

# Counselor Chaos

## For now, new alpha system is detrimental

At the beginning of the school year, PHS implemented a new counseling system, which assigns students to counselors based on last name rather than grade level. PHS is the last Pflugerville ISD high school to switch, at the district's request, to the "Alpha" system. The switch from a grade-level system to an alphabetical one was made possible by the addition of a fifth guidance counselor.

While this change will not affect the senior class, as Lonnie Perez remains the senior counselor, it will negatively impact many sophomores and juniors this year.

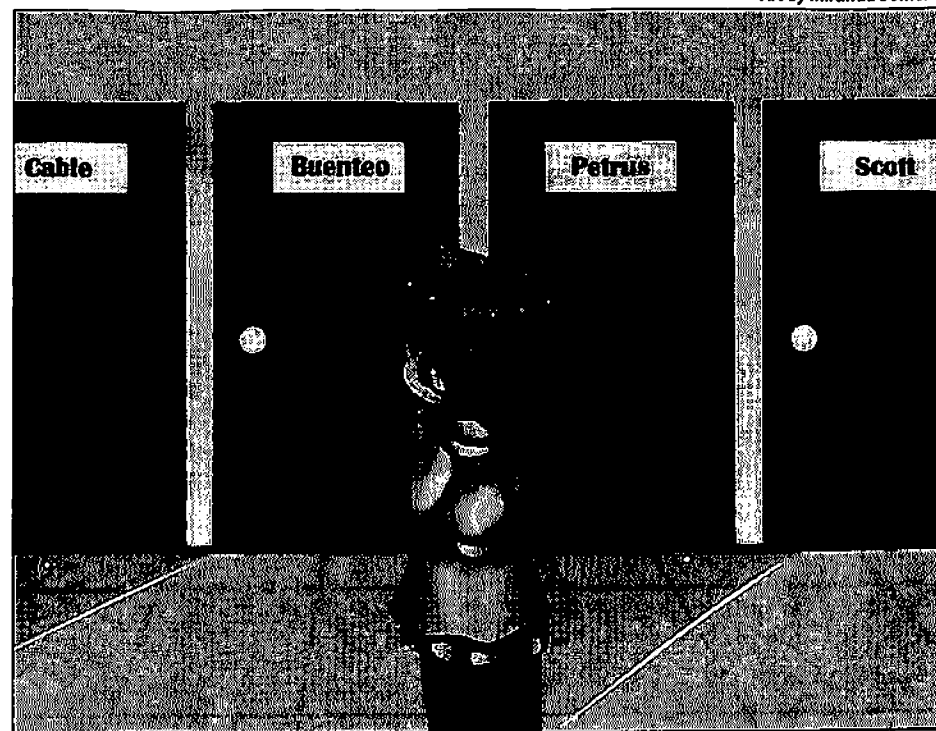
The new counselor system will make it difficult for counselors and students to form a close relationship with each other, and there is a likely chance that students will find their counselor unfamiliar after they go through so many. The junior class switched counselors between their freshman and sophomore year. Depending on their last name, many juniors have yet another new counselor this year. This has made it difficult to establish a lasting student-and-counselor connection.

While the new counseling system is organized by last name, assistant principals are

still organized by grade level. That means each counselor will have to juggle four assistant principals, and each assistant principal will have to juggle four counselors. The old bond between the grade-level principal, grade-level counselor and the student has been shattered.

Supporters of the alpha system say that it will be easier for counselors to establish relationships with multi-child families, and that having a fifth counselor will decrease workload. However, grouping students just because they are siblings can lead to bias. In addition, The American School Counselor's Association says that if counselors keep their caseload of students under 250, they will form better bonds with their students and be able to assist them better. It will be less stress on both the student and the counselor. However, for our five guidance counselors to have 250 students each, the school would need about 1,000 fewer students than we currently have. Therefore, the change in caseloads is not significant enough to assist counselors or students.

This is not a problem that affects everyone. It also may not be seen as an issue in the future, once counselors have had time



-Art by Miranda Bomer

to establish relationships with their new students. Eventually everyone, including the seniors, will have a counselor determined by last name. However, for those it does affect, this year could be jarring. If the school is in need of a fifth counselor, more focus should be given to the largest class, or to the college and career aspect of counseling. Or, at the very least, exceptions should be granted to those students who have special circum-

stances or intense bonds with their former grade-level counselors. The point of a counselor is to bridge the gap into post-secondary education by providing students with academic and emotional support. However, a true bond cannot be achieved without the consistency of one counselor.

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