



# The Column

Editor-in-Chief: ANTONIO PEREZ

## Creative Connections at WHSAD

Written by: Chandler McLaurin

Creative Connections is an amazing program WHSAD has enrolled students in since sophomore year. In this program we learn about many different tools that will help us not only in school but also in life. For starters, we have had a mentor come in every Thursday and teach weekly lessons for the whole school year. During these sessions we go over applying to colleges, how to seek out scholarships and financial aid, and how to thrive in life after attending high school and college. In the school, we have many dedicated mentors and community school directors who are in charge of running this magnificent program. One mentor who expressed their interest and love for this program is Ms. Naliaka who said "Working with the students 9th through 12th grade has been tremendous. Students have the opportunity to learn about programs both in their school and outside of school that they can join. The biggest help I believe are the one-on-ones with the Seniors. Students who need guidance



WHSAD Senior, Jared Ramirez, learned about his options for trades schools.

with the application process are able to work specifically with a Creative Connections coach to get all their questions answered and submit paperwork dealing with applications, scholarships, and financial aid."

Ms. Naliaka is not the only mentor who feels this way about this college career enhancement program. Mr. Auffrey, who is the Creative Connections Community School Director for WHSAD, is really passionate about Creative connections. He says, "Working with WHSAD students has inspired me to continue to work on my own goals in life, and seek out creative ways to support students on a daily basis. It's been a joy since day one." I asked him further

questions like would he recommend this program to any other school? He responded by saying "Absolutely, Creative Connections helps you start thinking about futures and goals during high school and after. I have worked with Creative Connections in eight other middle and high schools and it's a positive experience." I also asked how has Creative Connections helped the students here in WHSAD? He answered by stating "In our weekly classes, students participate in WHSAD learning opportunities that will boost their college career readiness. The mentors who work with this college career program ensure that we all are prepared when we get out of high school. They are passionate about their jobs they do on a daily basis."

It's not just the mentors who are really passionate. WHSAD students have really come to love this program as it has had a major impact on their lives. Jonah Vasquez, a WHSAD Senior, states, "Without the proper guidance, the process of applying to college becomes a much more tedious and dreaded process, even more so for first generation students. Thankfully, Creative Connections has partnered with WHSAD to educate its students further on what college means for us as leaders of tomorrow. Mr. Bassit is one of the many people made available to us for help. From weekly class meetings on Friday, to pull-outs from class, Mr. Bassit and his peers ensure that we are prepared throughout the process. He constantly provides us with scholarship opportunities, statistics from colleges, and friendly advice as we get closer to the application deadlines."

Another mentor who demonstrates these same traits is Mr. Bassit, who works with Juniors and Seniors especially because it's the transitional years for these specific students in the school. I asked him do you enjoy your time working with students enrolled in this program? He an-



Mr. Bassit assists Jonah Vazquez in navigating the financial aid process.



Creative Connections coach, Ms. Naliaka, helps facilitate college presentations.

swered, "Heck yeah, it's the best part of the job. I get to work with the students and bring them to the next level and help them out by looking for scholarships, applying to colleges and for financial aid." Another mentor who has been extremely involved is Amanda Saechao who has said, "Having a well rounded, diverse and exciting educational experience is vital for students to succeed in the future. Creative Connections bases our approach on helping students prepare for their college OR career aspirations, no matter what they are. We're here to be positive guides/mentors, in any way possible. "Tomorrow belongs to those who prepare today."

Personally, Mr. Bassit has helped me organize my college list much better than I would have. He has helped me understand that not only are you looking for academics at a university, but also some type of liveliness among the community. This is a place you're spending 4 years of your life, so spend it at a place you'll enjoy." Creative Connections is an education organization that puts its best foot forward to ensure the students a bright future after high school in college and in most importantly life.

Jared Ramirez, another WHSAD senior, has his own thoughts and feelings about Creative Connections: "When the Creative Connections people told us to make our college list, I didn't know what to put, so I started to look into trade schools. I feel like trades are better than colleges because you make more money when you come out of school instead of going to college and coming out in debt. There's a trade for everyone if you want to build cars or boats or you want to fix up houses. If college isn't for you, then you can look up and do your research on trade schools. Most trade schools are shorter than actual colleges and community colleges."



# Additional Resources for the SAT

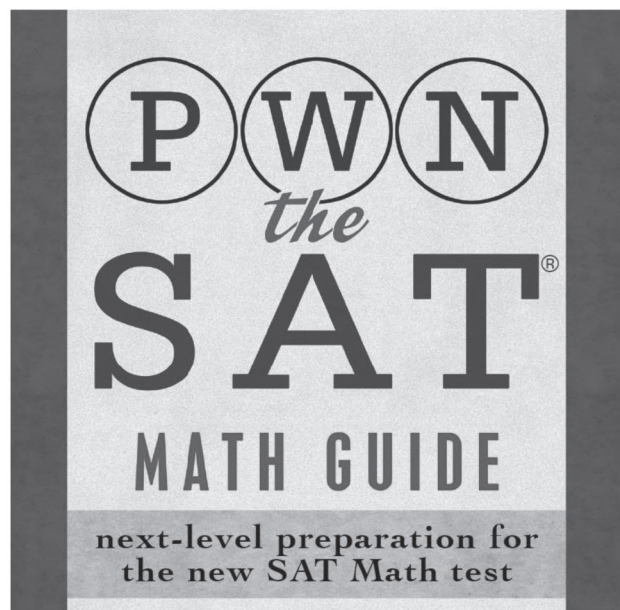
Written by: **Jonah Vazquez**

As the dreaded SAT nears, many students will find themselves scrambling for resources. But it should be kept in mind the VAST sea of prep materials that exist for the SAT. Realistically, companies understand the desperation concerned students carry and will sell materials that aren't up to par with the rigor of the current SAT. It's important to have a general idea of materials that have been known to work, as from there you would be able to figure out what works best for you. Don't ever be mistaken with the idea of the higher the price, the better quality the resource. There are *free resources that are just as valuable. Below are 4 resources in addition to last issue's SAT resources: Two free directly from the College Board, and two paid resources that are very well known.*

## -UWorld

UWorld, much like Khan Academy, functions as a question bank. While it doesn't necessarily teach you the material, it is more for being able to analyze your own mistakes. UWorld has been praised for its aid to others studying math using its website material. Personally, I adore UWorld much more than Khan Academy for its reading and writing help. UWorld does require a subscription, but there is a free trial for those curious about how it works.

## -PWN The SAT



Access to early and ongoing practice is key to student success.

Much like the College Panda SAT Math book, this book functions to help fill in gaps of knowledge through distinct chapters and follow-up practice questions. Mike McClenathan wrote this book with his audience in mind which can be seen through his jokes made in the book. I would note that both this book and College Panda's book are both amazing, and it might just come down to the preference of the reader.

## -College Board Official Practice Tests

These tests are THE BEST resources you can possibly use on your journey to study in conjunction with other materials. Why? Because these tests were created by College Board themselves, and now they're in your hands. Every mistake you might make in the future, you can make now and correct. These tests are the saving grace, the *holy grail of SAT studying. Most importantly, they are FREE. Do not, I repeat, buy the practice test book. They are all available for free on College Board's website.*

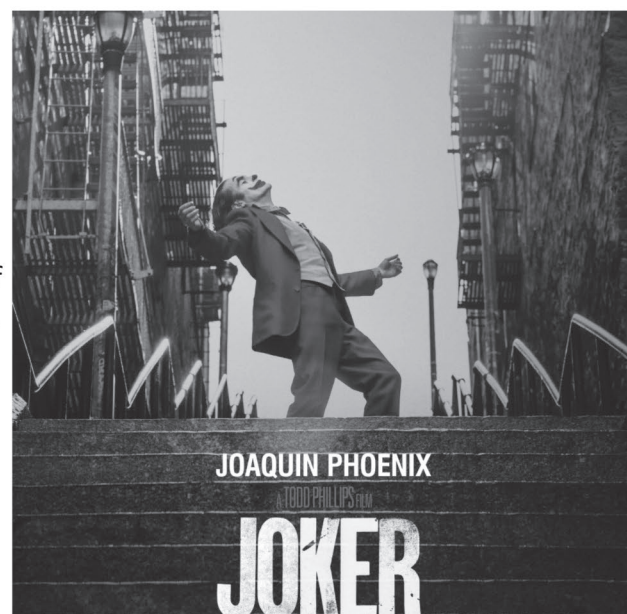
## -QAS (Question and Answer Service)

College Board offers something called a QAS which you can purchase during registration for your SAT exam. This is not to be confused with the SAS, which is practically useless in my opinion. The QAS will allow you to SEE YOUR EXAM. It also shows you what questions you got wrong. This is another amazing resource for studying. You sat for the exam under the pressure of the exam, and now you can see where you went wrong under REAL conditions. The Question and Answer Service is not available for every SAT exam.

# Joker, the result of Marvel Fatigue

Written by: **Silas Rodriguez**

"Joker," directed by Todd Phillips and starring Joaquin Phoenix, is about a mentally unstable man named Arthur Fleck and how society has helped push him over the edge to a life of crime and total insanity. This is easily one of the most intriguing movies released in recent memory. Prior to the release many, myself included, questioned if the Joker needed his own movie. A character who's ambiguity remains one of his most appealing traits. To take



"Joker" grossed over \$1.2 Billion in the Box Office Worldwide.

that away seemed like a cash grab at first. Not to mention all of the negative press the movie garnered for being "too violent" and possibly causing some viewers to commit radical crimes. Case in point, this was the years most polarizing release by far. However, after two viewings, I think this movie sets out to make a point. A point about comic book movies as a sub genre and a point about society as a whole. And while I do feel this movie wears its influences on its sleeves a little too much, ie films like Taxi Driver and King of Comedy, at its heart this is a deep and thoughtful character study. Many have already started to speculate that most of the movie is an elaborate fantasy by our protagonist and that there isn't much truth in what we see, but those theories have little to do with its social commentary.

My examination was a mostly surface level viewpoint taking the events of the film at face value. Without leaning into spoiler territory, a huge plot point of the film is that the rich of Gotham City are at war with the poor as several wealthy Gothamites were murdered by a so called clown jealous of their wealth. This ignited a social war between the suffering poor of Gotham and the rich who are seemingly incapable of helping their situation. Rather than solve the situation, a man running for mayor blames the killings on the clowns of Gotham, all the while social services are being shut down while a trash strike is going on and other crimes are flooding the streets. Interestingly, I found an unintentional comparison between that plot point and our real world. Similarly to how Gotham's politicians blame crime and poverty on the clowns and criminal of their city, our society loves the blame violence on things like movies and video games. Rather than actively try and solve these issues, many have seemed to back this idea that our leaders are not to blame, but it's instead our own fault for allowing violent media to influence shootings and terror.

As mentioned, this movie received a lot of negative press for being too violent and possibly inspiring people to become a murdering psychopathic clown. Whether the film makers intended for their movie to draw that real life comparisons is unknown, however one thing I do think they intended for the audience to leave with is how we play a role in this movie. How do people play a role in their society and what role do we play if any in creating people such as the Joker, or others like him? Could we be partly responsible for the level of disparity in our city? Or maybe there's nothing we can do to help. Nonetheless, I don't think a quote on quote "comic book movie" has ever made me think this way. Even the all time films like "The Dark Knight" who are thematically rich have never left me thinking about them for this long. "Joker" is by no means



the most original film nor is it the best character study, but as a comic book film in this golden age, it matures the genre in a way no other film can right now. There are no big fight scenes or overuse of CGI. Much of the film is practical with a very dark and subtle score. It's a real gritty and serious film both in its presentation of a 80's New York City-esque Gotham but also in its beautiful cinematography. This, combined with Joaquin Phoenix's incredibly heartbreaking portrayal of a broken down man and a story that's left up to your interpretation, makes a film that will leave me thinking about its themes for a while. More than any Marvel film has.

# Interview with Mr. Giambrone

Written by: Antonio Perez

**Q: Since it is your first year teaching at WHSAD what is it that you're anticipating the most thus far from the experience?**



Mr. Giambrone, the AP Environmental Science teacher.

A: I really want to learn the different cultures that a lot of my students come from. And use that to help me shape my teaching. Because I want to make sure that everyone is not only learning but also enjoying their experience here and relating to the stuff going on in the classroom. At WHSAD everyone is a good student that has a lot of potential so it's great to learn a lot of the backgrounds so I can incorporate that into my teaching.

**Q: Besides being a teacher what are some other aspirations, interests and or goals you have in life? Did you always plan on being a teacher from a young age?**

A: Outside of teaching I officiate high school football out on in Long Island where I'm from. Along with being a teacher I can hopefully make it to a college level of officiating or maybe one day even the NFL, that's something that I aspire to do on the side. I actually planned on being a teacher in my AP Biology class in 11th Grade. I was really interested in the subject and my teacher was a great teacher, and I was really good at it. Because of this, I wondered why couldn't I stay in high school forever? So ever since then, I wanted to be a teacher.

# Q & A with E & A

Written by: Erin Mickels & Ariana Lowery

**Q: How can I make the most of my freshman year?**

A: Coming to a new school with a completely new environment may be seen as scary or intimidating, but this is a new opportunity, especially for a freshman. This is your chance to find your footing, and one way of doing this is by getting yourself out there. Join clubs. Do community service. Talk to teachers and faculty to find activities outside of school. Find something you are passionate about and use it to push yourself forward. Not only is this a great way to get community service hours (which you are required to have a certain amount by the end of each year), but you will have a list of extracurriculars that can be put on your resume or college application, which will show prospective jobs and college admission offices that you are a well rounded student who puts their extra time to good use.

**Q: How to be independent?**

A: First off what does independence mean to you? Is it handling everything by yourself? Learning how to do something on your own ? Or being your own boss and needing nothing from no one? Well it's a mixture of these things. Independence is great, but the thing about independence is that at one point or another you will need help. For myself, independence is when I can do things by myself. I want to be able to live on

my own without a lot of help from people. The point is, in order to be independent, you are going to have to depend on someone or thing. If I want this to happen, I must keep working each and everyday to ensure it. Independence can be hard to achieve, but you must stay motivated. You must gain the ability to persevere. These traits are a necessity because without them you might remain dependent instead. One method to being independent is this: First ask yourself what do you want to be independent in? And why? This is planning. Planning can help you figure out your goals and how you want to get to them, and having a reason as to why you want to be independent shows purpose. Find a goal and plan on how to get it. Motivate yourself each day to at least do the littlest thing that can ensure you're on the right track towards getting it done. Now that we have everything, let's get the basics. Step 1: realize that you want to be independent. Step 2: plan! Figure out what you want to be independent in and why. Step 3: set a goal (ex. Studying by yourself or making your own lunch). Step 4: apply yourself. Go through whatever research that you need to that can help you reach you goal and work as such. I hope this helps make you more independent.

# Freshmen Highlight-Wilmer Bahsta

Written by: Deselle Thompson

**Q: Since you're fairly new to this school, what is it that made you want to come to this school? And now that you've been here for almost 2 months, what is it that you like the most?**

A: The design aspect is what really made me want to come to WHSAD. I'm interested in baking and anything with creativity. I really like the teachers the most, they are not as strict as the ones in my middle school, very relaxed.

**Q: What is it that drives you to be determined and get your work done?**

A: I want to be something that isn't uniform. I don't want an office job where you have to wear a tuxedo or formal suit every day. Not wanting to be standardized and basic is what motivates me to do my best

**Q: How do you like your teachers? Do you have a favorite?**

I like all my teachers, but Geringer is my favorite because he's more strict, and I'm more comfortable with that.

**Q: What do you want to do after leaving WHSAD?**

Anything from the Culinary Arts to creative design. Maybe eventually start a design company or a little French bakery with pastries.

# Volleyball Interview

Written by: Genavieve Ramirez

Johnelle Pierre

**Q: What's it like to be on the girls Volleyball team?**

A: Being on the volleyball team is a commitment you should be willing to take the moment you get ready to tryout. It is an honor to be on the team not a priority. So that means not going out with your friends majority of the times.

**Q: What routines do you do to prepare for a game?**

A: Before games we make sure to work on structural drills that will be beneficial for the game we will be playing. We discuss game strategies and the best way to achieve them before playing it out.

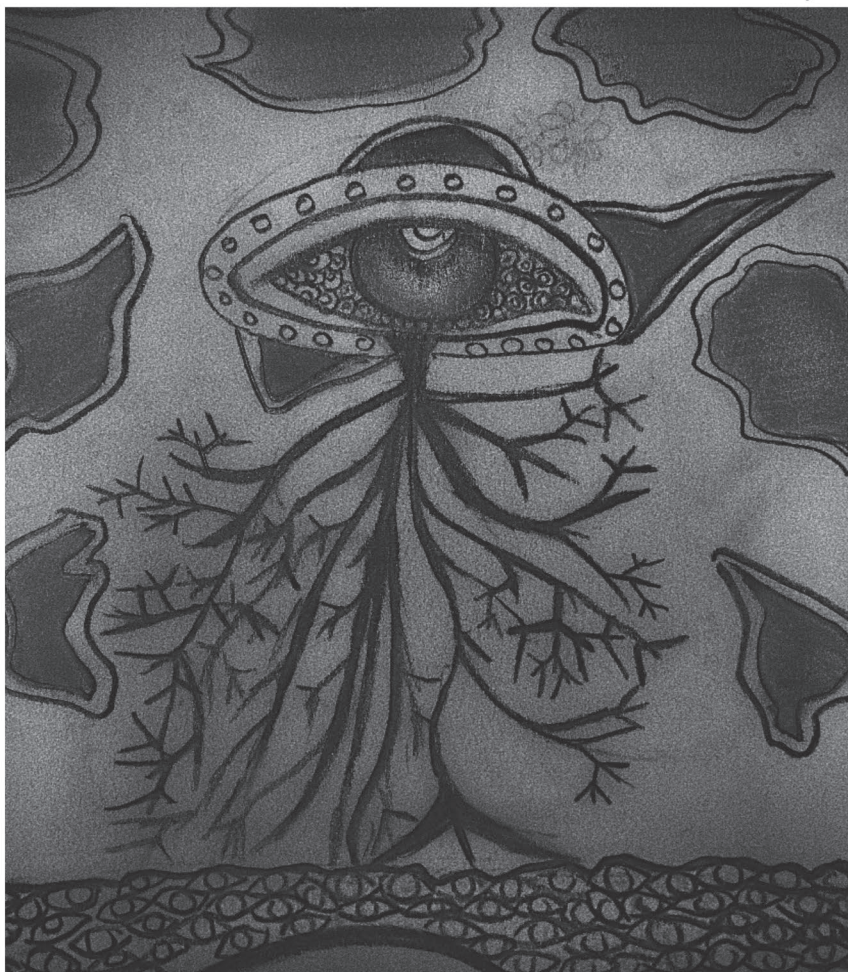
**Q: How is the teams relationship?**

A: The team has a very strong relationship considering we built a bond in and out of the court. We're with each other 3-4 hours out of the school day. It's only right that we keep a tight relationship between all of us.

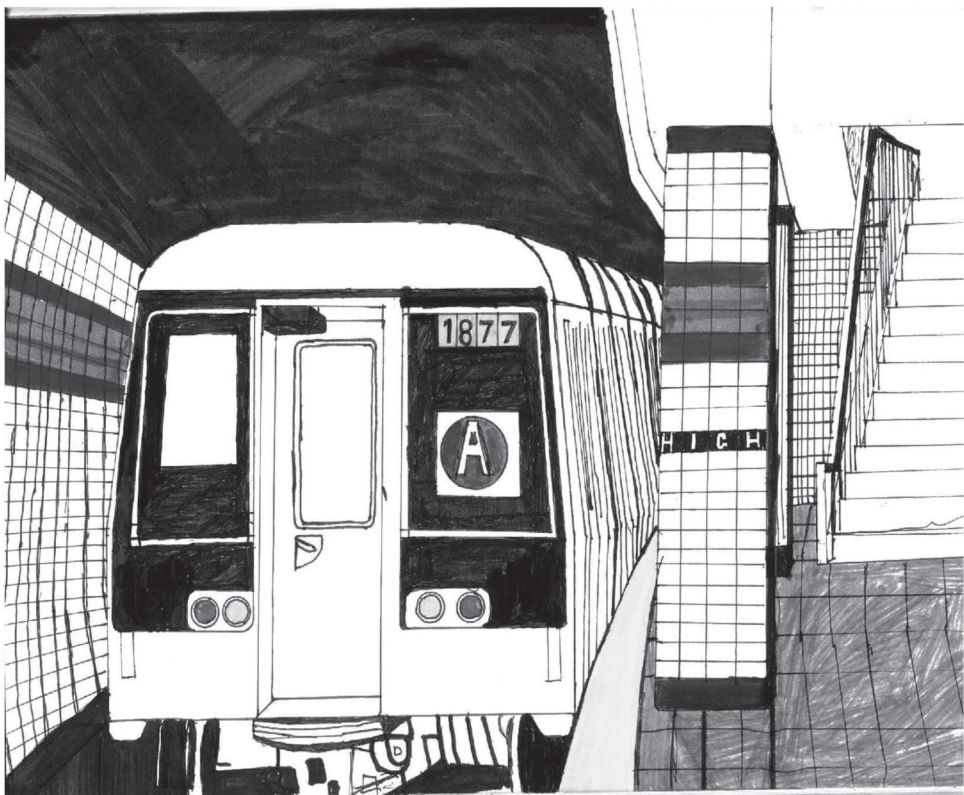


# Student Submissions

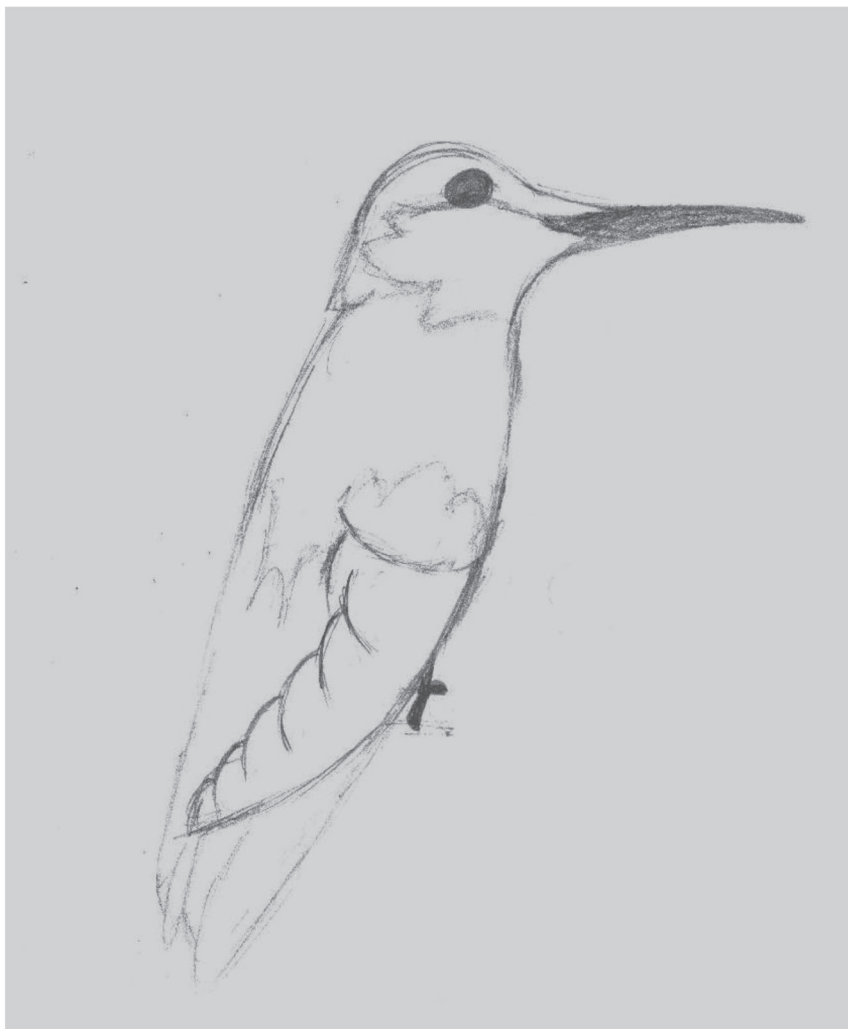
Curated by: **Benito Montalvo II**



**Anonymous**  
I SEE YOU



**Xavier Graham**  
The A Train



**Anonymous**  
Hummingbird



**Benito Montalvo II**  
Missing