugees and we worked hard to get to where we are now," but still, "over there one person works, 10 people eat but over here it's the opposite." Although the only reason why he left Afghanistan is because politics got in the way of his everyday life, the United States is his home now.



Lebanon in its prime before the invasions started.

Hani's childhood consisted of a tightly knit family and community, he emphasized his favorite activity was to go down the docks of his house on the beach and swim with the fish. He expressed that he had been living a happy, normal life until he was twelve years old. On what seemed like a normal day in 1975, Hani and his brother had been spending time together when they looked down the street where the Mayor's office was, Hani states, "My brother and I literally saw the first bullet that assassinated our mayor of the town, which sparked our civil war." Ever since that day, the sounds of chaos filled the nights with the soldiers using Gorilla warfare against the people. With all the failed attempts at pleading for their freedom, Hani made the decision to flee his country once he turned 18, leaving everyone and everything that he loved. "The massacres that happened in the capital and around our neighborhood," Hani stated what he felt was his breaking point.



Mass funerals held for those who lost their life in the massacres.

Although getting out of the country had been a hurdle itself, Hani expressed the rarity of his ability to get his visa. "Getting the Visa to come to the USA was extremely dangerous, in the sense of the checkpoints, the fighting was still going on and when I got to the embassy, there was no one else except from the Marines and the ambassador, they were surprised to even see I made it there". Anyone who dared make that leap of faith almost certainly died on the way, which made Hani's accomplishment a near miracle. He thanks his success in his voyage to his Christian neighbor, she was the one who smuggled him in her car across the checkpoints. Hani made it explicit that she is the one who saved his life; the checkpoints had been the most dangerous parts of his trip, they're random stops on the road where they check your ID, and if you are even from a town they do not like, they will pull you to the side and execute on site.

By the time Hani reached the United States where he was able to finally have freedom, he had been eighteen years old. In Lebanon he graduated high school but due to the language barrier, he retaken his senior year of high school. He had attended no other than Parsippany High School, expressing that his biggest concern was making new friends while he attended school, but to his surprise, making friends was among one of the easiest things. Showing his gratitude, he finally became a citizen of the United States at the age of 22 and emphasizes the countless opportunities that have emerged from his voyage. "It was like heaven and hell," he used to compare what new life is like in America from Lebanon.

While the two did not have English as their first language, and came from a completely different culture and environment, they were able to adapt quickly. Both are now successful business owners, of their growing empires. Farid was able to bring the remainder of his family over with him and eventually married and had two girls. Hani went on to marry his high school sweetheart that he met in ESL class, having three wonderful children.

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many when this happens you feel like the world is against you. As if this quarantine was made for the sole purpose of making your anxiety crush you. That dark void is hard to get out of when the odds are so against you.

Comparing life before and during the pandemic is difficult. They are nowhere near the same. From going to school every morning to sitting with a laptop for 7 hours and retaining information for 5 days straight or from going to work to not even having a job and struggling to pay bills and being unable to support your family. This is how the corona virus impacted many.

Samantha explains how “The biggest factor that made it worse was not being around people 24/7 and the way too much time to think.” She states her mind was loud and filled with the most stressful thoughts. Her mind was clouded with moments and with your imagination, the possibilities are endless. She mentioned that she constantly needs distractions to fall asleep at night. The time when one is supposed to be relaxed and clear minded she is up and thinking. Constantly falling deeper and deeper into a negative mindset that the only way to get out of is using a loud distraction in the middle of the night that you know deep down you don’t want to do because your so tired, but at the same time you don’t these horrid situations to continue forming in your brain that’s making you physically becoming ill. “It was fine in the beginning of quarantine and then towards the end I was just thinking about school and everything else and it immediately got worse and I couldn’t go to sleep without having something to distract me and it’s frustrating because sometimes I can’t turn the fan on or listen to music. I just need something to focus on 24/7 to get me to sleep.”

Know that you are not alone struggling with this. “It feels like in any social situation I have an intense fear of people judging me. I hear people laughing and I think they’re laughing at me and they could even be just talking and I think they’ll be talking about me. It can even be when I’m alone just thinking about it makes me scared. It’s horrible” is how it was described to me. Although you may feel as if there is no hope, knowing that other people are going through the same thing hopefully brings you enough courage and comfort to keep going and doing what you love with this impactful form of anxiety. It will get better.

The Back Page

The Back Page is an Opinion section. All views expressed are held solely by the author.
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I Bet Your Chromebook Doesn't Work Either

By Peter McMaster

Mine doesn't, yours doesn't hell I don't think any of our Chromebooks work.

It is the 2020 School year here at Parsippany Highschool and I think we are off to a rocky start with over 80% of students experiencing some sort of chromebook issue; but admittedly it was expected. With almost half the students choosing to attend school virtually, Chromebooks have become paramount for communication between teacher and student. Even before this, Chromebooks have been necessary to do work for your teachers.

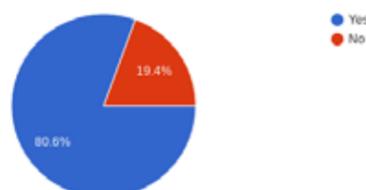
So why all the trouble now? Well simply put, the Chromebooks aren't meant to be work computers. They were made to be social machines for college kids to write up an essay and then go on twitter for the night. Sure, the chromebooks can load Zoom, and save all these virtual papers, but now the entire state is using virtual class and work. Especially for my fellow seniors, there are 3 years (probably more) of work we already have on our machines.

In a survey given to students, over 40% have experienced an issue with their chromebook that caused it to not function. The main issue is that everyone's chromebook isn't working for different reasons. Whether it be the camera, the wi-fi, the browser, keyboard, functionality, or sometimes google meets would just be green. There are clearly issues, and there are steps you can take to resolve them. I know it can be frustrating googling solutions, or trying to DIY one. But, just simply email the support desk from your phone, and within the next few days your chromebook should have your chromebook fixed (support@pthsd.zendesk.com).

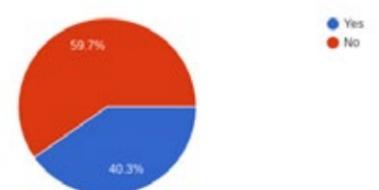
Are you all-virtual, or apart of Cohort A&B?
67 responses



Have you experienced Chromebook trouble so far this year?
67 responses



If yes, has it been to the point of non-functioning?
62 responses



Like to write?
Have good ideas?
Are you really hairy?
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