



# THE SNEWSPAPER

BERNICE MACNAUGHTON HIGH SCHOOL - MONCTON NEW BRUNSWICK - MARCH 2026

## WINTER OLYMPICS AT BMHS



A theatre full of Highlanders anxiously watching speedskating

By: Anastasiia Kutsurenko

As the winter Olympics come to an end, opinions about them are just beginning. The Olympics are very competitive for participants and fans, yet not everyone keeps up with the scores and performances. Some might be living under a rock when it comes to the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milano Cortino; while some didn't even know the location of the games, some might have been so invested that they felt like they were in Italy.

It's the same situation when it comes to our Highlanders. Of course, after the school's thoughtful assembly in support of Courtney Sarault, it's very unlikely that some still don't have an opinion on the Olympics, but what did everyone think before the gathering in the auditorium? Friday at lunch (before the assembly), various students shared their opinions on the sports, athletes, and seasonal preferences of Olympics.

When questioned about sports that they didn't care for before the Olympics this year, but have since changed their minds, these friends sitting at lunch together had diverging answers. Grade 12 student Allison Wasson replied: "I took a keen interest in mono-bobsledding these Olympics."

Annabelle Arsenault added: "I like how intense the curling got; I got really into it. It felt like a hockey game."

Alexandria Butland, on the other hand, said: "I don't care about it at all." Which is perfectly fine too, it isn't every-

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## BEYOND THE BELL: TEACHERS TURN PASSION INTO PURPOSE!

By: Lilli Celestine

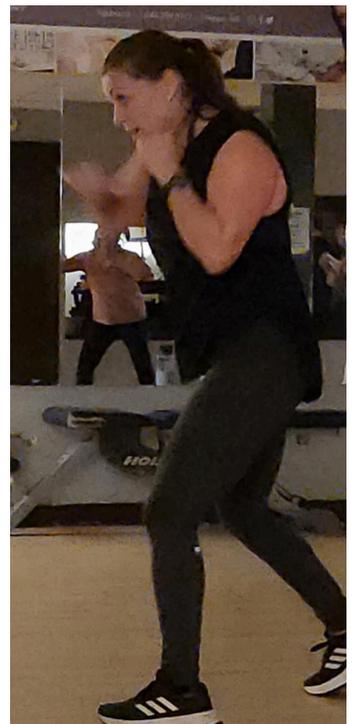
After the final bell rings, teachers don't slow down, instead they build, coach, create, and inspire. While students head home for the day, several staff members step into roles found far beyond the classroom. Behind lesson plans and report cards, these teachers are pursuing something more than a side job, they are pursuing passion.

For Mrs. Julie Verzilli, that passion comes in the form of event decorating. For nearly twenty years, she has transformed spaces for weddings, birthday parties, school events, and even prom. While larger events are sometimes paid, much of her work spreads through word of mouth, rather than advertisements.

"I don't have any business cards," she explained. "I've just created a reputation for myself, leaving people happy."

Working within different budgets, she says, challenges her creativity rather than limiting it. More importantly, she values the control she has over her projects and workload. Decorating allows her to express herself in a way that feels both artistic and fulfilling beyond the classroom.

Another familiar face within the school community once balanced teaching with running a downtown hostel for ten years. Inspired by a three-week hostel journey in Europe, Mrs. Monique Vautour and her husband opened one in a heritage home, intentionally located near key areas of the city so



Ms. Pellerin Cormier teaches cardio kickboxing three times a week for fun and some exercise.

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# RIVALRIES: BMHS VERSUS HTHS



A Highlander battles a Trojan on the football turf  
(photo credit: Maggie LeClair)

By: Peter Du

Every semester, students at Bernice MacNaughton High School and Harrison Trimble High School trade more than just scores on a scoreboard. The two schools, located in Moncton, New Brunswick, have faced off not only in various sports, but academically as well. For every spirit game between the two schools, the stands are loud and packed.

Students from both schools offered their thoughts on the rival school, the relationship between the two schools, and their thoughts on their own school.

Grade 11 BMHS student, Jacob Michaud, when asked about his thoughts on Harrison Trimble High School, said: "My opinion on Harrison Trimble is that they don't have as good of a community as BMHS. Bernice MacNaughton is a smaller school with fewer people, which makes people be closer together." When asked about his thoughts on BMHS, Michaud said: "I love this school. The people here are cool and we have cool teachers!"

Another grade 11 student at Bernice MacNaughton High School, Terra Kwan, gave her thoughts on the matter as well. She said, "I think Trimble definitely has good school spirit. I remember last year, for track and field, they had student council and a bunch of other people there to support. They were very loud, definitely the loudest. They were all very supportive of each other."

Kwan also said, nonetheless, many positive things about Bernice MacNaughton. When asked about her own school, Kwan said: "But I think we are also smaller, right? I think that makes us closer to each other, you know, like a family. I think we're great, we have great staff and students, and most importantly, we are Highlanders. Highlanders will always be better than the Trojans."

Former Bernice MacNaughton High School student, Paul Huynh said: "I think the two schools being located so near each other is what created this rivalry. People went to the same middle schools but were separated when high school came around, so many friends want to compete against each other. Trimble is in a less good area, which makes their environment more dangerous. Trimble might have more people, but the Highlanders are kinder, smarter, and have pride in their school. BMHS also has Olympian, Courtney Sarault, and they sure don't!"

The Bernice MacNaughton Highlanders seem convinced that their school is the better of the two. They show a lot of pride for their tight-knit community and spirit. Now, let's see what a student at Harrison Trimble High School has to say.

Regarding rivalry, grade 11 HTHS student, Sully Martin, said: "Trimble and BMHS have always competed, because of our close proximity and similar nature we've been rivals for years. Back in the day, it was Trimble against Moncton High, but I think the rivalry has shifted. It's known that Harrison Trimble has unmatched school spirit, we have a pride in our school community that can't be beat. We excel in sporting events, with lots of our teams having back to back championship wins. Personally, I've always viewed Bernice MacNaughton as a more academic school, with an involved student council. As a biased Trimble student, I have to say Trimble is on top, like I said, Trimble spirit and pride can't be beat!"

Harrison Trimble seems to show a lot of school spirit and pride as well. Like Bernice MacNaughton students, Martin believes that his school is superior to others.

The Bernice MacNaughton Highlanders and the Harrison Trimble Trojans have battled for years. Each student has their own bias and is proud of their own school's achievements.

The fact is, school pride is valuable for each school: it creates school spirit and bonds students together; no school can effectively prove that they are the *best* school. Rivalries build competition, which builds communities.

# GIRLS' RUGBY



By: Justice MacLean

The girl's rugby season is starting up for our Highlanders; this marks an exciting time of year for everyone, but specifically the girls.

Rugby is one of the fastest growing sports for girls worldwide, highlighted by big events, such as the Olympics and the Rugby World Cup. Bringing this sport to BMHS opens doors for their future pathways, and some post-secondary pathways offer scholarships for the players. It also allows the players to build confidence for themselves and teaches them how to lean on their teammates' shoulders for support that they would need during a game.

In short, building teamwork skills needed for future workplaces is important.

Sara MacLean said: "Rugby is important for young girls to learn teamwork and to be more involved."

Unlike sports that specialize in experience early on in life, rugby allows the players to learn whenever they want, whether it be at age 10, 15, or even 20, they can learn at any given time.

Rugby also welcomes all sizes into the sport, so big or small, you can make a difference. Grade 10 student Sophie Carrier said: "It's really cool and I love that it's such a big sport, not just at our school but internationally. I think it's a great way to stay active and connect with people while staying competitive."

Rugby is more than just another sport, it represents prog-

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# \$5 VS \$500 DATE NIGHT: DO EXPENSIVE DATES REALLY MATTER?

By: Clara Nguyen

With Valentine's Day recently passed, everyone's Instagram page surely was full of roses and fancy dinners. That brought up the topic of the day: Does a meal at The Keg mean more than the meal at McDonalds?

Some people like the idea of the high-budget, like \$500, date: dressing up and going somewhere nice, taking aesthetic pictures for social media with your special person to make meaningful memories usually are the most common thing to do during these special occasions.

Ryver Calidguid, grade 11 student, said: "I'd like a fancy dinner because it makes me feel special to that person, and I could take fire pictures for my story."

Not everyone can afford hundreds of dollars just for a meal; they might prefer real connections, because sometimes when the focus is on planning and paying, the connections between the two might get lost.

Sophia Nguyen, grade 9 student, complained: "I went to Baton Rouge once, and the only thing we worried about was how expensive the bill would turn out and how we should act in a fancy restaurant. I did not have a chance to get to know him."

On the other hand, getting a 5\$ Happy Meal and driving around is where real connection starts, less pressure and more space to open yourselves.

"I love 'Dons, 'Dons are where all relationships started, haha," Tom Guo said.

Fancy dinner might be a perfect date for some couples but for students- budget does matter a lot, the point of date is to find a person that you can enjoy being with and price tags shouldn't decide whether a date is "good" or not.

At the end of the day, what matters is: Can you talk about random stuff for hours? Do you feel relaxed?



# COURSE SELECTIONS: IS IT STRESSFUL OR A RELIEF?

By: **Chloe Blanchard**

Course selections for the 2026-2027 school year are underway, and, as always, it is labeled as nothing short of pure chaos.

Months of preparation, Course Fairs, and exposure to post-secondary opportunities have brought a reassurance to teachers prior to the long-awaited process, yet it was quickly discovered that the haywire homeroom scenario is ultimately inevitable.

All aspects considered, choosing courses is incredibly difficult, especially when dealing with indecisive teenagers who are entirely unsure about their future and what it entails.

This journalist has experienced first-hand what it is like to sit in a room filled with anxious nerves and unanswered questions. Students often find themselves under the assumption that an English teacher should know the entire course description of Physics 120, and whether there are three unit tests, rather than four.

Course selection is just as overwhelming for teachers as for students, who are left doubting their decisions.

BMHS student, Reagan Howley, when asked about her experience with the infinite questions that her fellow classmates ask, and don't ever seem to get the answer to, said: "Students expect teachers, who don't teach a specific course, to know exactly what happens in that class. It makes for a very busy and stressful atmosphere in a short timeframe."

Many people suggest a different selection process, often simply concluding that changing the execution of a school-wide event for over 1000 students is a piece of cake. The complaints vary from course selection happens too early in the school year, that more time is required for adequate choices, and that students are often too unsure about their future to decide what courses to take.

Due to the under-representation of future pathways, most high-school students don't realize that certain courses are required to get into specific university programs.

BMHS Teacher, Mr. Cory LeBlanc, when asked about his thoughts on the process and how his homeroom students react, said: "As a teacher, I think course selection can be very confusing, and students are led to feel a sudden pressure to pick the correct courses. Due to their lack of confidence, they confide in us teachers, and so we feel a lot of pressure to help them make the right choice. I'm not sure if there's any other way to organize the course selection process. It

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## Pathways to Graduation for **Essential Skills Achievement Pathway - Workplace Entry**

Grade 9 (no credits)*	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
ELA 9	At least 1 course from ELA 10 Compulsory List	At least 1 course from ELA 11 Compulsory List	ELA 12
FI Mathematics 9	Geometry, Measurement, and Finance 10	Financial and Workplace Mathematics 110	NBCC Skilled Trades and Work-Ready Math 120
FI Social Studies 9	Civics	Culinary Technology 110	Culinary Technology 110 (Co-op placement)
FI Science 9	Physical Education 10	Culinary Technology 120	Culinary Technology 120 (Co-op placement)
FI Art 9	Intro to Skilled Trades 110	Hospitality and Tourism 110	Human Services 110
Music 9	Career Pathway Design	Outdoor Education 110	Essential Skills Achievement Pathway - Workplace Entry 400-Hour Work Placement
FI Physical Education 9	PIF 10	Essential Skills Achievement Pathway - Foundational Learning	
Personal Wellness 9	Introductory Mi'kmaw 110	Essential Skills Achievement Pathway - Workplace Entry - Workplace Readiness	
Technology 9	Essential Skills Achievement Pathway - Foundational Learning		

Students have many choices and pathways to choose from

# ARE BMHS STUDENTS GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP?

By: **Ludi Choi**

High school and university students report struggling to get enough sleep during the school week, due to heavy workloads and busy schedules, raising concerns about how fatigue affects learning and well-being.

Numerous students come to school already feeling exhausted. In classrooms, it's common to see a student resting their head on their desk, constantly yawning during the lesson, or someone staring blankly at a worksheet, without doing the work.

Many high school students say getting enough sleep during the school week feels almost impossible. Between homework, extracurricular activities, such as sports, part-time jobs, and screen time, teens often sacrifice rest in order to keep up with their responsibilities.

Grade 9 student Rubi Choi says sleep is one of the first things she gives up when work piles up. "I usually stay up until midnight finishing assignments. By the time I wake up,

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# LUCKY CHARMS AND RITUALS: HOW SUPERSTITIONS SHAPE ATHLETES AT BMHS

By: Isabelle Boudreau

Coaches at Bernice MacNaughton High School emphasize discipline, teamwork, and preparation, yet many quietly rely on personal superstitions before stepping into action.

For many student athletes, sports are one of the few things where they can let go of their troubles. Games and practices provide a moment away from all the homework, deadlines, and teenage pressures. No matter where they are, some athletes hold onto rituals they believe bring them success. This raises the question of how common superstitions are and what student athletes truly think about them.

"I think they are good, they don't matter physically but do affect performance because mentality is important when going into a competition of any kind or even when training," says grade 12 student Elizabeth Butland, who is involved in the BMHS cross-country and track teams.

"If it gets you in the right state of mind and it's not harmful, then there is nothing wrong with them," Butland continues.

With more than seven different kinds of sports being offered at Bernice MacNaughton, many students are able to find a specific sport they love and stick with it throughout high school. During that time, athletes develop superstitions that can follow them even past their high school years.

Marc Boudreau, former Highlander and current second-year student at the University of New Brunswick, discusses just how deep some of his rituals go. Even after switching from high school football to the university's team, his superstitions have stayed with him. "While I'm not usually a superstitious guy, I do have one shirt that I started wearing under my jersey in my last year of high school, I wore it for all five of my spring and fall seasons until retiring it at the end of last season," says Boudreau. It is safe to say that the ritual does not die until the shirt does.

When asked how she feels about athletic superstitions, as both a coach and athlete in gymnastics and varsity girls volleyball, grad student Annabelle Arsenault replied, "My athletic superstitions vary on the sport I'm playing: for gymnastics I have a specific block of chalk I bring to every competition and in volleyball, my jersey number has to be an uneven number."

When it comes to coaching, Arsenault adds, "I don't have specific rituals with the kids, but I definitely encourage the kids with superstitions to continue to do them." Balancing

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## FAST FOOD WHAT IS THE GO-TO FOR HIGHLANDERS

By: Mason LeBlanc

When hunger hits and there's no time to cook, BMHS staff and students head straight to their favorite fast food spot, and they know exactly what they are ordering.

BMHS staff member Mrs. Rhonda Helgeson said her go-to spot was Wendy's where she orders her regular meal - a Dave's Classic Cheeseburger with bacon with no pickles or onions. When asked why Wendy's and the Dave's Classic were her go-tos, Helgeson said: "Ahhhh... it's just good, it tastes fresh, unlike Burger King." For Helgeson, it's all about the crispy bacon and fresh flavor.

Like Helgeson, staff member Mr. Scott Cunningham also prefers Wendy's over other fast food places. Cunningham orders a Dave's double with the works when he needs a quick meal and said, "It's quick, it's tasty and I can eat it and not feel bad, unlike when I eat McDonalds."

Tre Grening, a BMHS student, says his go-to is McDonald's. He prefers to order a Big Mac combo with habanero sauce.

When asked why McDonald's, Grening kept his reason simple: "Because it is good and it fills me," he said.



## OLYMPICS (CONT)

one's cup of tea.

When asked about their favorite athlete, former figure skater and a "big fan" of the sport, grade 11 student Eva McClean answered: "Piper Gillies is my favorite athlete these winter Olympics. She's an Olympic ice skater and I'm drawn to her because she's a very brave person. She survived ovarian cancer, she survived the loss of her mom, she's a very resilient athlete, and a great performer also. If I could say one sentence directly to her it would be: Keep advocating for what you believe in." McClean also mentioned that she prefers winter Olympics over summer because of figure skating.

A different perspective about the season of Olympics came from Hallie Rossignol, a grade 11 student: "I like summer Olympics because I understand the sports, like volleyball, as to where winter Olympics, I don't really know how to play any of the sports - like, I've never gone skiing." When asked about the pressure the athletes endure during the Olympics, she added: "I think the Olympic teams are under a minimal amount of pressure, but it's all about their head space and their options before competing."

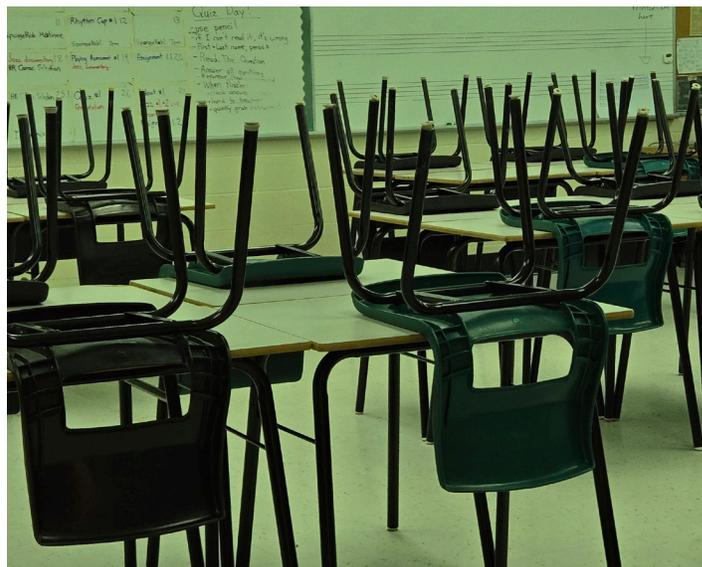
BMHS teacher, Mrs. Melanie Melanson, shared another opinion about the pressure on the Olympians. She answered the question with a question: "Under too much, or under a lot? I don't know about too much, I think they train for that, and their whole lives prepare them for that. Preparation wise, you can prepare. They are under an immense amount of pressure."

Imagine you have a goal that you have four years to work towards, and then it all comes down to one moment when you're racing and everything needs to be perfect. It's crazy, yeah for sure, that's why it's so impressive when they do it.

Last year, I had an athlete that was on a four-year training cycle because she was looking at making the Olympic team and she ended up making the team, but the cycle she was in was in 2020 and then COVID blew up. It's a lot, but we try and find competitions leading up to it that will get you in that space. Anyways, I'm always just really impressed."

When asked about memorable moments during these Olympics, Melanson's response was: "I'm heartbroken with the women's hockey, how they lost in overtime - that was devastating. But then, in a happy way, it was really cool that we gathered as staff on Wednesday in the Library to watch Courtney's race, and it's kind of fun to be altogether and see it, so I'll remember that because we can joke about it later."

While the Olympic Games are sadly at an end, they entertained everyone so well, and they united our Highlanders for a bit.



## FAVORITE CLASSES & TEACHERS AT BMHS:

By: Veruka Ripley Ruhnke

**B**ernice Macnaughton High School offers a variety of classes for students to choose from. Students may choose their favorite classes based on the way the teacher teaches, the subject, or the workload.

Grade 10 student Grace Woodford said: "My favorite class is Science, since I really like learning about science in general. I love most of the teachers that teach it, and it's something I want to look into when I'm older."

Grade 10 student Mason Louie suggested: "I really like Outdoor Education because it is very fun to do outside of the school and do fun activities."

Parker Allen, a grade 11 student, said: "My favorite class is Gym and that's because you get to move around and it's not as mentally stimulating as classes like Pre-Calc."

For some students, it may be because of the teacher. Grade 10 student Ava Cormier said: "I really liked Biology because I liked my teacher Mr. (Cory) LeBlanc because he taught well and it was a very good class to take."

Grade 10 student Addison Clarke stated: "My favorite class is ELA Extended because I really like Mrs. (Emilee) Layden and I love how much freedom we get in our work." She then went added: "Being able to choose my topics and how I work makes school a lot more enjoyable and stresses me out a lot less. I'm always willing to do my assignments and turn them in on time if it is something I enjoy."

According to Grade 10 student Isabelle Michaud: "My favorite class is Drama with Mr. (Jeff) Lloyd because he is a very nice person and the class is fun because you get to make

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# VAPING IN OUR BATHROOMS - AN ONGOING PROBLEM

By Anastasiia Balycheva

Students have complained about not being able to use the foyer bathrooms freely during breaks, due to dozens of people vaping there.

This has been being a growing problem since around 2019, when student vaping became popular. Smoking has existed for centuries, which has just transformed, now that new technology has come out. The activity is popular because vapes have variety of flavors, like fruit, candy, or menthol, and it's easy to use.

Addicted teens need to get access to their nicotine source quite frequently, where the "high traffic" in the bathrooms problem comes from.

BMHS student, Oscar Marino, stated his opinion: "I feel like this affects me in a way that makes me not want to go to the bathroom, just because I know there will be a lot of guys vaping, which I don't think is appropriate to do in the bathroom, so going to the bathroom becomes uncomfortable."

This problem affects teachers, staff, and students, due to a high health risk, and the illegality of it. Music teacher, Mrs. Rebecca Moore, when asked about her opinion on it, said: "It concerns me when Highlanders don't take care of themselves. It can negatively influence students, particularly younger students. Let's all do our best to positively influence each other."

Speaking of illegality, BMHS has signs next to the outside door to inform that smoking and vaping on school grounds isn't permitted.

Student Beatrice Paguia says: "People who do it in school should just go outside and do it."

Not only that it affects the smoker's health, it affects their surroundings. Sophie Carrier stated her displeasure: "Some people can get headaches from the smoke."

It has been confirmed by many BMHS students that they've experienced headaches after being surrounded by smoke. Carrier later continued: "biologically, it affects your brain chemistry."

According to Health Canada data (the 2023-2024 Canadian Student Alcohol and Drugs Survey) approximately 20% of high school students vape, and the highest percentage of users is grade 12 (27.4%). Roughly 12% of highschoolers vape daily. Even though it's illegal, almost half of the students say it's "pretty easy" to get one, through friends.

The truth is - the majority of addicted people don't want to be addicted, and most likely they haven't chosen that path. Their circumstances affected their choices. The path to help this problem is not patrolling the bathrooms and making the rules stricter; instead, it's by offering help to the students and offering support from teachers and councillors.



Despite the school's best efforts, vaping in our bathrooms is a very real problem at BMHS.

## SAME GAME, DIFFERENT CROWDS

By Haley Patterson

In many high schools, including BMHS, boys' hockey games often attract larger crowds than girls' games.

The boys' hockey program has been established for many years, allowing it to build strong rivalries throughout the city. In contrast, the girls' hockey program has struggled in recent years to consistently find enough players to form a team, which has impacted both its popularity and the development of a steady fan base.

Because the boys' team has existed longer, it has had more time to build school spirit and gain community recognition.

Another contributing factor is scheduling and promotion. Boys' games are often advertised more heavily through school announcements, social media, and word of mouth.

One BMHS boys' hockey player, Aiden Gaudet, stated: "Hitting in boys' hockey brings more fans into the rink and elevates rivalries."

This suggests that physicality and in-game excitement help drive fan attendance. Avery Tucker, from the girls' hockey team, added: "It is talked about more and people feel it's better hockey, making it more fun to watch," showing that *perception* plays a major role in support. Similarly, BMHS girls' hockey player Holly Banks stated: "It is rougher and

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## BEYOND THE BELL (CONT)

newcomers, usually without cars, could easily access what they needed.

Throughout its existence, the hostel welcomed guests from all over the world, including international students, adjusting to life in Canada. Some encounters were unforgettable.

"I met royalty from England who were on their honeymoon and wanted to avoid the public," Vautour shared. "And two gentlemen who dipped a bottle in the Pacific Ocean and walked every step of the way to Newfoundland."

Balancing teaching with this full-time job was demanding, but she found the two roles complemented each other nicely.

Creativity is also a central theme to a well-known supply teacher who spends her summers creating and selling handmade art. Trained as an art teacher, Ms. Briggs designs themed pieces that connect with personal memories. This past summer's theme, "Making Memories," featured magnets crafted from real Atlantic seashells. While art is a significant passion, she continues to supply teach because of the joy it brings.

"If it was possible to make a full-time living off art, I would, but I would really miss supply teaching."

Working as a supply teacher relieves much of the pressure that comes with full-time marking and testing, allowing her to instead focus on connection and creativity in the classroom.

For Mrs. Tammy Pellerin Cormier, passion shows up through movement and motivation. She teaches cardio kickboxing and bootcamp classes at a local gym, a path that began after purchasing a boxing gym when her daughter developed an interest in the sport. Coaching allows her to inspire confidence and strength in others, much like she does at school.

"I like inspiring people and getting people to move and feel good about themselves," Pellerin added. "That feeling you get when you know you're helping people."

While these teachers shared their stories, they are not alone. Other staff members express their creativity and skills; some, through professional cookie design, private therapy practices, and others, through karaoke hosting, to name a few. Balancing two jobs can bring stress, but each teacher interviewed described fulfilment rather than frustration.

As Mrs. Pellerin put it, offering advice that applies well beyond fitness classes:

"Don't be afraid to try. If you have a passion for something, you are able to project it. It will inspire, even yourself. Most important is do it when you don't feel like it."

## COURSE SELECTIONS (CONT)

may just be an inherently overwhelming task that we have to accomplish as a school."

Howley and Leblanc both expressed their concerns regarding students' nerves on Selection Day, but indicated that there is no clear way to reorganize this process. After all, many students report feeling a sudden relief after finishing their schedule choices. They know their classes for next year, months in advance, and can rely heavily on their remarkable Guidance Office and Resource Department if there are any complications.

Grade 11 student Juliet Lockhart attested to the excitement that many students feel, post-selection, saying: "You could say that it's very exciting and beneficial for our futures. Although some students get nervous, it's interesting to see the variety of courses we offer here at BMHS, and use that to spark interest in our futures."

Course selection is a hugely awaited process that students think about months in advance. There's constant speculation as to whether the courses chosen are the ones they truly want, and the repeated back-and-forth can pull homeroom teachers in every direction.

There is a bright side to this process, because after all, it shapes what students learn and their potential futures. Homeroom teachers are stuck with the same students for all four years of their high school journey. The fact that teachers can witness their growth every year with the courses they've chosen is an indication that their constant back and forth debates on whether taking Pre Calc A and B in the same semester is truly worth it, has made them the student they are today.

## SAME GAME (CONT)

faster."

In conclusion, these opinions suggest that many spectators seek maximum entertainment from hockey, which some believe boys' hockey provides. The rapid growth and increasing excitement surrounding girls' hockey at a national level, however, should not be overlooked, as it deserves equal recognition and support.



**BMHS HIGHLANDERS**  
**2025/2026**



# PLAYING FAVORITES:

## GENDER BIAS AND INEQUALITY IN SCHOOL SPORTS



Photo credit: StuGov

By: **Lucy Kawamura**

**B**MHS shows favoritism towards boys' sports teams, with unequal recognition and support, according to many girls.

Despite progress in promoting diversity and equality at BMHS, gender differences still exist in our school sports programs. Both girls' and boys' teams receive recognition at BMHS, yet boys' teams often receive more consistent acknowledgements, and girls' sports teams are more likely to get overlooked. This imbalance sends a strong message about which athletes' achievements are valued more.

Grade 10 students RYANNE HOPPER and MACKENZIE BANISTER said: "More people go to boys' football games than any of the girls' games."

They added they've been to football games where the stands are filled with roaring cheers and rocking green and white with school spirit; then, they go to a girls' soccer game and the stands... crickets.

Football, a widely hyped sport, and girls' soccer, where there's a lack of interest, may not be the best comparison, but a sport that is more comparable for boys and girls, like rugby, also faces this same issue.

Alexa Reid, grade 12 student, has played on the girls' rugby team since her grade 9 year. She states: "I find we just don't get enough recognition," and, "I find no one really cares to try and fix it."

She said two years ago in the yearbook there was a page for girls' and guys' rugby, but the girls had almost no pictures on the page; it was mostly the boys photos. They had one picture of the girls rugby that was outdated and wasn't the actual team from that season.

Many girls have already noticed this and wonder if there will ever be a change. It's not just the girls; the boys have

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## SLEEP (CONT)

"I'm already tired," she says.

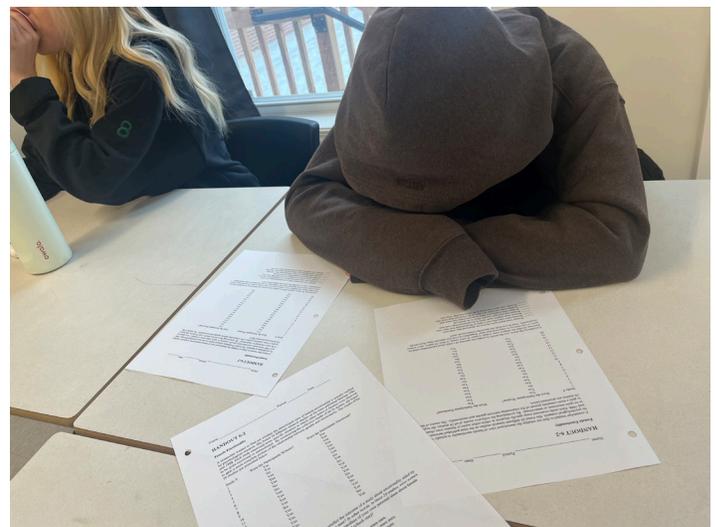
Like many students, Choi admits that balancing school and personal time makes it hard to maintain a healthy sleep schedule. Some university students feel the same way.

York University student Siwon Wu from often feels very tired and fatigued when attending class and lectures, but he also said something interesting about how it depends on the financial situation of an individual. Siwon said, "I feel like if the student came from an upper-class family, where the student did not have to worry about finances and can focus on school, that student would have the time to get enough rest and sleep for the next day."

Siwon states that since he has to balance school and work, he does not have enough time to complete all of his school work and assignments while also having a job, to get a full night's rest. However, not all students feel the same pressure.

Lua Choi, grade 11 student, believes time management plays an important role. "If I start my homework earlier and stay off my phone, I can usually get around seven or eight hours, or even more," she explains. Choi says that planning ahead and staying off her phone at night has helped her to keep a healthier sleep schedule allowing her to feel more rested and focused in class.

While experiences could vary, it's clear that sleep is an ongoing challenge for many teens. As academic workloads and responsibilities increase, students may need to start thinking about how they could balance productivity and rest.



Students often lose the battle with sleep during the school day

## SUPERSTITIONS (CON'T)

personal superstitions with the professionalism of coaching is a crucial factor in creating a positive athletic environment.

Whether it is a lucky shirt or a block of chalk, athletic superstitions may not guarantee a better performance, but they can theoretically improve the athlete's performance.

They help give the athlete self-confidence and focus. For athletes at Bernice MacNaughton High School, these superstitions are not just mere quirks; they are part of the mindset and heart of the game.

## GENERATIVE AI: KNOW THE DIFFERENCE!

By: Landyn McCleary

People see AI as a tool to create and have fun with, and many see it as the end of creativity humanity, but what about how the popularity of generative AI in the recent years has made people *generalize the concept* of Artificial Intelligence and reduced it down to just generative AI.

When people were asked "what's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the term AI," there were a variety of responses.

The first person asked was Sophia Harris, who said: "I think of art dying, because AI is stealing from the beautiful minds of creative people." This opinion is describing how generative AI compiles information and images sourced and made by people, to create text, image, or audio responses.

Another interviewee, Finn Richard, who was asked the same question, stated: "I think of those AI videos on TikTok," referring to the AI generated images and often videos that get posted online every day.

Hayden Ward had a different response: "Well, it depends on the context." When asked to elaborate on his statement, Ward says: "Because there's different uses, like coding and algorithm is more coding AI to do a certain task, but Generative AI creates new images and not doing certain tasks." Ward explores the idea of "AI" not just being a strictly generative tool.

When you consider these opinions, all mention generative AI, because it's a big current topic, How popular and controversial Generative AI has become; it's watered down the meaning of what Artificial Intelligence really is.

Most common AI in the world is reactive, which reacts from being signaled to do something and is coded and pre-defined by the creator and doesn't generate anything new.

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## PLAYING FAVORITES (CON'T)

said they noticed it too, but since they're the ones getting all the glory, why would they want any change?

Hayden Tran, player on the boys' soccer team said: "I think it's pretty obvious: guys sports teams are treated better than girls, but I don't know what the root reason behind that is."

Although some guys notice it and don't know why it happens, other guys do have opinions on it. BMHS football players Isreal Amosson and Joash Chavit remarked: "I agree that boys get favorited and more support in sports, but that's because guys are better at sports."

Some adolescent males tend to think girls' sports aren't as important because they just "aren't as good;" however, this belief may be influenced by larger social patterns that extend beyond just one school.

Normally, female athletes face significantly lower pay, fewer opportunities, and less media coverage, compared to men. Because boys' teams are often more visible and promoted, it can make it seem like they are better, even if that difference comes from having more resources and support. Society has made it that guys are better at sports, which can lead people to value boys' athletics more highly.

As a result, some young athletes may grow up thinking the attention they receive is because of their skills and athletic ability without considering how history and social expectations play a role.

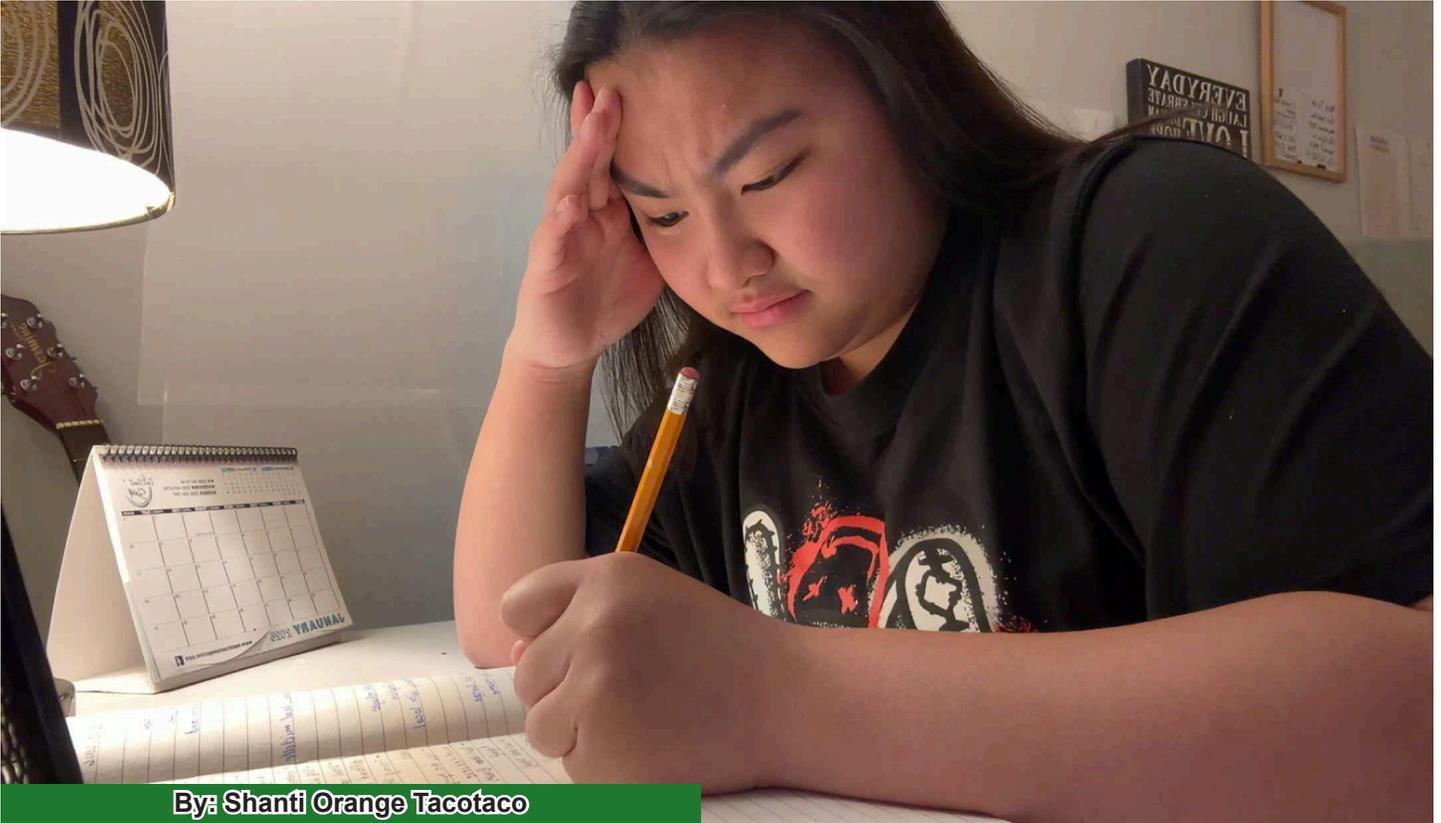
Grade 10 student Aden Lee Wolfe said: "I agree that boys get favorited and have more support in sports but also sometimes it's deserved, like with the girls' and boys' soccer team. It's a lot less interesting watching the girls since they aren't as good as guys."

The boys' football team is probably one of the more popular sports at BMHS, and with that popularity comes more expectation to be posted and for Student Government to come, which then boosts publicity. Drawing a bigger crowd

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# BALANCING PASSION AND DEADLINES: HOW STUDENTS CAN AVOID BURNOUT



By: Shanti Orange Tacofaco

**A**t what point did your dreams start to feel like burdens?

As the semester progresses, students find themselves constantly pouring their time into doing assignments, trying to submit them before the deadlines, and catching-up on extracurricular activities. They rarely have enough time to do the things that they love. For some, what started as a clean slate slowly began to feel crowded, and the excitement and dedication that was once promised faded under the weight of expectations.

“When it comes to burnout, one can experience it for many reasons. Firstly it’s caused by excessive workload, a lack between work and life, or exhaustion from something mental, physical or emotional. I always say that one can only sustain high levels of stress for so long before they crash which is a reason we need to pay particular attention to signs of potential burnout. Signs such as fatigue, negativity, when you can’t perform as well as you normally can, headaches, loss of appetite or lack of sleep.” This is according to BMHS counselor, Mrs. Lindsay Dominie.

Ms. Emilee Layden added that: “Tears and attendance problems can be signs of burnout. It really depends on the person, and people-pleasing often leads to burnout, so the signs may be masked until the breaking point. For the per-

son themselves, sleep deprivation and feelings of constant debilitating anxiety are the alarm bells.”

In an effort to sustain academic momentum and preserve mental well-being, “I think self-advocacy, counselling and finding a safe community of support are good ways to address the situation. Reducing course load and finding healthy strategies and habits are good measures to take to get things back in control.” Ms. Layden urged.

In addition, setting boundaries by saying “NO” to extra projects or doing your friends homework, having a proper time management, aiming for reasonable and achievable goals, avoiding procrastination, and combating laziness can enhance the productivity and prevent exhaustion among students.

Francheska Ondo, grade 12 student, shared that: “To avoid burnout, I go to the gym and do some workouts, I take some deep breaths to calm myself down. And to combat depression, I pray to God. My advice to my fellow Highlanders who have experienced a lot of things in their life, just take time to take deep breaths and ask yourself about how many good things you have done in your life. It’s okay to cry sometimes, but always remember that you have purpose in this life and always take a break when you need to, but do *not* quit.”

## FAV TEACHERS (CONT)

scenes and hang out with your friends, it is also a good way to get out of your comfort zone.”

At BMHS, there is a large assortment of classes to choose from, with new ones being added annually.

So, whether someone is interested in science, the arts, history, writing, or other genres of subjects, there is bound to be something for everyone.

## GIRLS' RUGBY (CONT)

ress, equality, and opportunity, sending a much-needed message that female athletes do not all look the same, act the same, or communicate the same.

It creates a legacy for players to compete, to grow, to learn, without the worry of “fitting in” to the team.

Grade 10 student Ryleigh Everette said: “Women’s rugby proves girls do not have to be quiet or delicate to belong in sports; it breaks stereotypes. It looks like an opportunity where girls can push themselves and support each other at the same time.”

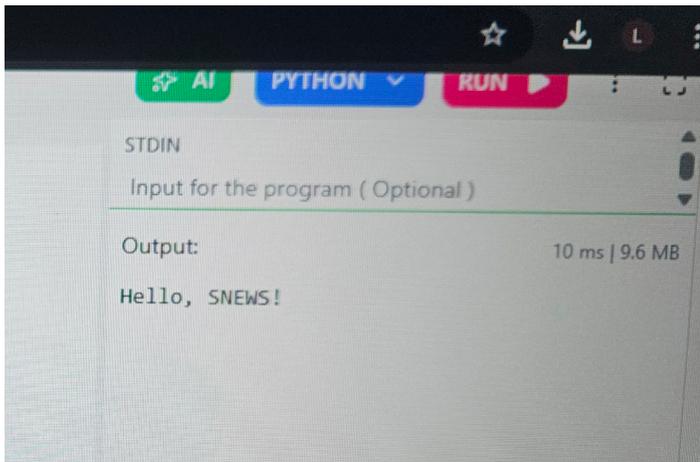
## GENERATIVE (CONT)

Non-generative AI would include being recommended certain ads based on activity, autocorrect, spell check, predictions such as weather, like the half day BMHS got from the weather predictions on the 23rd.

To summarize, AI isn’t just a program to create images and help you with homework; it’s used day to day and is needed for many programs and businesses to operate properly.

There's a wide spectrum of AI models that can sserve a range of tasks, from snow day predictions to X-rayed images being analyzed for abnormalities at hospitals.

So, keep in mind that not all AI is *generative*; that's just the most popularized one.



Artificial intelligence is often oversimplified and misunderstood

## PLAYING FAVORITES (CONT)

means more people show up to cheer and watch the game together and, of course, it makes the whole experience more enjoyable and entertaining.

Brooke Boone, grade 10 student who played on the girls’ soccer team, said: “We get the same stinky jerseys every year and nothing else. No shorts not even socks, while the football team gets all this funding and new equipment.”

Although this is true, reflecting on Wolfe's previous statement, the football games cost money to attend, and those funds help them get newer athletic necessities.

Haylee Willams, another grade 10 student from the soccer team, added: “We are definitely not a priority. I find there’s a lot of inequality from the amount of time we get on the field. From my experience the football team sometimes would run their practices past their scheduled time, while teams from other schools were waiting to warm up, and it wasn’t just for soccer; I’ve heard this about field hockey too.”

Olivia Keenan, grade 10 field hockey player, said that when they shared the field with boys’ football for practices, “They had most of the field and sometimes our practices would get cancelled because their team needed the full field.”

It seems that dominant male sports are more prioritized, even if it’s just a practice, compared to a game for a “weaker” girls’ sport.

In terms of fairness, it’s not just unfair for the girls playing on teams representing BMHS, but also other girls’ sports teams from visiting schools. It puts BMHS’s reputation for being an inclusive and equitable school in harm's way.

Even if it’s the skill level that matters, and some girls’ teams may lose a lot of games per season, some of the more dominant boys’ sports teams may not have success in a season either, yet they still get more privileges, compared to female athletes.

Many of the girls’ teams at BMHS *do* succeed, yet girls find they lack acknowledgement for their success and think the school would rather talk about the boys’ success, especially on the announcements.

Many girls at BMHS just want to be taken seriously in sports, have equal opportunities to play the sport they love, and be more noticed. If school sports continue like this, the inequalities will continue further in life and in the future.

Most of these girls want to feel as they are being treated as equals and given a chance to succeed, just as much as the guys; instead, the school is influencing the mindset that girls aren’t as good or not as important as boys because there will always be “favorites.”

# CLASS CLOWNS: WHAT MAKES THEM “TOUGH”?

By: Kat Kucheriuk

The teacher is mid-class when someone makes a joke from the back of the room. Everybody knows that there is always one person who tries to make the class laugh. However, even the funniest person has their own struggles and, sometimes, humor is a way to hide emotions and protect yourself. So, how do we recognize a class clown, and what makes them seem “tough?”

To find out what really lies behind the jokes, students and teachers were asked about their experiences with class clowns. BMHS student Amelia Paul stated: “I think class clowns all have different characteristics; some are respectful and keep their jokes to a minimum, while some are louder and more disrespectful to teachers.” Paul added, “I think what makes them “funny” is how random they can be and what is said at certain times.”

Another grade 11 student, Logan Briggs, said: “Probably they will be loud. Why are they funny? Because of the good sense of humor.”

Mr. Matthew Melanson, teacher at BMHS, said: “Class clowns are easy to identify because they treat every moment of silence as a chance to bring some energy to the room. They have confidence, quick thinking, and a willingness to risk embarrassment if it means making others laugh.

What makes them “tough” is their social bravery and ability to speak up when others might stay quiet.”

Mr. Melanson also added: “In a class like English, they can actually help get discussions going and make others feel more comfortable sharing their ideas. That said, their enthusiasm can sometimes be exhausting and definitely tests my patience, but they often help create a lively and engaging classroom environment.”

“They are considered class clowns probably because the class collectively finds their humor funny. It’s their humorous and positive energy they give out that makes them one,” said grade 11 student Bea Penilla, who later added that grades do not define class clowns.

Mr. Kevin Foster, another teacher at BMHS, said: “What makes a class clown funny to me is having good timing,” and added: “When a student says something that fits and the timing is good, I can’t stop laughing, but it can’t be at anyone else’s expense.”

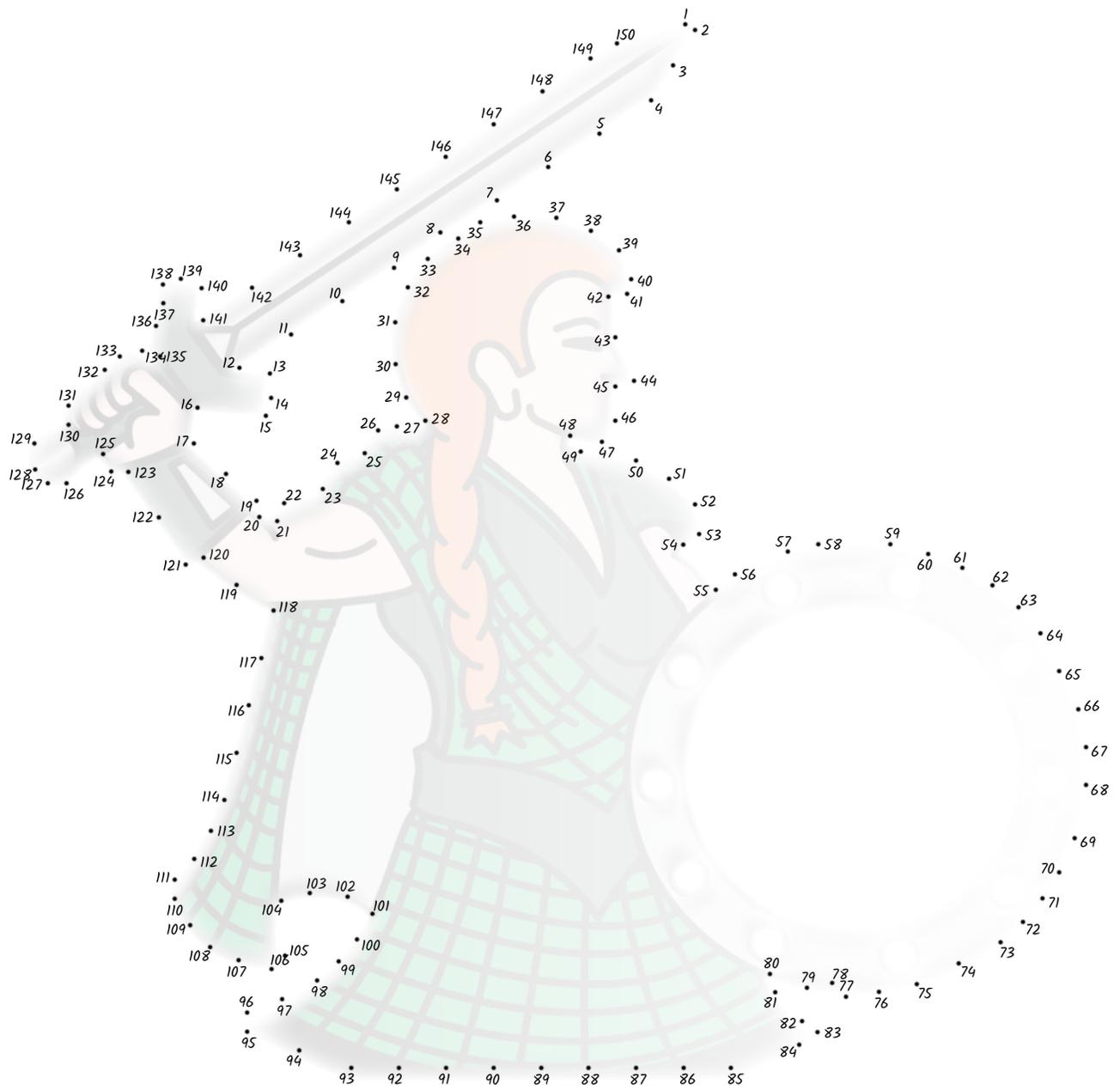
While class clowns are often seen simply as the *loud* or *funny* ones in the room, interviews with both students and teachers show that there is more behind the humor.

For some, joking is a way to bring energy into the classroom or help others feel more comfortable, while for others it can be a way to hide emotions or protect themselves socially.

What makes class clowns seem tough is not just their confidence, but their willingness to speak up, take risks, and draw attention to themselves. Behind the laughter, class clowns play a complex role in school life - one that blends humor, pressure, and resilience.



Class clowns can be more complex than just their surface persona. (Photo credit: Amelia Paul)



# Connect The Dots!