



## Meet Dr. Mary O'Meara: POB's New Superintendent

By Jake Feldman  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

I had the pleasure of speaking with Dr. Mary O'Meara, who shared some interesting revelations regarding her life experiences.

Dr. O'Meara is the eldest of four children; while she excelled in school, this was not the case with her younger sister, who was one of the youngest in her grade. Dr. O'Meara's sister struggled in school; early inequities resulted in several missed opportunities. Growing up, Dr. O'Meara was often intrigued by the obstacles facing her sister. After finishing college, Dr. O'Meara began working at a law firm. Her younger sister attended a community college and went on to become a teacher. Dr. O'Meara appreciated the tremendous impact that her younger sister had on her students as she bridged reading literacy with writing. Dr. O'Meara, inspired by her sister's career journey, returned to school to further understand the inequities in education. As a teacher, Dr. O'Meara noticed how reading impacted her students' lives, and she soon obtained her Master's Degree in Literacy. After completing more than 15 years in education at various schools in positions that include English Teacher, Chairperson of English Language Arts, and Assistant Superintendent, Dr. O'Meara became the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction at Plainview-Old Bethpage in 2018, where she instituted a multitude of successful programs. For example, elementary school teachers in the district began receiving training from Columbia University. Moreover, as Assistant Superintendent, Dr. O'Meara sought to provide each student



Source: Dr. Mary O'Meara

with an equal educational opportunity, leading to the implementation of college-level classes at the high school.

On July 1, 2020, Dr. O'Meara was appointed the Superintendent of Schools for POBCSD. When asked about her favorite part of her job, Dr. O'Meara relayed, "I enjoy working with the smartest individuals across the POB faculty." She further added, "I appreciate the POB parents' commitment to their children's education. In addition, I love how the students are strong advocates.

Students as young as second grade, wrote letters to me about too much homework. It is amazing how the POB community is always willing to help."

Outside of her job, Dr. O'Meara is the mother of five children. Moreover, she enjoys playing basketball- she was the point guard on her Varsity team. Dr. O'Meara is also a voracious reader, favoring non-fiction pieces, and plays three instruments: the accordion, piano, and clarinet.

As superintendent, Dr. O'Meara aspires for Plainview-Old Bethpage to function as a center of research and a pipeline. Her vision is to create a multitude of opportunities that range from local business internships to new course offerings coupled with educational opportunities for POB staff. Dr. O'Meara, for example, seeks to provide opportunities for teachers to obtain their Master's Degree and become Doctoral candidates and explains

that "with team learning, the possibilities are endless." Dr. O'Meara hopes that "our community remains committed to leaving the lines of communication open. As we emerge from the pandemic, we will all hinge on open, respectful communication."

## Goodbye Mrs. O'Donnell: We Will Miss You

By Michael Khalfin  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

This school year, I have been fortunate enough to have an amazing research teacher. Mrs. O'Donnell has helped me out with so many of my endeavors, including competitions and program applications. On the Toshiba ExploraVision due date, she requested that all projects were turned in on time – by the end of the school day, at 1:30 pm. That day, I kept looking over my project and thinking of all the little, but important things that I could change. At 1:20 pm, I came running into her room, telling her that there was no way that I could submit at that time. She gave me her phone number and told me to text her when I was ready. At around 7:00 pm, I finally texted her, and she submitted my project well after dinner. She could've easily told me to submit what I had earlier that day, but she was willing to work with me even after school, which was incredible.



Source: Mary Lou O'Donnell

DNA Day competition, and things just weren't working out for me. For two weeks, I was in her remedial every day. She sat down with me, helping me reorganize and rewrite – over and over again. In my opinion, it's Mrs. O'Donnell's willingness to go above and beyond that makes her such a phenomenal person. For 24 years at POBJFK, Mrs. O'Donnell has connected with some of the top students in the school and has given them unprecedented opportunities.

Right from the start, it was meant to be. When she walked in for her interview, the principal, assistant principal, and three other administrators greeted her. She was nervous, so she started to talk and tell them about her background. Ten minutes later, they exchanged glances, and there was a pause. They looked at Mrs. O'Donnell, and said, "We would like to offer you the position."

Another time that Mrs. O'Donnell was there for me was a couple of weeks ago. I was working on my essay for the

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# WELCOME!

The Hawk Eye is  
always accepting new  
members and entries!

Please listen to the  
announcements for the  
time and locations of  
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Thank you for reading!



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### THE \*HAWK EYE

is published *four times* a year by the students of the Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School at 50 Kennedy Drive, Plainview, New York 11803.

Any correspondence should be directed to the Editors-In-Chief at the above address.

For advertising information and rates, call the newspaper office at (516) 937-6370 ext. 346, or (516) 937-6418.

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When she started at Plainview, Mrs. O'Donnell was a biology and chemistry teacher. At the time, the director of research was Melanie Krieger – a distinguished research teacher from Ward Melville. When Mrs. Krieger needed an assistant, Mrs. O'Donnell was able to fill that position. This was her second encounter with research, but this time it would be permanent. Mrs. Krieger would become Mrs. O'Donnell's research mentor for several years. According to Mrs. O'Donnell, "I loved being the second banana. She would take care of all the nonsense, and I got to work with the kids." When Mrs. Krieger left teaching, the school asked Mrs. O'Donnell if she would run the program on the high school level. She agreed and became Head of Research for ten years.

Because of Siemens Westinghouse Competition, 2007, 2008, and 2009 were magical years for Mrs. O'Donnell. 2007 was the school's first time making it to Siemens Nationals. POBJFK students placed second in the country, which was unexpected and astounding. The following year, our school's team made it to nationals again, placing fourth. Then the year after, POBJFK's team came in first place in the entire country. Mrs. O'Donnell got to go with her students to the White House, where they were celebrated. That little time frame was magical. Also, Mrs. O'Donnell felt like Plainview's victories in the Siemens Competition were the first time her parents were really proud of her as an educator. Her brother was a prominent businessman on Wall Street and often got the attention of her parents. However, this changed with her teams' incredible victories.

Another important moment in Mrs. O'Donnell's career was when she co-authored "How to Find a Mentor" with Amber Hess and Benjamin Pollack, two students of hers. The article is one of the most cited links on the Science Buddies website. It started when Amber's father, Kenneth Hess, contacted Mrs. O'Donnell. He was seeking help finding his daughter a summer research mentor. Mrs. O'Donnell created a 12-step process. She broke it down, wrote it up, and sent it to Mr. Hess. This is how the piece was created. That summer, Amber obtained a research position in California and did remarkably well. Mrs. O'Donnell's process is still good, and works if a student is willing to put in the effort. It's all about creating a connection between student and researcher. The student needs to do their homework, and then send an email to showcase their knowledge and interest in a professor's work. The email recipient should think, "Wow, this kid really took the time to figure out what I do." Mrs. O'Donnell emphasizes including a follow-up question to create back-and-forth dialogue.

Over the years, Mrs. O'Donnell has been part of many research projects. Her favorite project was "Supersilk" with Audrey Shein and Alyssa Iryami. She told me, "We just kind of came up with it together. It was magical." She was mentoring a Senior project that dealt with graphene, and she learned that this was the hardest synthetic material in the world. Mrs. O'Donnell, Audrey, and Alyssa were talking about silkworms, and how they create silk used for parachutes, clothing, etc. Mrs. O'Donnell brought up the idea of feeding silkworm graphene: would this make the silk stronger? Audrey's dad knew a place in Flushing where they could get silkworms, and the school purchased graphene for them. The first batch of silkworms all died because the girls fed them too much graphene, essentially poisoning them. The second trial fared better when they used less graphene. The silkworms produced silk, and it was just a matter

of measuring the strength of the threads. Mrs. O'Donnell took the girls to Mr. Pekor, the AP Physics C teacher, who gave them a TI-83 calculator with attachments. The girls had to push down on the silk until it snapped, which let them measure the tensile strength. Finally, they realized that the silk was, in fact, stronger than usual. They won so many competitions with this simple, but novel concept.

In 2016, Mrs. O'Donnell was part of a pivotal moment when our school won second place in the Toshiba ExploraVision

competition. Honorable mentions were common among POBJFK students, but placing nationally was a tremendous achievement. The winning paper was called "Intra-Neuromuscular Cellular Regeneration Promoter" and was written by Philip Danziger, Samantha Fruck, and Grace Smiin. Mrs. O'Donnell and the students received a fully sponsored trip to Washington DC. Interestingly enough, Bill Nye "the Science Guy" was at the ceremony, where POBJFK students got to personally meet him.

This was not Mrs. O'Donnell's last time traveling to Washington DC. About three years ago, she applied to the Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship, and with no surprise given her background, she got in!

While in DC, Mrs. O'Donnell worked on two main projects: transdisciplinary learning and virtual mentoring. Transdisciplinary learning is the exploration of relative concepts,

issues, or problems, by combining academic disciplines. In her own words, "It's what we do

every day here in POB research. It means going through the process of creating real-world solutions, and may involve writing, collecting/analyzing data, applying math, physics, chemistry, biology, and/or psychology, and more." Spending the year in DC helped her develop a STEM voice in terms of how to engage students, especially girls, in transdisciplinary learning.

The other project Mrs. O'Donnell completed in DC was co-authoring a manual for virtual mentoring. When COVID-19 came, scientists at the National Labs expressed that they had to close down and halt research temporarily. Mrs. O'Donnell stepped in to show how this was not the case. Virtual labs, data analysis, mathematical modeling, etc. were still tools that were feasible for online mentoring.

She also had the opportunity to interact with many famous people during her time in the US capital. This included former First Lady Laura Bush, author of *The Martian* Andy Weir, the "Hidden Figures" mathematician Dr. Christine Darden, Senator Ted Cruz, and several Supreme Court justices.

In Mrs. O'Donnell's words, "our school district has been very good to me." POB granted her a leave of

absence last school year so she could participate in the program and then return to teaching. She says, "I'm very grateful for Plainview." She also says she has had incredible students and colleagues over the years.

Mrs. O'Donnell has always made it a point to keep in contact with her research alumni. Her joking rule is, "You have to email me once a year and let me know what you're up to." Last year, when COVID-19 hit, a lot of university mentors for the summer were withdrawing. Mrs. Sheik and her students reached out to Mrs. O'Donnell, who at that time was in DC. Mrs. O'Donnell asked her alumni if they had any labs or were willing to mentor. Sure enough, her alumni came through. This year, she is incredibly proud that two Plainview seniors, Ronald Cheng and Ben Yacht, were mentored by alumni. She felt that this was a beautiful full-circle moment in her career.

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Source: Mary Lou O'Donnell



Source: Mary Lou O'Donnell

In the research classroom, there is a wall showcasing all of the college acceptances over the years. Mrs. O'Donnell has a saying, "Researchers are made, not born." She firmly believes that it takes four years to make a strong research student who wins awards and gets into the best colleges possible. She passionately told me, "When you take someone in ninth grade and provide them with opportunities, and they take you up on them, then you create a researcher. Success can't just happen at the drop of a hat." Our school's research process has produced winners; MIT, Yale, and Harvard students; and future mathematicians and scientists. Additionally, Mrs. O'Donnell says that she can spot a researcher from a mile away, a skill that has been honed after years of working with students. Students need to have a "yes" attitude – and ability to look at things and always persevere when things get tough.

So many accomplishments, awards, and incredible relationships later, Mrs. O'Donnell is retiring. She says it's "bittersweet" that this is her last year. "I'm happy to be moving forward and to have new and exciting experiences outside of school. But I am very sad to be leaving the students and colleagues that I have worked with for so long. I have a lot of good friends here." Recently, Mrs. O'Donnell found out that she will be working with the Library of Congress this summer. She will be part of a team of teachers who are exploring newly digitized collections. Together, they will be trying to create transdisciplinary projects based on these sources. For example, she says that a student will be able to access all documents by Alexander Hamilton for research analysis. Last Spring, one of her unfinished projects was sorting through Robert Oppenheimer's published material pertaining to the Manhattan Project (where they made the first atomic bomb). She was going to read through all of these papers to see if she could write lessons for the Department of Energy. This endeavor seems like the logical continuation from where she left off.

Other things Mrs. O'Donnell hopes to do after retiring are to become a certified yoga instructor, visit her family more in Italy, and work with students privately. She loves mentoring students in projects after high school and is certainly not ready to give that up. Mrs. O'Donnell says she will be doing that in addition to some other projects.

As her student, I am definitely saddened to see Mrs. O'Donnell go. Being in her class this year has been the experience of a lifetime for me. I am excited to hear about all of the other wonderful things she does.



Source: Mary Lou O'Donnell

News

## 2021 AP Exams: What You Should Know

By Justine Choi

There are only two months left until May; for many students, this means that Advanced Placement (AP) exams are right around the corner. These exams, offered yearly by the College Board, are traditionally two to three hours long and taken in May by students in AP classes. The exams are used to measure the extent of the students' mastery over material learned throughout the school year. POBJFK offers a wide range of AP classes, covering subjects including calculus, chemistry, history, world languages, music theory, and many more. Performance on the AP exams is measured on a scale from one to five, and the majority of the tests include multiple-choice and free-response questions. A few classes, such as AP Capstone Seminar, typically have additional requirements, such as submitting individually written essays or team-based projects. Students who score well on the AP's have the opportunity to earn college credit at several institutions.

Last year, AP exams' administration was undoubtedly complicated by the situation presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the College Board still found a way to allow students to take the exams by administering them online for the first time. These online exams were significantly different from the traditional paper examinations: they were much shorter (for example, the AP World History exam solely consisted of one document-based essay question). They were generally considered open-book. The questions also tended to be much more conceptual than simply testing students' ability to recall content. Given the relatively unusual nature of last year's AP tests, it is unsurprising that many students are anxious about this year's exams.

According to the College Board, the 2021 AP exams will be given in three administrations: one in early May, another in late May, and the third in early June. The first administration will consist only of paper-and-pencil tests, the second will be a mix of both paper and digital

exams, and the third will only have digital exams. All examinations, whether they are paper or digital, will be full-length. However, it is essential to note that with the digital exams, students will not be able to move back and forth between questions; once they answer a question, they must move on to the next one and cannot review or go back to the previous one.

Whether POBJFK students are taking the exam online or on paper depends on the class. Some classes will require that everyone takes the digital version, while others will give students the option to take either the digital or paper version. If needed, students should check with each of their AP teachers for further details specific to each exam.



Source: palyvoice.com

# Spanish Honor Society Sends “Get Well Soon Cards” To Stony Brook University Hospital

By Spanish Honor Society  
Academic Honor Society

Members of the Spanish Honor Society from the Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School created ‘Get Well Soon’ cards for Spanish-speaking patients at Stony Brook University Hospital. Throughout this difficult time involving the pandemic, the juniors (11th grade) and seniors (12th grade) worked together to write heartfelt messages in Spanish. They used phrases like “Aliviate Pronto” and “Recupérate Pronto” which mean “Get Well Soon” in Spanish. Students decorated the cards with images of animals, balloons, flowers, and hearts to let patients know they are not alone. The students were able to create more than 130 cards to be sent to Stony Brook University Hospital. This service project allowed students to give back to the Spanish-speaking community during the pandemic and allowed them to foster their communicative language skills.



Source: Spanish Honor Society



Source: Spanish Honor Society

## 2021 Steam Night

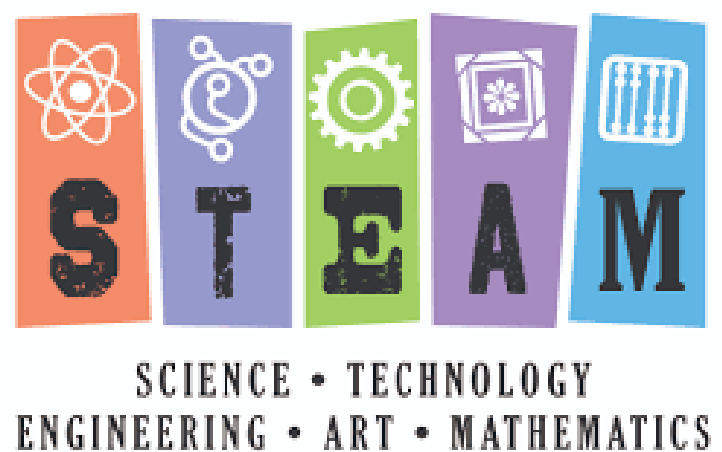
By Tarunika Sasikumar  
Secretary

The 2021 Steam Night was like no other. In previous years, over a thousand kids and parents arrived at Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School to be entertained by POBJFK students in the Science Honor Society and POBots. However, this year, due to the pandemic, the PTA decided to convert Steam Night into a virtual event. In the virtual event, there were four different workshops that families could participate in: Paper Circuits, Lava Lamps, Snow Challenge, and Big Wind. In order to take part in the activities, families had to purchase material kits (one per child) that consisted of items pertaining to all four events. From 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM, three different half-hour sessions were run, allowing families to attend three live workshops of their choice and an additional workshop on their own. During each event, POBJFK

students introduced themselves, taught the science behind their event, and guided each child step by step to successfully complete the specific activity. Fiona Wu, a junior at POBJFKHS, was one of the volunteers to run the Snow Challenge. She described that her favorite part about Steam Night was seeing the children’s reactions when the experiment began to work for them (in her case, when the instant snow began to form). Steam Night was a complete success. Students, teachers, and administrators were able to come together and host an event for 800 students while providing a wonderful, long-lasting experience.



Source: POBJFK Twitter



Source: La Salle College Preparatory

Check out the Hawkeye Newspaper Club blog: <https://pobjfk-hawkeye.weebly.com/>  
Includes all editorials + weekly articles!

# SciOly Competition

By Christine Song, Elif Koch, and Isabella Chen  
Opinion Editor and Layout Editors

Science Olympiads (SciOly) is a science competition team where students from middle schools and high schools nationwide test their knowledge on a variety of different sciences. These subjects include anatomy and physiology, astronomy, chemistry, code buster, dynamic planet, and forensics. In POBJFK's SciOly club, students are assigned to a partner and two different events. Over four months, students prepared for the competition by working on practice activities and creating a group "cheat-sheet" used during the exam.

In prior years, the competition required a field trip to the in-person event. This year, however, it was held entirely virtual on March 20. On the competition date, members were given a specific time and password to access the test on the New York SciOly Website.



Source: The Harriton Banner

Participants were able to take the exams online while working together with their partners through video call. This year, over 50 of POB's top science students competed in 15 different events at the Nassau County East Regional Competition. Sharan Grover and Hephzibah Yoo, student-teachers of the Codebusters event, both agree that despite the challenges that virtual meetings and competitions posed, "we were able to pull through" and "have a great time" as we "bonded with our team members." Mrs. Susan Wetzler, the advisor of SciOly, explained that members worked together and were "having fun while learning complex material and making new friends."

Out of 45 teams and over 500 students, six POBJFKHS students won medals, and one of the teams came in 16th place. Mrs. Wetzler extends her congratulations to Ethan Hsu, Emily Hiang, Michael Olakkengil, Brandon Sala, Jake Strauss, Daniel Zhang, and all our competitors on a job well done.

## College Admissions Trends During the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Amanda Kang  
Co-Managing Editor

For many high school seniors, applying to college is one of the most stressful events of the year. To make matters more challenging, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in some unexpected changes in college admissions. Here are some of the interesting statistics that have emerged so far regarding the 2021 college admissions cycle:

1) Colleges have seen a rise in the number of students who apply early action. This may be because many colleges have chosen to go test-optional, encouraging students who usually would not have considered these schools to apply. The sheer increase in applicants' volume forces colleges to be more selective of the students they accept. For instance, Harvard accepted about 7% of its early applicants in the fall of 2020, as opposed to nearly 14% of its early applicants in 2019. Because of this, most college acceptance rates are going down as well.

2) A trend to anticipate that comes with the release of regular decisions includes longer waitlists. Many colleges add more students to their waitlists to hit enrollment targets with an increased volume of applicants. They are also aware of applicants applying to a more significant number of schools, which is another reason for the waitlists.

3) There has also been an increase in the number of students who decide to take a gap year. In 2020, a study performed by SimpsonScarborough revealed that within a sample of incoming first-year students who aspired to attend a four-year residential college, 40 percent of them stated that they were likely or highly likely to not

attend a four-year college this fall. In 2020, this could have been due to the evolving mindset surrounding college and the activist spirit that is common among the members of Gen Z. Now, with the effects of the pandemic, more students are facing economic uncertainty when it comes to attending a four-year college, which only points to an increase in students taking gap years.

Despite the changes occurring this year, it is essential to remember that no matter what you choose to do in life after high school, never lose sight of what you enjoy doing. Passion and perseverance can outweigh even the most unusual challenges and will ultimately lead to success.



Source: The Princeton Review

## Who Wants a Job?

By Brianna Rogers  
Staff Reporter

Are you getting ready to go on your first job interview? I recently had my very first job interview, and I felt completely unprepared. Thankfully, the POBJFK Guidance Department is now facilitating mock interviews. All you have to do is set up an appointment with your guidance counselor, and they will provide a mock interview. This means you will be asked a series of questions that may be asked in your real interview, and you will receive tips from someone who has been on many interviews before. Your guidance counselors have already been provided with a typical interview template, as well as a set of questions that could come up.

As a student, typically, this is something I would brush off and call "pointless," but the skills you learn for an interview will stick with you forever. This program is meant to help students in the present and future endeavors and is something you might want to look into.

The Guidance Department and everyone else at POBJFK want to see you succeed and want to give you as many tools as possible to do so. So don't hesitate to see your guidance counselor; they only want to help.

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# Vaccines and Variants; An Insider's Point of View

By Mark Alstaedter  
Staff Writer

As more vaccines are administered across the country, I have begun to wonder what that means for our society, and more specifically, our school community. I think I speak for most people when I say I cannot wait for things to go back to normal, and the vaccine could very well get us there. However, as all things do, this plan has its flaws. For example, concerns over side effects, limited access, further required testing, and new variants are working against the global recovery process.

As a student, I fall into the group of those ineligible for a vaccine. Due to my lack of perspective, I thought it would be best to reach out to my Living Environment teacher, Mr. Schlissel, who was vaccinated earlier this year. Mr. Schlissel shared the following: "Being fully vaccinated has made me more comfortable coming to school and interacting with other teachers and students. I cannot state

that I am 100% comfortable, as I am still a little concerned due to the unknown variants that exist with the COVID-19 virus; therefore, I am remaining vigilant (by continuing to social distance and use masks). I believe it is critical for 75-80% of the individuals in this building to be vaccinated at some point (faculty, staff, students, etc.) if we are to return to the pre-pandemic life we had in and out of school. Society, which includes this building, needs to have what is called 'herd immunity' before I believe things can return to what they once were." Hearing this gave me greater insight into the sentiment of those who are vaccinated as I had not considered these things. Despite the various obstacles we continue to face, I am hopeful that our efforts will eventually pay off and that we can safely return to our everyday lives soon

## Virtual Programs

By Victoria Lee  
Staff Writer

Since summer is around the corner, you may already be thinking about what to do during your precious break. One way you can spend some of your time is by attending a virtual program. Some programs to consider are Cornell University Summer Session Online, Boston University – High School Honors Online, and Purdue University's Summer College.

The Cornell University Summer Session Online is for students that are currently in 10-12th grade. Admissions started on March 1st and are rolling. A few of the classes that they offer are Anthropology, Asian Studies, Classics, Communication, Economics, Government, Human Development, Nutritional Science, Plant Biology, and Psychology.

The Boston University – High School Honors Online program is for rising 11th and 12th graders. The application is due on May

28, 2021, and courses to include Introduction to Law, Introduction to Management, Introduction to Computer Science 1, Introductory Microeconomic Analysis, Elementary Statistics, and more.

Purdue University also offers many online summer courses like Applied Domestic Animal Anatomy With Clinical Correlations I, Computer and Information Technology, Communications, Computer Science, Economics, English, and History. They cost \$948.30 per credit and are for students who are 16 years of age or older.

These are only a few of the summer program opportunities that are available. You can always find more by doing a simple Google search. I wish you the best of luck when applying to the summer program of your choice!

## A New Type of Home

By Brianna Rogers  
Staff Writer

Remember in middle school when you were able to make and take home your 3D printed art in Technology? Now imagine that your design was a 1,407 square foot house with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a two-car garage.

Riverhead, New York, has officially sold the first house to be made completely from 3D print. The house has all of the features you'd normally find in a traditional home, including air conditioning, gas heating, and a dishwasher. It also contains large windows and a two-door closet in the master bedroom. Not only that, but the house only took about eight to nine days to print, faster than building a traditional house.

You are probably wondering why this new development is so crucial for students still in high school. After all, it will be a while before most of us buy our first house. Now that the technology for 3D printed homes has been perfected and proven to work, this could be what our future homes look like. With 3D printing, houses can be sold cheaper (this house was sold for \$299,999, which is half of what a typical Long Island house costs) and at a much faster rate. It has also been established that this 3D printed house is able to last for at least 50 years. Furthermore, it's said to have more strength and durability than a wood-frame construction house. So when you're thinking of taking the hour drive to Riverhead, keep a lookout for a 3D printed home. Who knows, maybe one day you'll buy a house made completely from 3D print.



Source: Sarah Paynter

By Benjamin Kule  
Staff Writer

On April 29th, football fans of POBJFK High School will be glued to their TVs to see who their favorite teams select in the NFL Draft. The NFL Draft is an annual event where the top college football players are selected onto their respective NFL teams to continue their professional football careers. The draft is one of the league's most prominent events each year and can drastically improve the teams with top picks. Here are my predictions for the first 15 picks of the NFL Draft.

**1. Jacksonville Jaguars - Quarterback Trevor Lawrence, Clemson University**

Trevor Lawrence is one of the best college football players in recent history, and his ability to conduct an offense makes him the likely choice for the Jaguars with the first pick.



Source: NFL Spin Zone

**2. New York Jets - Quarterback Zach Wilson, BYU**

Although many Jets fans believe they should not give up on quarterback Sam Darnold just yet, others believe the chance at a skilled QB like Zach Wilson is worth it. “[The Jets] can get a QB who only lost once last season, and winning is the most important stat,” says 12th grade Jets fan Noah Kule.



Source: The Jet Press

**3. San Francisco 49ers - Quarterback Trey Lance, North Dakota State University**

The 49ers moved up in the draft order specifically to draft their quarterback of the future and get one with an all-around game to fit their system.

**4. Atlanta Falcons - Quarterback Justin Fields, Ohio State University**

With their current quarterback Matt Ryan possibly leaving the team by the end of next season, the Falcons should get a new quarterback while they have a top pick. Many think Fields might be better than Lance or Wilson.

**5. Cincinnati Bengals - Offensive Tackle Penei Sewell, University of Oregon**

Bengals' rookie quarterback Joe Burrow had a gruesome injury last year when he tore his ACL, so drafting protection can prevent another future injury.

**6. Miami Dolphins - Wide Receiver Ja'Marr Chase - Louisiana State University**

The Dolphins need elite wide receivers catching Tua Tagovailoa's passes, so drafting a receiver to pair with recently acquired Will Fuller V would help.



Source: CBS Sports

**7. Detroit Lions - Wide Receiver DeVonta Smith, University of Alabama**

Despite being undersized, Smith is one of the most skilled players in the draft, and so he could productively replace Kenny Golladay, who is no longer with the team.

**8. Carolina Panthers - Quarterback Mac Jones, University of Alabama**

Without an elite quarterback on the roster, giving Trey Lance the keys to the Panthers' offense could pay off big time.

**9. Denver Broncos - Offensive Tackle Rashawn Slater, Northwestern University**

The Broncos' weak offensive line worsened the entire offense last season, so that a brand new tackle would be huge.

**10. Dallas Cowboys - Tight End Kyle Pitts, University of Florida**

It seems Kyle Pitts can catch any ball thrown to him, as well as block, giving him a high upside at the tight end position.

**11. New York Giants - Defensive End Gregory Rousseau, University of Florida**

Gregory Rousseau is the kind of player who knows how to pressure the quarterback, greatly helping the Giants' defense. “After the loss of [defensive lineman] Dalvin Tomlinson, the Giants need to draft his successor, Gregory Rousseau,” says 10th grader and Giants fan Hunter Pearlstein.



Source: 247 Sports

**12. Philadelphia Eagles, Linebacker Micah Parsons, Penn State University**

If Micah Parsons, who could easily be a top-ten draft choice, is still available with the twelfth pick, he would be a great pick to help the Eagles' defense.

**13. Los Angeles Chargers, Cornerback Patrick Surtain II, University of Alabama**

The Chargers also need help defending the pass, which is a specialty of Surtain's at the cornerback position.

**14. Minnesota Vikings, Defensive End Kwity Paye, University of Michigan**

Kwity Paye is a physical player on defense and can help the Vikings run defense as a defensive end.

**15. New England Patriots, Cornerback Jaycee Horn, University of South Carolina**

With Patriots' star cornerback Stephon Gilmore possibly on the way out, Jaycee Horn could fill his void.



Source: 49ers Webzone



# MLB Preview

By Seth Schlank  
Sports Editor

This upcoming Major League Baseball season may be the most normal one we had in North American sports since March 12th, 2020, when the sports world went on pause as a precaution against the then-unknown novel coronavirus. While many things have stayed the same, there have also been many changes. Major League Baseball had 60 games from July 23rd to September 27th and added three teams to each league's playoff competition. The Los Angeles Dodgers beat the Tampa Bay Rays in Game six of the World Series.

## Minor League:

This offseason may have been the most tumultuous one for the Minors since the 1963 reorganization of the Minor Leagues, which was the organization of teams into Triple-A (AAA), Double-A (AA), High-A (A+), and Low-A (A). Triple-A is the highest rung on the Minor League ladder, one step away from the Major Leagues. The 2021 reorganization allowed teams to move their minor league affiliates closer to their Major League home stadium, gave Major League Baseball full autonomy over professional baseball in the United States, cut nearly 1,000 jobs, contracted twenty teams, and allowed each Major League team to funnel their prospects through four different leveled teams.

## American League East:

The New York Yankees probably have the highest expectations out of any other team in the American League except for the Tampa Bay Rays, who lost the World Series in 6 games last season. The Yankees lost to the Rays in the ALDS last year in San Diego. The Yankees lost Adam Ottavino in a trade with the Red Sox and gained Corey Kluber, Jay Bruce, Jameson Tallion, and Derek Dietrich. Their Win-Loss Prediction is 98-64; They will win their division and beat the Dodgers in the World Series.

The Tampa Bay Rays added Rich Hill and Charlie Morton, but I don't think that these moves will help with the loss of Cy Young Award-Winning pitcher Blake Snell. The Rays have the roster to make it to the playoffs again this year, but I think that they will make it this year as the first Wild Card and will lose in the ALDS. Their Win-Loss Projection is 90-72; They will finish in second place in their Division and will advance to ALCS as the first Wild Card.

The most underrated team in the American League, in my opinion, is the Toronto Blue Jays. The Blue Jays added George Springer, who will be their first member from the 2017 Houston Astros team, who were punished by Major League Baseball for cheating their way to a World Series championship. The Blue Jays have a strong young core in Vladimir Guerrero, Jr., Cavan Biggio, and Bo Bichette, all of whom have the possibility to propel them to a third-place finish in an extremely competitive division. Their Win-Loss Projection is 86-76; They will narrowly make the Wild Card game and will lose to the Rays.

The Boston Red Sox will be miles away from where they once were post-World Series championship season in 2018. Red Sox manager Alex Cora, is now back after a year-long suspension for his active role in the Astros' cheating scandal. Players-wise, the Red Sox lost key members of their 2018 championship team when Andrew Bennettendi was traded to the Kansas City Royals and when Jackie Bradley Jr. became a free agent and signed a two-year contract with the Milwaukee Brewers. Their Win-Loss Projection is 80-82; They will miss the playoffs.

This season may be even worse than the last for the Baltimore Orioles, who finished 25-35, one game better than the Red Sox. Trey Mancini missed the entirety of last season whilst recovering from colon cancer surgery, and is back and ready to play ball again. The O's also added Matt Harvey and Felix Hernandez to a very young squad, with the likes of Ryan Mountcastle and Dean Kremer, who both made their Major League debuts last season. Their Win-Loss Projection is 76- 86; They will Miss the playoffs.

## American League Central:

The clear frontrunner in this division is the Chicago White Sox. Their young core, consisting of Michael Kopech, Lucas Giolito, and Tim Anderson, will lead the South Siders to their first division title since 2008. The Sox made the postseason as a Wild Card team last year, but lost to the Athletics in the Wild Card series. Their Win-

Loss Projection is 89-73; They will win AL Central, and will lose in ALDS to the Yankees.

The Twins are probably the fifth-best team in the American League. Nelson Cruz is back, Shortstop Andrelton Simmons was acquired, and Alex Colomé has joined the Twins as a much-needed bullpen support. They may be down to the wire in the last few days this year with the Jays for the second wild-card spot, but I think Toronto will end up pulling through. Their Win-Loss Projection is 87-75; They will miss the playoffs by one game.

The third-best team in this division is the Royals, a team below-mediocrity for many years. The team lost one of their perennial franchise players when Alex Gordon retired last season. However, they are one step closer to being a relevant team once again, with the additions of Andrew Benintendi and Brad Bach. Their Win-Loss Projection is 84-78; They will miss the playoffs.

If there was an award for the most damaged team in an offseason, it would go to Cleveland. The face of their franchise, Francisco Lindor, was traded away in a package deal with solid starter Carlos Carrasco to the Mets, in exchange for infielders Andrés Giménez and Amed Rosario, along with prospects Josh Wolf and Isaiah Greene. Their Win-Loss Projection is 82-80; They will miss the playoffs.

At last, we have arrived at the basement of the AL Central, the Detroit Tigers. A team riddled with injuries with a shallow farm system that will not bring them success in the near future. They need more time before they can contend at all. It will be interesting to see what A.J. Hinch can bring to the club, after being out of baseball for a year due to his participation in the Astros' sign-stealing scandal. Their Win-Loss Projection is 77-85; They will miss the playoffs.

## American League West:

This season may well be the one that will bring the Los Angeles Angels back to the Postseason. The Angels have Mike Trout, who is considered to be the best player of our generation, Shohei Ohtani, who is the first player since Babe Ruth to pitch and hit in the same season, and Anthony Rendon, who they acquired in December 2019 as a free agent. The Angels have Dylan Bundy, but may need a midseason trade to add another arm for the playoff race. Their Win-Loss Projection is 88-74; They will Win their Division, but will lose in ALDS to the White Sox.

By no means are the Oakland Athletics a championship-caliber team, but they are miles ahead of the Rangers and the Mariners. The A's also acquired Pitcher Adam Kolerek, while signing P Sergio Ramo, DH Mitch Moreland, and P Trevor Rosenthal. Their Win-Loss Projection is 84-78; They will miss the playoffs.

In my mind, the third-place AL West team is the Astros. Losing a main part of any team is difficult, but for the Astros, losing George Springer is a big blow. While the Astros will not make the playoffs this season, it will be very interesting to see what they do next season. Their Win-Loss Projection is 80-82; They will miss the playoffs.

The Texas Rangers have Joey Gallo, and have added David Dahl, who was most recently with the Colorado Rockies. They lost Lance Lynn and Corey Kluber, but added Nate Lowe, a first baseman who was most recently on the Rays' AL Championship team. Elvis Andrus is headed to Oakland, while Dane Dunning is joining the club from the White Sox. The Rangers will be a fourth-place team for a little while until they can pull it together. Their Win-Loss Projection is 79-83. They will miss the playoffs.

The Mariners have a legitimate chance of taking back the title of the worst team in the American League this year. Their limited number of offseason moves will prevent them from making it above fifth place in the division this year. I am not confident that their few moves will help the M's a significant amount. Their Win-Loss Projection is 77-85. They will miss the playoffs.

Continued on the next page --->

### National League East

The current Mets have the best chance of making the playoffs this year than any other year since their World Series appearance in 2015, due to the additions of Francisco Lindor, Carlos Carrasco, James McCann, Kevin Pillar, and Trevor May. I think that the Mets will win the division this year-- and I will stick to this statement. Their Win-Loss Projection is 89-73. They will lose in the NLDS to the Cardinals.

The Braves are once again a perennial contender, but I think that they will fall short. Their Win-Loss Projection is 86-76. They will make the Wild Card but will lose to the San Diego Padres.

The Philadelphia Phillies have a probability to win this division, but the Mets and Braves are just going to be too good. Their Win-Loss Projection is 80-82.

The Nationals, two years removed from their World Series championship, look nearly identical to their team last year, but with a few noticeable differences. This is not the end of the road for the Nats, but they will need to add one or two players by the trade deadline in late July. Their Win-Loss Projection is 83-79; They will miss the playoffs. The Miami Marlins flexed some muscle, winning a playoff season in Chicago against the Cubs last year, as well as making momentous hiring, with Kim Ng joining the Fish as their new GM. Ng is the first woman to hold a General Manager role in the Major Leagues. Their Win-Loss Projection is 79-83; They will miss the playoffs.

### National League Central

This division always ends up being the most competitive since there has never been a single team that stands out from all the rest. This year, the Cardinals have changed that. The Cardinals added superstar third baseman Nolan Arenado, and if nothing else happened the last offseason, I think Cardinals fans would be more than satisfied. Adam Wainwright and Yadier Molina are back for another season, which gets everyone excited. I think that the Cards have a good chance of winning the division this year. Their Win-Loss Projection is 91-71. They will lose to the Dodgers in the NLCS.

The Cubs, Brewers, and Reds all have a fighting chance, but the Pirates will be interesting to watch this year. They had the worst record in baseball at 19-41, and they lost Joe Musgrove, Jameson Tallion, and Josh Bell this

offseason. The Brewers will finish at 89-73, the Reds at 85-77, and the Cubs at 83-79. The Pirates, in my mind, will finish at 75-87, which would put them in the basement of the Major Leagues. They will too miss the playoffs.

### National League West

The Dodgers have emerged as a dominant force in the National League for years to come and will make it to the World Series this year. I think that this year will be the one where the Yankees will finally make it back to (and win the) World Series and will have to face a nearly identical Dodgers team (plus NL Cy Young Award winner Trevor Bauer). Their Win-Loss Projection is 97-65. They will make it to the World Series and will lose to the Yankees.

The Padres added Yu Darvish, Joe Musgrove, and Blake Snell to their rotation and their already stacked team, but we will have to see how far they can really go versus the Dodgers this season. Their Win-Loss Projection is 90-72. They will make the Wild Card game and beat the Braves. However, they will lose to Dodgers in NLDS.

The Giants and the Rockies showed off the potential they had last season, but for the Rockies, Arenado went to the Cardinals, and David Dahl went to the Rangers. The Giants' starting rotation was thinned following the departure of Jeff Samardzija, Drew Smyly, Trevor Cahill, and Tyler Anderson. The team added Anthony DeSchalfani and Alex Wood, but I don't think that's enough to get them above the Padres this season. Other hitters, such as Pablo Sandoval and Justin Smoak, weren't productive last season, but Donovan Solano made a name for himself. The Rockies' Win-Loss Projection is 85-77. They will miss the playoffs. The Giants' Win-Loss Projection is 83-79. They will miss the playoffs.

The Diamondbacks have added both Anthony Swarzak and Joakim Soria, yet they have lost Kevin Cron to Japan. Last year, the D-backs were hoping to compete, but it doesn't look like they can this year either. Their Win-Loss Projection is 77-89. They will miss the playoffs.

This baseball season will certainly be different this year and baseball fans across the world are gleaming with hope for a return to a pseudo-normalcy.

## Opinion

# Spring Break: How are Plans Different This Year?

By: Rachel Miniman  
Staff Reporter

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, spring break won't look the same as it has for the past few years. Just two years ago, public areas were vacant, and people didn't have to worry about overcrowding. Although COVID-19 is a big interference with many spring break plans, many students from POBJFK from various grades filled out a survey stating how they would spend their spring break. The most popular results were watching television/movies, going to the mall, baking, riding a bicycle, going on walks, playing video games, and going on their phones. Additionally, 71.4% of these high school students said they are going to spend most of their time at home for spring break. From this, we can see most people will be spending their time in fresh air or sights of vibrant flowers, most likely due to the pandemic since it is difficult to see friends and family.



Source:  
Bodytech.co

# The Golden Globes Controversy

By: Fiona Wu  
News Editor

On February 28th, 2021, the 78th Golden Globes award ceremony officially commenced. Though it is not unusual for controversy to spark over award winners, this year was particularly special in that the Hollywood Foreign Press Association's (HFPA) nominations received an outstanding amount of backlash. This was primarily due to its lack of BIPOC representation—an acronym that stands for “black, indigenous and people of color.”

One of the biggest disappointments for many was the lack of nominations for the BBC show *I May Destroy You*, a drama series about Arabella Essiedu, a young woman who is raped on a night out and tries to rebuild her life following the incident. It was created by Michaela Cole, featured a predominantly black cast, and was rated a staggering 98% on Rotten Tomatoes, yet zero nominations. This show being robbed of a nomination was enough to cause public outcry on its own, but the nomination of Netflix's *Emily in Paris* aggravated fans even more. This show is about Emily Cooper, an American marketing executive, who is hired to work at a marketing firm in Paris, even though she has no knowledge of the language or the culture.



Source: Geo News

The show received a 63% rating on Rotten Tomatoes but still managed to acquire two nominations. In fact, multiple people on the show itself expressed outrage online at the fact that their own show had received such high nominations when *I May Destroy You* was “completely left out of the picture.”

Continuing the controversial trend in this year's Golden Globes was the nomination of Lee Isaac Chung's *Minari* in the “Best Motion Picture—Foreign Language” category. *Minari* is a story about a Korean American family moving to Arkansas in search of finding their own American dream and about the challenges they faced during this new life in the strange and rugged Ozarks. Unlike *Emily in Paris*, this nomination was not criticized for its undeserving nature, rather the category into which it was placed. *Minari* is an American-made and produced film, yet it was still nominated in a foreign language category. The HFPA's reasoning for this placement is due to an old rule that states that any film with at least 50% of non-English dialogue goes into the Foreign Language category. Though this rule is understandable, *Minari* is still an American film centered on telling the story of the American Dream. However, it is 2021, and it may be time to change some rules around.

One could argue that awards shows don't mean anything—but in today's society, they really do. Technically, they are supposed to represent the best of what Hollywood and, in turn, the best of what America has to offer. If we strictly went by the Golden Globe nominations, the lack of diversity and highly Eurocentric bias speaks to the progress that we have yet to make in this country. This is not to say that the nominees weren't deserving of said nominations, but the HFPA needs to broaden their scope of what is worthy of being nominated, as well as do more research. They are not an inherently bad organization, but the lack of diversity within their institution may explain why there is a lack of diversity within these nominations. With 2021 being the year of attention being drawn to minority groups, it may be time for Hollywood to catch up.

## A Guide to Your First Plant

By: Christine Song, Isabella Chen, Elif Koch  
Opinion Editor and Layout Editors

Spring is finally here, and it's the perfect time to raise your first plant. After all, who wouldn't love to have a little plant buddy by their side? Some greenery on your desk can help remind you of the nature we've been missing out on in this technology-focused world. Since many people excel at (accidentally) killing their houseplants, we've created a guide for you to successfully raise your first plant during these lonely times.

### 1. Choosing and buying a plant.

As a first-time owner, it's probably best to get one that anyone can grow. The plants recommended below are typically hardy and require little maintenance. You can start with seeds, but we recommend buying a plant that is already grown. This makes the process much simpler, and there will be less room for error. Examples include: Pothos, Jade Plants, Spider Plants, Succulents (Cacti, Aloe Vera, etc.)

**2. Choose the right pot.** Most plants require drainage holes to prevent waterlogged soil. Your pot should have a hole in the bottom and a tray below it. For slow growers, pots should be around 1-2 inches larger than the plant.

**Plastic vs. Ceramic:** Plastic pots are easier to clean and less fragile. They retain more moisture, so watering can take place less frequently. Ceramic pots are more porous and allow for air movement through the sides of the container, lessening the impacts of overwatering. This feature is more advantageous for plants, such as succulents, that prefer dry soil.

**3. How to take care of your plant.** If you have chosen one of the plants mentioned above, caring for one should be relatively easy. Of course, requirements for care vary from plant to plant, so you should do a little bit of your own research on the side. However, here are some general tips:



Source: Pinterest

For plants that do not require much water, you should water the plants around every two weeks. Ensure the soil is completely soaked with water. Let the excess water drain onto the tray below, and then dump it out after 30 or so minutes.

Keep your plants near windows. Some plants, such as succulents and snake plants, are sensitive to direct sunlight, especially when they are newly planted. Therefore, you should gradually introduce them to the sun.

Place your plant away from air conditioners and radiators. Gently wipe leaves with a damp cloth to clear them of dust. To allow the leaves to continue growing, trim the dead parts using scissors.

The best time to repot your plant is usually spring. Succulents generally require a more porous soil, like one mixed with sand or pumice. If you want to keep your plants small, the best way is to prune the roots (when repotting, cut loosened roots about an inch away from the main roots).

Studies have revealed that the phytoncide chemicals released by plants in homes and workplaces help relieve stress and lessen depression, anxiety, or anger. They are also responsible for improving air quality in spaces. With the addition of lowering carbon dioxide levels in the air, some plants, such as spider plants, peace lily, and bamboo palms, are even capable of filtering harmful compounds in the air. Plants also increase the humidity in the room, which is important for respiratory health. On top of all this, research shows a 15% increase in productivity after offices were “spruced up with leafy, green plant life” (as explained in *Time*).

So, are you ready to become a plant parent this spring? We're rooting for you!

# Fun Fridays? Two Perspectives.

By Jessica Levy  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Because of the treacherous Coronavirus, there have been many changes and complications for life as a student or staff member at POBJFK. For the safety of all heading into the school building, a precedent was set at the beginning of the year. Students with last names beginning with letters “A” through “K” would go into school on Mondays and Wednesdays, while students with last names starting with letters “L” through “Z” would go into school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Everyone would be remote learners on Fridays. These precautions were initially set to maintain social distancing and other Covid safeguards.

As the school year has progressed, more and more school districts have been able to go back to school full time due to the increase in vaccines and the decrease in Coronavirus cases. As a result, the school board revisited the original in-school/out-of-school schedule and decided it was appropriate to allow half of the students into school every Friday. While this may seem like a win for both students and teachers because of more in-person interactions, there are also a few downsides. Because every student was previously remote every Friday, this was an opportunity for students to interact with their counterparts on the opposite side of the alphabet that they do not usually see. Going back to school on Fridays took away that unity from the students.

On the other hand, going into school on Fridays was a good idea because it gave students and teachers the opportunity for more face-to-face interaction. Fridays have been a great way for students to further their connections with teachers. These relationships eventually transform into college recommendations and lifelong friendships. When life resembles something closer to normalcy, students will be used to waking up early and plowing through another day of rigorous work. This will continue to prepare them for challenges that will come later in life. Hopefully, the POBJFKHS family will be reunited soon when we emerge from the global pandemic.



Source: Dayton Daily News

## Cryptocurrency: Will We Be Giving Our Own Kids Digital Allowances?

By Jesse Ray Sheps  
Co-Managing Editor



Source: Yahoo! Finance

For many years we lived in a world where “cash was king” that focused its attention on the United States dollar. In less financially stable countries around the world, shopkeepers still will accept the American dollar as a currency for various goods. However, the growing popularity of cryptocurrency will likely change how we trade for goods and services in the very near future.

Similar to the dollar, cryptocurrency is an alternative form of digital asset that can be exchanged between individuals or companies for goods and services. Some online companies have issued their own currencies, known as tokens or coins, to be traded specifically for the good or service that the company provides. They work in the same way that arcade tokens do for arcade machines. One exchanges their own real dollar for the cryptocurrency to be used in the marketplace. Blockchain is the decentralized technology used by cryptocurrency, spread across thousands of different independent computers, which records the various uses and transactions for that particular token or coin. One significant reason for those with a preference for cryptocurrency is its security, and the fact that it is not tied to any particular government, which may safeguard them from inflation and government interference.

There are currently nearly 7,000 different cryptocurrencies in the marketplace, but the main three that may be best positioned for future growth and adoption are Bitcoin, Ethereum, and Litecoin.

Although cryptocurrencies are not yet used in daily financial exchanges for goods in today’s economy, there are many who see cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin as the international currency of the future. This future speculation is why one single Bitcoin is now valued at \$50,000. Financial investors have made the value of these cryptocurrencies skyrocket, and some industry titans have gotten

behind this future currency. Elon Musk, Tesla’s CEO, recently purchased \$1.5 billion worth of Bitcoin and has been tweeting daily about a lesser valued, but popular cryptocurrency known as Dogecoin.

Cryptocurrencies are not tied to a central bank, so their values are really just what people believe them to be worth. That may sound a bit crazy, but consider the fact that this concept is really no different than the fact we as a society have arbitrarily given a high value to gold.

Owners of these digital coins can keep them secure in their own digital wallets, which is out of sight from government regulations. This has raised some concerns about their use for criminal activity. One word of advice for anyone who decides to stockpile their cryptocurrency in their own private digital wallet at home- do not lose your password for the digital asset. One unlucky German programmer, Stefan Thomas, had over 7,000 bitcoins stored on a secure hard drive that required a password. They were stored in a digital safe that only permitted ten tries with an incorrect password. Mr. Thomas earned these bitcoins many years ago when the value was only worth a few dollars each, but he, unfortunately, forgot his password. Mr. Thomas currently only has two more guesses left to figure out his correct password, or his \$350 million worth of Bitcoin will be erased permanently from his hard drive!

The future of cryptocurrency depends on whether big financial institutions get behind it. Just last month, Paypal finally agreed to trade in cryptocurrency, and there is now a recent announcement that Mastercard may permit crypto payments on its network. While we are not immediately convinced we will be buying slices of pizza at La Piazza anytime soon with cryptocurrency, the real question is whether this eventually becomes the normal way in which we pay each other in the future. When asked about the possibility that we would be giving our own children allowance with cryptocurrency, sophomore Natalie Phillips believed that the idea was incomprehensible, stating, “no, it is not feasible that we would stray from regular currency.” Jordan Goldklang, a sophomore, noted that he has been watching the market appreciation of one of his own favorite cryptocurrencies, Dogecoin and that he very much believes cryptocurrency will be increasingly popular in the future.

Only time will tell whether cryptocurrency is the future for how we do business. Some individuals collect as many of these digital coins as they can, seeing limitless potential, while skeptics see nothing but risk. Even if cryptocurrency is the future, there is no way of knowing which one of the almost limitless digital coins will become the new gold standard. I can only hope that the new “Jesse-coin” cryptocurrency that I am considering creating on my computer starts trading at \$50,000 each too!

# Regents Exams 2021: Will They Happen?

By Alison Chertoff  
News Editor

The question of whether NYS Regents exams will be administered for every subject this year has not yet been finalized. As students anxiously await this decision and teachers focus on completing required topics, the Biden administration defends these exams' importance while the teachers union has argued against it.

For the second year in a row, the Chancellor of New York's Board of Regents, Lester W. Young Jr., has requested a waiver for this year's Regents exams. Since there are many different teaching methods within our state, it does not seem fair to administer a standardized exam. Also, these exams put additional stress on both educators and students. This school year has been extremely challenging, and student's and faculty's mental health and safety should be considered. Throughout the state, there have been numerous school closings and absent students due to quarantine.

The rationale behind giving these standard tests during a pandemic year is to offer support to students that have fallen behind. However, some other alternatives, such as teacher evaluations and class grades, should help determine this. Adaptive tests have shown to be good indicators of a student's success. This is a type of exam where questions get more complex in response to correct answers. They get easier in response to wrong ones. This is a more individualized way of testing. Another option suggested by the U.S. Education Department is to administer tests during the summer or the fall when school will hopefully be back to normal.

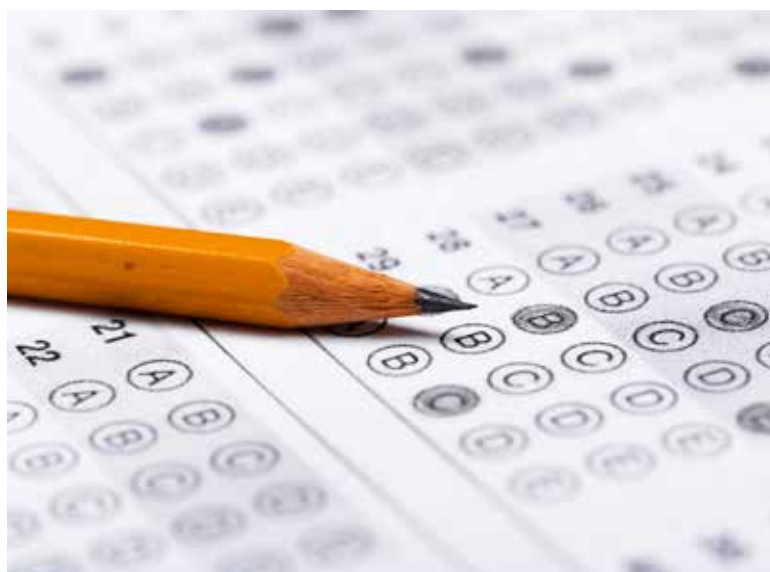
Regents exams have often been criticized for not accurately reflecting student success beyond high school. Historically, students must get at least a 65 to earn a standard high school diploma. Perhaps now is the time to reevaluate a better method to assess student abilities and determine their academic needs.

There will be no standard method for New York public school students to take the exam this year. Some may be in their classrooms, which they have attended every day. Others that participate in the hybrid model would sit at desks that they occupy a few days a week. Lastly, are the students whose schools do not have in-person learning or have parents who are not comfortable sending their child in during a pandemic. These students will take the exams at home. Though some will be comfortable in their room, others could be dealing with Wi-Fi issues and noise from working parents.

The Department of Education announced that students would not

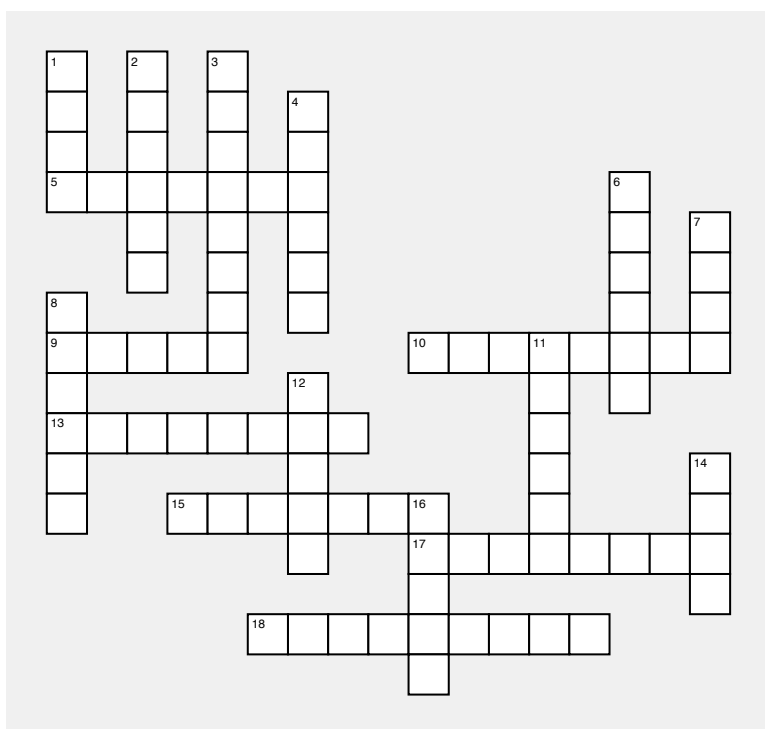
be penalized for their Regents' grades. High school seniors can't be denied a diploma for failing or opting out of taking the exam. This would certainly take the pressure off some students, and the state would still be able to assess student learning. I spoke with Sage Adler, a Junior scheduled to take the US History, English, and Physics regents. She told me, "It is not fair for Regents to be administered considering that we have only been going to school every other day. In addition, I don't think it will be an accurate representation of the hard work I have done this year."

The Regents debate remains a controversial issue. We cannot give students a standard test when they have not had a standard learning environment. The current information indicates that Algebra, Earth Science, and English will go on as planned. As for the other exams, there is no definitive answer. Students and teachers are hoping for an official announcement soon. So the question remains, will there be a June 2021 Regents exam?



Source: Timeout.com

## Spring Crossword



### ACROSS

- 5) They're usually found in beds
- 9) Time for showers
- 10) Gloom's opposite
- 13) Yellow spring flower
- 15) Day for diamonds and dreams
- 17) Shower apparel?
- 18) Monarch, e.g.

### DOWN

- 1) Sport with tees
- 2) Fledgling plant
- 3) America's pastime
- 4) \_\_\_ egg
- 6) Eating outing
- 7) When spring ends
- 8) Vegetable plot
- 11) One of four in a year
- 12) Breezy
- 14) Flying toy with a tail
- 16) Verdant

Source: letrimcoco.ie



Source: Scientific American

# Review Of Zack Snyder's Justice League

By Jesse Ray Sheps  
Co-Managing Editor

It would not be odd for the casual movie viewer to ask why there would be so much excitement over a release of a re-cut version of the four-year-old critically panned and box office flop "Justice League" movie. However, the superhero origin story of this film dates back to 2017, and the original release of the disappointing DC film directed by replacement director Joss Whedon. Super-fans of the original "Justice League" director, Zack Snyder, have been leading a grassroots movement to see the initial vision for the film that Mr. Snyder had imagined, over the very different movie that Mr. Whedon put together after taking control of the film. Mr. Whedon took over the project when Mr. Snyder was forced to leave during the end of production, due to the tragic death of his child. Fans of the superhero franchise craving the Snyder version were further emboldened when Wonder Woman's own Gal Gadot herself tweeted out #ReleaseTheSnyderCut, with Batman's Ben Affleck soon following in support. The fans eventually won the battle as the movie was just released.

Now, four years and \$90 million in post-production costs later, fans of the DC superhero franchise can finally see the four-hour version of Zack Snyder's Justice League, known affectionately as "The Snyder Cut." Snyder, who previously directed "Man of Steel" and "Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice," had a much darker vision for the Justice League than Joss Whedon, the latter director who was used to directing much lighter material. The two versions of the movie are strikingly different visions.

Providing a review for the longest theatrical movie ever released on screen in history with an over four-hour running time is not an easy task. No matter how much you enjoy the superhero genre, watching this lengthy cinematic experience leaves you feeling like you just took a punch in the gut from Superman. In reality, the movie should probably have been done in three hours. At some points in the movie, you are convinced it's about to end, and then you look up at the clock to find another two mor hours to go. However, these dips and upswings are all part of Mr. Snyder's large and brilliant narrative brainstorming, and is a small price to pay for what turns out to be a heart stomping and passionate adventure for both casual and die-hard superhero fans.

The movie centers around five members of the Justice League, including Batman, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, Cyborg, and the Flash. This team of superheroes try to save the Earth from a powerful alien invasion, and realize they can not do so without the

help of the recently deceased Superman. Facing the destruction of the human race, the Justice League seeks to use one of the powerful "Mother Boxes:" a source of incredible power that evil aliens are searching for to raise Clark Kent from the dead to help save the day.

The Snyder cut successfully puts together the "DC Comics" merry band of heroes and provides the viewer with plenty of emotional backdrops via "origin" style flashbacks. Mr. Snyder's version

successfully provides healthy competition to the Marvel Cinematic Universe's "Avengers" films, for it takes time for character development in order to stress that each of these heroes are a strong-minded, deeply emotional individual with a story to tell. These backstories prove quite important in how they learn to work together to save the Earth from the destructive ways of Darkseid and Steppenwolf.

The film has a bit of a familiar feel if you are a fan of the Avengers: an evil god-like alien creature invades Earth in an effort to collect a series of magical items that will ultimately help them control the entire Universe. The storyline at times seems to shadow Marvel's Thanos adventure, but one must remember that Mr. Snyder's movie was actually made years before the Marvel version.

Snyder provides the viewers with some of the most amazing special effects and visual battles that they might ever see on the screen. This film deserved to have been viewed on the big screen, but the COVID-19 pandemic has interfered with such plans. Despite this limitation, there is no doubt this movie will keep the viewers on the edge of their seats- even as they hit the four-hour mark. In the end, it is the emotional heart of the movie- not the superhero battle scenes- that truly packs a punch for this film. Each member of the Justice League has their own unique story to tell. There are plenty of big-name actors in this movie, but the standout performance here was provided by Ray Fisher, who plays Cyborg. Mr. Fisher shows great emotional range in his character's transformation from a young athlete

to a super-powerful cyborg machine. Cyborg's lesser known backstory, in comparison to mega-heroes such as Superman and Batman, really pushes the film to a higher level. All of the Justice League actors bring a top-level performance and deserve great accolades.

All superhero fans can sit back satisfied knowing that they showed their own superpowers by convincing the studio to produce a new version of the same movie featuring their favorite characters and continuing the legacy of the Justice League in such a powerful alternative way.



Source: Forbes

# Top Movies

By Nicole Graubart  
Staff Reporter

This year has not been what anybody expected; however, movies have been getting us through this unprecedented year. Nothing compares to sitting on your couch with a bowl of popcorn in your hand, fully invested in a film. Movies can take your mind off all of the stresses of the pandemic. There has been a wide variety of cinema premiering and old films available for viewing due to the recent increase in streaming services.

To understand the thoughts and opinions of POBJFK students, I surveyed thirty students about which movies were their favorites since the pandemic. Students from POBJFK have expressed which

movies are their top-notch picks to watch during quarantine through their votes. Older animated Disney movies and Marvel have been the overall favorites, perhaps because they provide people with a magical or mystical experience during such a trying time. Mean Girls, the Star Wars franchise, and the Harry Potter franchise all came in a close second. The genres of horror and comedies were typically the least popular overall.

No matter what genre or type of movie, I think it is safe to say that being stuck in a crazy time in history can be easier with the distraction of a good film.

## Night of A Cappella!

By Annie Heischober  
Staff Reporter

Students of the POBJFK High School A Cappella Program take the stage every year in January to perform for their peers and family. The stage creates an atmosphere where talents soar. Students sing with their groups, sharing their musical skills with the rest of the community. Jenna Fabiano, a Senior and the President of the A Cappella program, stated that "Being a member of this club has given me the opportunity to grow as a leader and find myself as a singer and performer among my friends." The performance is rewarding because it is the outcome of all of the student's hard work. Due to COVID-19 circumstances, all involved have chosen to pivot the program to a virtual platform for this year's Winter Night of A Cappella. Although it was an unforeseen adjustment, the program continued to thrive, making the virtual concert a huge success.

A Cappella is a musical style that encompasses no instruments.

Voices are used to generate music. At POBJFK high school, there are nine unique groups. Eight of these groups are student-run: Acafellas, B-Sharps, Chock Full of Notes, Drastic Measures, Noteworthy, On A High Note, Rolling Tones, and Under A Rest. The Acafellas and B-Sharps are for those with lower voices that sing in the tenor, baritone, and bass range. Drastic Measures, Noteworthy, and On A High Note are for sopranos and altos, who have higher voices.

Chock Full of Notes, Rolling

Tones, and Under A Rest contains all voice parts and are classified as a mixed a cappella group. Each group has a board made up of a manager, assistant manager, musical manager, and secretary. The election of new members is decided by the managers when auditions take place. Auditions are held three times a year, with people being selected based upon the need for balance between voice parts within the group. Beatboxing, also known as vocal percussion, is an essential part of A Cappella as well!! Each A Cappella cluster has its individual and unique style. However, they all participate together. Most students involved in the A Cappella program are part of the school choir.

"Vibe," established in 2019 by Mr. Paltrowitz, the choir director and A Cappella advisor, is a teacher-run group of top performers in both choir and A Cappella that represent all eight student-run groups. Students are required to audition for this group. Mr. Paltrowitz created this group because he believed in students' learning new Vibe skills to bring back to their student-run groups. This will better them in singing, performing, recording, audio/video editing, and running effective rehearsals.

Throughout this school year, rehearsals have been modified. Students are running their rehearsals over Zoom or Meet because

singers need to be 12 feet apart. However, members still arranged their music and taught it to the group. Rehearsals were mainly for announcements, instruction, and group discussion. Groups continue to have a great time at rehearsals and do some singing to prepare for the projects unique to this crazy year. Before the pandemic, Sunday was "A Cappella Day!" Groups would rehearse for approximately 2 hours, including learning, practicing, and singing the music together and socializing with friends.

For Winter Night of A Cappella 2021, each group created a unique project. The groups produced music videos to present at the virtual concert. This premiered on YouTube as a playlist. All of the project's audio and video were done by the students and the club advisors, Mr. Paltrowitz and Ms. Nicky Brenner. Nicky Brenner was a former student and now a professional in the field of recording

engineering and producing. Workshops on the video and editing process were available for anyone in the A Cappella club to attend. Students used Soundtrap, an audio recording and editing software, to produce their music. They were able to use their Chromebooks and school accounts provided by the district for Soundtrap. Some groups used other software to do audio editing, for example, Melodyne and Logic. After all members' recordings were time and

pitch-corrected, volume and

balance were then adjusted. Beatbox was edited as well. Then, the sound was mixed, and once audio editing was finalized, the video process could begin! Some groups chose a virtual video, while others got together in person, following all social distance guidelines to record certain parts of their project. Members individually recorded themselves, and group shots were also filmed. After all, the video elements were put together; the audio was added to create a final product. On January 29th, after much hard work and dedication, students and the community witnessed the first-ever virtual Winter Night of A Cappella Concert!

Go check it out!

Youtube: Plainview Old-Bethpage A Cappella

Instagram: @pobacappella

Facebook: POB A Cappella



Source: POBJFK A Cappella Club