

Fuel for change

The principal comes over the intercom. This is just a drill. We hide in the darkest corners of rooms, away from doors and windows and under desks. One or two laughs might be heard to break through the anxious air. But there is an overall seriousness to our hiding. We are anxious. We are anxious because we know that at any day, at any time, this could be more than a drill.

Our lives could be ended with a single bullet: whether it be at school, a concert, a place of worship, shopping or walking down the street. How do we learn in a classroom without worrying about all the ways to exit the building should the unthinkable occur? How do we say yes to large, public gatherings without wondering if our goodbyes will be our last? How do we stroll casually through the mall without fear that our lives will be over if we wander into the wrong store at the wrong time? How do we live, if not in fear?

Last month 29 people died in mass shootings in Texas. Twenty-two died in a shooting at and El Paso Walmart, and seven died at a shopping center and movie theater in Midland-Odessa.

Our fear is justified. Although only two percent of gun deaths were caused by mass shootings, gun violence was the third highest cause of death in 2017.

If we allow those who carry out mass violence to force fear into our lives, then we submit to terror before it is carried out among us. However, if we allow the fear to push us to do better, to create change, and explore solutions of ending unnecessary deaths, then we take our fear and turn it into fuel.

We can fuel a better tomorrow. We can fuel schools where students focus on classwork and not on the caliber of gun used in last week's school shooting. We can fuel the protection of

the most sacred American freedom, allowing everyone to worship freely without hatred threatening them in the form of bullets. We can fuel fun experiences where anxiety of the unthinkable won't stop us from stepping out of our houses.

Only if we let it our fear be turned into fuel will we create change. The fear we have can be transformed into a vote for someone who supports better gun laws. The fear we have can be changed into a phone call or meeting with a local representative. The fear we have can be used to support victims of gun violence and their families.

We must not and can not allow ourselves to be stuck in a cycle in which we cower in fear, post our thoughts, and wait until the next tragedy to happen. Taking our pain and creating change is the only way we can escape circling the drain of violence.

Whatever you think causes or does not cause shooters to take lives does not matter. What does matter is that we have a problem. A problem that we need to solve. Whatever you think we need to fix it, advocate for it. Raise it up. Care. Care before it's too late for you to do so.

Take your fear and make it fuel.

Thinking elementally

Mental health plays an integral part in every student's academic career, directly affecting their ability to conduct themselves in everyday situations, classroom environments, and professional settings. A student's success may be in jeopardy if their mental health inhibits their focus and their expectations in the classrooms.

The problem with mental health in America's education system is that we do not do enough to curb and address a student's mental health during primary education, which is when students learn how to appropriately behave and apply themselves in group settings. Elementary school teachers have a natural propensity to be a constructive force in a student's life and to address and prevent students' mental health issues before they have a lasting impact on a student's academic career.

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– TigerTimes staff

Research by Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child suggests that as children, the rapidly developing nature of the brain heightens during trauma, incurring stress and fear-related hormones. In periods of extended traumatic exposure, the brain adjusts to the heightened stress state and normalizes the stress and fear, threatening the development of a healthy psyche as the child ages. Elementary school teachers interact closely enough to form secure relationships with children and should help to address the roots of what would later become mental health issues, such as bullying, cheating, and aggression in social settings.

A study in the Oxford Journal of Pediatric Psychology contends that exposure to [potential traumatic events](#) (PTEs), stimuli ranging from car accidents to bee stings, in early childhood can precipitate depressive symptoms in developed children by sensitizing the child to stress, decreasing a child's tolerance and lowering the stress threshold, making the child more susceptible to anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. This may later manifest itself as poor study

habits and procrastination, impulsive temperament or deviant social behavior. While a large body of research maintains that mental illnesses are genetic expressions, the way a child learns to act and to behave in group settings can deeply affect their ability to succeed academically.

Although young children might not have the vocabulary to articulate or express the complexities of their mental states, children jump internalize false assumptions when they do not have enough information to make informed conclusions. As a [Psychology Today](#) article suggests, talking to children about mental health, as well the traumas they may experience, can help to clear up misconceptions about their intrapersonal state, including the ways that children express fear, anxiety and depression. By excluding young students from these talks, children are left to deal with complex social issues by themselves, which can affect their emotional independence and their self esteem. The solution to mental health issues in high school and in college, when the consequences are more sustaining and severe, is to address mental health issues when the human brain is more flexible and can learn to cope with stress at an early age. Currently, talks about mental wellness in primary education are far and few between. If we introduce the vocabulary of mental health to young students and we incorporate elementary school teachers in those talks, we can mitigate the latent dysfunctions of mental illness during early education.

Subject to the jurisdiction of prejudice

Every six weeks is like a routine. The newspaper staff goes through our usual process. Sit down. Discuss current events. Decide what issue the students care about. Write and publish a story. And like all issues, forget.

But, we can't forget. How could we when the futures of some of our student body are at risk?

"Anchor babies." Unwanted. Unwelcomed. Un-American. Children of foreign parents, hated by those who don't know them. Who don't know their struggles. Who don't know the brutality, tyranny and persecution their parents escaped when coming to the United States.

Anchor babies are defined as the children of an illegal immigrant or other noncitizens, who under current legality, become United States citizens at birth. Jus soli, also known as birthright citizenship, ensures that children born in the U.S. are able to participate and contribute as members of society, protected under the 14th amendment. If this, or its interpretation, were to be challenged or revoked, the result would be catastrophic.

Alteration to the 14th Amendment would ensure that generations of individuals would be unable to obtain legal status and could become stateless. Following President Donald Trump's announcement to abolish jus soli through executive order, conservatives have supported this by arguing that the amendment calls for interpretation.

The Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution states that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein

they reside.” This subjugation clause has caused much controversy among politicians and citizens as they argue to whom these babies are subjugated to – the country of the parent or place of birth. The U.S. Supreme Court, however, has affirmed that the 14th is applicable to all children born on U.S. soil, regardless of parental status.

So if the law is clear and steadfast in its position, why is this an issue?

Trump’s announcement concerning birthright citizenship came just around midterm elections. Republicans were using the 14th amendment to bolster their platform to ensure their election into Congress. Similarly, Democrats were appealing to their voters by vehemently advocating for the rights of anchor babies. Both parties, regardless of their position on birthright citizenship, were using the issue to campaign for the support of their party amid election season. This begs the question: are children now just a political platform to campaign on? Are the lives of these people secondary to politics?

The media and politicians blast the news cycle with the stories of immigrants flooding into the country, taking American jobs from American people and degrading American values. Are the people here not American? Citizens born in this country and “subject to the jurisdiction” of this country are American themselves, so such “American” jobs and values apply to them.

This is not an obscure or inaccessible issue. A neighbor, a best friend, or even your family members may be affected by this change. It is easy for politicians, the media or conservative peers to view immigration as wrong, that anyone who did not come over on the Mayflower or share the same light pigment as you is an illegal immigrant.

Anchor babies usually evoke the image of Hispanics fleeing

Mexico by the mass. The media has portrayed these immigrants as rapists, terrorists, drug dealers, all coming to steal our jobs and hurt our citizens. In a study by Pew Research Center, however, it was revealed that the largest group of immigrants is not from Mexico, but from Asia. The basis of the argument surrounding citizenship under the guise that anchor babies are illegal, or from Mexico, or are criminals is built entirely of Trump's inaccurate notions of immigration. One cannot seriously form an educated and logical argument to debase the 14th Amendment if the supplied information is fake.

Illegal immigration remains a debated issue among politicians and citizens alike. Scapegoating children of foreign parents, however, does not serve a logical argument for their political base or go to serve your re-election efforts. Condemning children of foreign parents for being born to such is not a bullet point in a rally speech, but a discussion over the rights for American children.

A positive outlook

As we walk through the hallways, students sense a different setting around them. There is loud chatter among students; laughter erupts from them. There's something distinct about this year. It's more than just new administrators, new teachers and new students. It's the atmosphere, a welcoming one that gives us a sense of home.

The changes that have been made this year are to be applauded for creating an open and friendly environment for students and faculty. With our new principal, Carla Dupree, students have taken notice that our faculty and administration have become more approachable and conscious with students.

On the first day of school, Mrs. Dupree announced during lunches that cell phones will be allowed while in the cafeteria. Having phones out in school is not authorized for anything but educational services, so the ability to use our phones during lunch in the cafeteria is a favorable outcome.

Another new feature that has been added to the administrators' front doors is Bitmoji stickers, emojis that someone can personalize to look like themselves. Bitmoji was created by Bitstrips as a personal emoji that can resemble you and was integrated into Snapchat in 2016. This detail can help students find administrator offices faster and makes walking into Mr. Anderson's office a much less daunting task. Our student body is heavily consumed by technology and social media so it's a good break for us to be on our cell phones during lunch.

When we lost two classmates this year, Dupree sent an email to the faculty regarding that if any students is having difficulty in class to send them to the counselors office immediately. Anne Granado, English AP teacher, sent an email as well to her senior classes regarding the incidents, sending her love and support to all of her students. On Sept. 7, at the senior sunrise STUCO officers and Dupree expressed their condolences. We all took notice of the caring nature Dupree radiated and the good intentions behind her decisions she made.

One of the main things we as students complain about is food, specifically our cafeteria food. One of our newest additions to our cafeteria is the snack-line outside next to the lunch tables. Different lunch lines have a specific theme going on, for example, the Italian line which serves pizza and spaghetti. Administration has take into account students that do not eat meat, they added a salad bar.

Our administration this year have take into account the student body and staff, they are are continuously trying to

better each school year. Little changes sometimes make a big impact. These changes reinforce Texas High as the place to be.

The future of your career

High school is the intersection of a large number of social constructs: cooperative socialization, child development and professional development, among others. Society has come to a consensus that education is the road out of poverty, the road to higher ground. This road, however, does not come without its fair share of bumps and detours.

Many issues plague high schools today, such as a failure to pay its teachers, a failure to prioritize student safety, and a misguided approach to planning student careers and futures. It seems impossible to underplay the importance of education. Our world's rapidly evolving culture and accompanying economy, as well as politics and society, highlight the need for a smarter, more qualified workforce. For these reasons, an examination of our conditioning and preparation for the workforce is an important step in realizing our potential.

We are expected to know what we want to be as children, as middle schoolers and as high school students. Despite this ongoing discussion of our careers and futures, a study by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York shows that only a quarter of college graduates work in a field related to their major and only a little more than half work in a field related to their degree. We are expected in high school to follow our paths religiously, but students need exposure to new and diverse working climates. Most careers planned during high school are likely to be overturned in the coming years.

In 2013, House Bill 5 changed the graduation requirements for

high school students in Texas, obligating them to adopt an endorsement in the ninth grade, which are 26 credit plans in five different areas: multidisciplinary studies, STEM, arts and humanities, public service and business and industry. However, only public universities –which operate under the legislature of House Bill 5 – must legitimately consider endorsements for the college admissions process. Private institutions will not consider them beyond the extent they play in, what the Tenney School, a prestigious private school based out of Houston, calls the Big 3: class rank, test rank and course rigor.

The problem with endorsements falls mainly onto the academic advisers, who have to prioritize graduation requirements over other elective classes a student might opt to take. Through these prerequisites, students can be shortchanged of a certification, license or associate's degree. Most students will end up debating their previous planning and go on to change their schedule. Instead, they will find themselves at a loss.

For instance, a core class might fall on the same class period as another class you want to take for career experience. Depending on how specialized these kinds of classes are, that might be the only time in the block schedule that class is offered. Instead of taking this career-specific course, you would have to take that core class because of the graduation requirements.

We are expected to know what we want to be too early. Even in middle school, administrators and academic advisers come over annually to help students hash out what they want to work on during high school, maybe even their college or professional careers. Entrusting them to plan their careers at that time seems like a misstep in an inefficient direction.

Almost half of students who enroll in college end up dropping out. In that way, we are expected to fail on our own. What are

we supposed to make of all these expectations? The uncertainty is enough to challenge the idea that the careers hashed out during high school translate into skills or knowledge that we can take to college, or to vocational school or to the workforce.

Look ahead to safety

Since 2013, there have been more than 300 school shootings in America. There have been at least 17 shootings in 2018 alone, averaging more than once a week. Students don't think it will ever happen to them until it does. Under the shadow of this threat, schools must step up to the plate to make their students feel safe and educate them on how to react in the event of a school shooter. There is a problem, however, with the measures being introduced to increase our safety.

The fact that Texas High's campus is predominantly outdoors increases the risk of an intruder. There are too many entrances and exits at which to install metal detectors and security, compounded by the fact that the crossing guards and police officers aren't always in their kiosks or stations to safely monitor the flow in and out of the school.

While teachers do participate in some drills in the incident of a school shooter, kids are left clueless aside from knowing to sit away from the door and be quiet. Students need to know what to do, what not to do and where to go. If someone were to get stuck in the halls or separated from their teacher, they would automatically become more vulnerable in a shooting situation, but especially if they have no knowledge of how to react.

Mental health is closely tied to school shootings. Some argue

that it is the source of shooting, and recognizing those students who are unstable could avoid the incident early on. Some schools require teachers to participate in mental health workshops where teachers learn how to identify signs and symptoms of mental health issues. By implementing these workshops, we could be addressing the problem at its source.

However, after investigation of the Florida shooting, it was discovered that many students and teachers had reported Nikolas Cruz for troubling behavior. He was investigated a year before the shooting by the Florida Department of Children and Families. Additionally, the FBI received a tip that he intended to kill people at school. In this way, the system failed to protect citizens.

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No protocol can stop the deranged from waltzing into schools, guns blazing. School is a garden to cultivate tomorrow's youth. School should not be a prison. While we do surrender some of our rights at school, we should not have to surrender whatever sense of safety we have, nor should we be stripped of our privacy.”

– Tiger Times Staff

Schools don't act until it happens, as seen with Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida after 17 were killed and 14 injured. Why act after it happened and not before?

No protocol can stop the deranged from waltzing into schools, guns blazing. School is a garden to cultivate tomorrow's youth. School should not be a prison. While we do surrender some of our rights at school, we should not have to surrender whatever sense of safety we have, nor should we be stripped of our privacy. In Parkland, students are now being required to wear clear backpacks. This happened before after Columbine when mesh backpacks became popular, but they quickly went out

of fashion after the safety fervor died down. It seems as if the Fourth Amendment that protects right to privacy is being infringed upon, while the Second is unnegotiable, which is not under the school's authority.

While active shooter drills give us a sense of what to do, our mental clarity is compromised by panic. There will most likely be mayhem when the lights turn off.

Only in the aftermath of tragedy are we forced to consider what we have done wrong and begin to take additional preventative measures. Whatever side of the gun control issue a person supports, there should be no argument that students should be safe at school. The responsibility falls to both students and faculty.

Students should report any suspicious behavior immediately to administrators, and law enforcement officials should take those reports seriously.

Our administration should continually evaluate safety procedures and make sure that they are communicated effectively to students and staff. There should be no ambiguity in our knowledge of escape.

It's not just the teenage "spirit." It's not rebellion. At the end of day, it's self-preservation.

Taking our bodies back

The first word is a snowflake. Seemingly harmless at first, and not cold enough for anyone to say anything about. But when one snowflake falls, hundreds are bound to follow, and soon the cold words pile up into a frozen avalanche, silencing the ones inside. Sexual assault can, and often does, start with

something as simple as a word, something innocent, and snowballs into something that permanently affects the victim.

We need to change our attitude toward sexual assault and start treating it as the serious problem it is. We are the ones who can make change and repercussions for the criminals and save the victims from being left in the cold alone. It is disturbing the ways that sexual inequality is promoted and normalized:

Boys will be boys.

It's just locker talk.

Learn how to take a joke.

But boys grow up. Talk escalates. And every joke has a root in truth. The perception that words aren't equal to actions is false, because the two are inseparable. A person's words predict their actions, and words that degrade women are predictive of sexist behavior and are normally rooted in insecurity. Of course, times used to be different. Women were expected to be submissive and tolerant of any abuse, verbal or physical, that they endured. But times are different, and it is time for tolerance of this behavior to change.

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Sexual harassment and assault allegations have littered the news lately, but the difference between the two can seem blurred. Simply put, harassment is unwelcome advances or requests, and assault is forced, threatened, or otherwise nonconsensual sexual contact. While sexual assault is objectively more serious, it's important not to dismiss anyone's experiences by comparing them to someone else's. Every victim deserves a voice.

Since the momentum of movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp seem so recent, many people feel that this issue is being overblown; many of the sexual assault allegations are from almost 20 years ago, which influences some to believe that people are only shedding light on their experiences for attention. Allegations of something as serious as assault should at least be considered. Just because one claim might be false, all claims shouldn't be dismissed. Sexual assault is and always will be relevant.

Many movie stars and business moguls have newly tarnished reputations as a result of the powerful sexual assault movements that are sweeping across the world. The fans of franchises with actors and directors who have been exposed as abusers may feel upset by the negative connotations attached to their favorite movies, but victims experience a much worse reality, and it's unfair to discredit their claims because of a fondness for an actor. The only way to stop the success of abusers is to completely stop praising them or patroning their work. It needs to be made known that sexual assault is a grave offense that's extremely difficult to be redeemed from. Nowhere should it be acceptable for sexual abuse to remain normalized, a rung necessary to climb in the corporate world.

Sexual assault seems like it permeates every pore of life today. It can be disheartening to see the numerous allegations that emerge each day, but believe it or not, there is a bright side. All of these accusations that come up are proof that society has changed for the better, and women are feeling more and more empowered to speak out. As far as keeping perpetrators of assault from power, it's important to stop them before they can start. Shut down degrading jokes, talk about your experiences, and make sure people know that what they're saying hurts you.

The ever-growing threat of sexual assault is most common at college campuses. Many colleges have enforced new policies that require applicants to take a test that screens their

knowledge on sexual assault, what it means, and how to prevent it. These assessments are aimed to reduce statistics of harassment and assaults by making students more aware of their actions and the consequences they might have to face as a result.

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The avalanche of silence brought upon the victims of sexual assault can be overcome, but not alone. To be rescued from a situation so dire requires a strong support system based on friends and family who love and understand the victim.

If you've ever been a victim, the first step is to reach out (you don't have to if you're not ready) and find someone that you trust enough to share your story. If you haven't experienced anything like this, you have a responsibility: Help those who have. Be understanding, not skeptical, and respect people's boundaries. Educate yourself on what sexual abuse is (sexist jokes, physical conflict, verbal abuse) before they have the chance to become serious.

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Our right to write

We sit in a circle, squeezing onto couches, disregarding any sense of personal space we might have possessed. There is a

chatter among us, the sound of loud laughter and people groaning overdramatically as they are forced to accommodate the arrival of one more body on the couch. As one of the editors in chief speaks out, addressing the room, the noise comes to a lull.

The question is asked.

“Does anyone have any ideas for this issue’s in-depth story?”

Silence. For a moment, we all trade glances, surveying each person in the circle, expectantly waiting for someone to speak. It’s an important question, a necessary one. The question of choosing a prevalent issue in today’s society on which to centralize our paper. We want it to be relevant and timely; something that will spark interest. We want it to be something that you, the student body, actually cares about. And once we feel like we’ve found it, we’re off.

We research relentlessly, conducting polls and interviews with various students and faculty members in an earnest attempt to capture the real perspectives of different types of individuals, those affected either directly or indirectly by the topic in question.

Sleepless nights are spent tirelessly writing and rewriting articles in order to preserve and present the honest opinions of you, the students and faculty of this campus, in an unbiased and unchanged manner.

Then finally, after weeks spent agonizing over computer screens trying to make this idea come to life, we distribute the culmination of our blood, sweat and tears to the entire campus, eager for your reaction and hopeful for your approval.

It’s at this moment, this specific point in time, that something crucial, misses the mark.

A new question. “Why is the newspaper so sad?” And another.

“Why do you keep talking about problems if you’re not going to do anything to change them?”

Create your own user feedback survey

Recently, the *Tiger Times* has endured criticism regarding the issues we choose to focus on in our publication. Whether we’re being told that we should lighten up or shut up, we just can’t seem to get it right. We thought it might be time for us to clarify what it is that we aim to accomplish with the newspaper you see passed around every six weeks.

The root of all journalism is to inform. Journalism is the outlet through which news is disseminated, and what it means to do is spread knowledge. That much is the same for us and our paper.

Our purpose is to be a voice for the people. We mean to honestly and objectively inform, and most of all, we mean to be a reflection of this student body.

In response to the question on why we fixate on controversial or hard-hitting subjects, we ask this: Why not?

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We aren’t given the option to be decent human beings only at times most convenient for us. We here at Tiger Times just want to know what good has ever come from staying silent. What good has it ever done? The answer is, none. None at all.”

We can’t ignore real problems happening in our world when we are the ones affected by them. And even when we aren’t the ones directly involved, it is unacceptable to ignore the hardships of others. We aren’t given the option to be decent human beings only at times most convenient for us. We here at Tiger Times just want to know what good has ever come from staying silent. What good has it ever done? The answer is, none. None at all.

This has been said many times before, and it may still garner the same scoffs and eyerolls, but know it to be true regardless: We are the future. As young people, we have the power to make change, to make a society worth living in. But we wonder, how can we expect to change anything before we start educating ourselves on the issues plaguing the world we live in? How can we incite progress before we start communicating with one another?

This is what the Tiger Times is trying to do. By presenting these hard to hear topics, we aim to challenge the mind of every student. By making an exhibition of issues that some students might not even be aware of, we hope that traditional schools of thought may be tested, and people will be forced to form their own opinions when we don't offer them one on a silver platter.

We want to make it clear that our goal isn't to be a depressing dark hole of despair and misery, despite often being interpreted as such. In all honesty, we want to address the matters in society that so many people would rather keep quiet, and by doing so, we hope that you will be inspired to take a stance, whatever it may be, and then take action.

This staff cares, and that is why we write. Granted, it is a small step, and it won't be enough to change the world, which is why we're asking you to meet us halfway. Continue the discussion, ask the hard questions and don't stop there.

Who owns it?

The debate over students' ownership of intellectual property started when a student in Lewisville, Texas used the school's equipment to take pictures of a sporting event and posted them

on his Flickr account. Flower Mound High School ordered Anthony Mazur to take down the photos, and had all photographers and yearbook staff members sign a waiver to their works. A student should have ownership of their intellectual property and should not be forced to sign it away.

Students work tireless hours to produce art projects, research papers and other assignments for school. These students should have a right to own their work. The school cannot attempt to reprimand a student for work produced as a part of their class. This creates a scene too close to the line of Communism and Nazism. When someone's product is stolen from them, they have a right to be frustrated. Mazur sacrificed his time to attend athletic events and missed time to work on homework in order to complete the yearbook and fulfill the duties of being a photographer. It's not right for school administration to take credit for that work by having the photographers sign over their creations.

However, some argue that Mazur should not have used the school's property to sell photos for profit. Flower Mound administration also stated in the case of Maruz that he violated the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act by posting photos of minors on his Flickr website. Although Maruz was found not violating FERPA, questions are raised over what constitutes a student owning their work. If a student uses the school's art supplies to produce a work, the school should still not claim ownership of it.

Texas High's policy on intellectual property states that a student shall retain all rights to work created as part of instruction or using District technology resources. This means that photography, yearbook, newspaper, art and English students own their works no matter what equipment is used unlike the tyranny that occurred in Lewisville.

Art department needs more strokes of approval

The halls of Texas High are filled with students a part of various likings. Theater, clubs, sports, dance, and, last but not least, art. The art department may not be the most popular group, but it is one of the most hardworking sectors at Texas High.

With this in mind, more recognition should be given towards the “artsy” students of our high school. Behind the scenes action in theater and other productions would not be possible without the creativeness branching from those who love to draw.

The work ethic put into the art projects displayed around school takes hours and even more determination. Perfectionists spend their time making their piece of work eligible for awards and competitions. Many students have entered their artwork and have gone as far as receiving an award at state.

A new class has emerged within the art department and has created a lot of interest throughout the school. Pottery is also a section that should be noticed more often, considering is it an unique class to take. Displays of the pieces created by the students bring forth details that would seem difficult to make within a few short hours. The time spent on their artwork pays off, but may not be seen by the rest of Texas High.

Texas High, standing as the largest school in Texarkana, Texas, and containing almost 2,000 students, has developed more than enough groups for students to choose from. Giving each club or sport the same recognition can be difficult, but

this could change if more people realized how hard the art students work. Art competitions should be held at Texas High to attract more people towards the department. Students who are proud of their artwork should not hesitate, but go to their teacher and ask to enter their piece into a nearby competition.

Pencil, paper, paint, or clay, the art department has helped many students branch out and discover what they truly enjoy to do on a daily basis. Whether it is sketching the view outside or molding a vase, these talented artists are a part of Texas High and should be more noticed rather than forgotten.

Editorial: Just a regular day

“This is not a blow off class,” a phrase frequently argued by many teachers. Their objective as the educator is to provide a path for success to every student by teaching them to integrate creative thinking and problem solving methods in order to achieve answers. While many students who attend either AP or DC classes would undoubtedly agree that their curriculum encourages critical thinking skills, the same cannot be said about those that attend regular, or as they are often called, easy classes.

While it can be argued that regular classes were designed initially to give students a less stressful path to a high school degree, there should be a standard set by the regular teachers, and if one is already in place, it is simply not being met or set too low.

When taking a test, the teacher is supposed to be evaluating a

student's understanding of the assigned material; however, they are not supposed to pause and give the students who do not pay attention a free answer. When in the middle of a discussion, a teacher should be unhindered and have everyone's attention. There should not be students shouting or dancing in the middle of the classroom.

Perhaps the true difference between regular classes and the advanced is the drive for students to want to succeed. AP students study for the AP test, DC students strive to gain the extra college credits, but what of the regular students who are content with simply passing the STARR test? A total transformation of the regular system is not necessary, but leaving things the way they are may be worse than the alternative.

If instead regular classes could offer some benefit for students who pass with a 90 grade point average, such as free ice cream at lunch, then maybe more initiative would be shown. Even doing something as simple as rewarding students with a few bonus points would help.

While it would be unfair to believe that every student who's not in an advanced class is lazy or does not try, it is true that a large population of regular students focus more on socializing than on learning.

One reason for this could be because regular teachers are more forgiving than advanced teachers. Advanced teachers must deal with the burden of cramming more lesson plans into smaller allotment of time due to the multiple tests that come with advanced classes. Whereas regular classes just have to take the standard tests. Because of this, most advanced teachers are stricter and make it more clear that insubordination will not be tolerated.

Whatever the case, TISD should implement a more challenging curriculum for their regular classes as a means to make

students have to focus on their studies. If nothing is done, the sophistication gap between regular and advanced classes will just continue to grow.

Sex-ed is the answer to rise in teen pregnancy rate

Every year there's more and more of them. Teens walking around, sporting their "baby bump." It's become a normal part of society. The rise in teen pregnancy has overtaken America, producing more birth complications, an increase in abortions and far too many young children in foster care. The problem is massive and can be traced straight back to the bases of American society. Even in today's open-minded era, the word sex is taboo in most conversations. That is, until you talk to a group of teenagers. Adults don't want to talk about it. Teenagers want to know about it. And that right there is the root of the pandemic. When humans reach a certain level of maturity, their bodies begin to change. However, this natural process is often looked at as something to hide, not discussed. Even parents are reluctant to tell their children what to expect with these changes. With everyone keeping quiet about the subject, the only way teens have to learn is through experience.

If they're not receiving the proper instruction at home, then it's the school's duty to step in and fill in the gaps. One perfect way to do this is by offering sex education classes.

Sex education is an acceptable way to tell students about the risks of unprotected sex. Most teenagers in our school have never been told about the different preventative measures. The

younger a person is, the more likely they are to have birth complications during the pregnancy. Teen mothers are more likely to produce children with mental or physical anomalies or have miscarriages. Three of every ten American teenager girls will get pregnant. However, the rate is on the decline. According to the Office of Adolescent Health, rates have dropped since 2011. This is generally credited with the increase in availability of contraceptives to the teenage population. In a sex education class, the students would be informed about birth control, and the importance of safe sex.

Sex-ed could also greatly reduce the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. The spread of STDs can be easily prevented with the use of condoms. With the stigma surrounding STDs, it's very difficult to start a discussion about them, especially with adolescents. With the rates rising as they are, it is vital to reach teens about the importance of practicing safe sex.

Opponents normally push for a policy of abstinence, however, in today's changing world that is becoming more and more impossible. The world that teens inhabit is hypersexualized. TV glamorizes the act and the social stigma surrounding it only leads teens to crave trying it if only for the fact they know they shouldn't. Sex education could shed light on the reality of sex and show teens that it isn't some mysterious ritual or rite of passage into adulthood.

Sex education is an important step in changing the epidemic of teen pregnancy and the rise in STDs. Schools should implement a sex-ed policy requiring all high school age students to take it. The class would be informative for teens and answer their questions about the act itself and even contraceptives. If every school would enact a sex education curriculum, it could help solve the massive problem in our society.

source: Office of Adolescent Health
<http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-health-topics/reproducti>

ve-health/teen-pregnancy/trends.html