



Common racial discrimination unfounded, hurtful to others

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Chief Photographer

Every year students check in a box to define themselves by race for official forms, including SAT testing, AGR cards, and even driver's licenses.

Discrimination based on race occurs when people are singled out and or treated unfairly because of their skin color or by race.

A national poll commissioned by the Episcopal Church found that nearly all Americans (98 percent) feel that there is at least some discrimination in the United States today.

Harris Interactive conducted the online poll for the church in October 2013, among more than 2,000 U.S. adults.

Discrimination never has an age limit. It could start in elementary school or even in adult life.

"When I was in the third grade, I was in line at the water fountain. A kid behind [me] said that [I] needed to go to the back because I was black. I told him that's not true, I was here before you," senior Shirlyn Davenport said.

"Then he called me a [explicit]. I



started to cry [and went to tell] my teacher, who then proceeded to call my parents and his parents. They came to the school, and we all sat down with the principal to recite what happened," Davenport said. "The boy got in trouble and had to apologize to me."

Racism can give people unfair privileges over other races. People can feel that other races have better treatment than their own.

"So I have limited experience with racism since I'm white, so I'm usually on the privileged side of racism. I know this because I almost never get pulled over, but, even when I do, I know the cops are nicer to me and are more likely to let me off with a warning," English teacher Emily Hernandez said.

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Academy designed to improve freshman performance, success

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The administration opened Freshman Academy this fall, a new approach to help ninth-grade students become successful in high school.

"The reason why we decided to implement Freshman Academy this year," assistant principal Richard Halle said, "is because it has been proven that your sixth grade and ninth grade years are the hardest years a student faces."

Halle, who is the administrator in charge of Freshman Academy, said that he is optimistic for the results that Freshman Academy should yield, after seeing the success of the program at Marshall High School.

For the Academy, all freshman core classes are located in the A100 hallways, and students are separated into "houses," modeling the Marshall High School Freshman House. All freshmen have fourth period lunch, and their core classes are scattered throughout the day. They have their electives throughout the school.

With the house system, teachers from each subject share the same students. For example, four teachers, each from a different core class, have the same students, so if one student is struggling in one class, that teacher can consult with the other three core area teachers and can create a strategy to help the student.

Then principal Anthony Jarrett started the Marshall High School Freshman House after administration saw negative trends with their freshmen, including smaller numbers of students beyond the ninth grade.

The main causes that the Marshall administration identified were increased absences, lower academic performances, and multiple disciplinary offenses, as seen among ninth graders.

Student Success

"Last year, we noticed that our previous freshmen had a tendency to have lower grades throughout, whether it was STAAR results or tests," Halle said. "We compared our statistics with Marshall High School, who had similar demographics as us, and their freshmen were more successful due to having their own Freshman House."

Halle said that the goals the administration has set for Freshman Academy were to provide freshmen more of a structured and persistent first year



Freshman Academy students Sarah Solis and Raven Portillo create a world map in World Geography. Teacher for the class is Kaycee Barnett. Photo by Allie Goulding

of high school, while they are still in transition from the middle school environment to the fast-paced high school environment.

With the freshman students having their core classes and the athletics department nearby, Halle said that students will have less stress, only having to remember where their other two electives are, compared to remembering locations for seven classes, as in prior years.

Focus on Freshman

"I think [Freshman Academy] is going to be very good for the kids," freshman geometry teacher Kiley Fuller said. "That way, since they're constantly with each other, it'll promote them looking out for the other."

Teachers see many positives for the students.

"I feel that it's a good idea

to focus on the needs of incoming freshmen, in order to better prepare them for success," Freshman Academy and Algebra I teacher Lisa Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez also said that having the house system in place helps students to identify with their grade group within their population in high school. She said that getting to work with freshmen gives her joy to have an impact on their academic growth, and with the Academy in place, that the growth will be even greater.

The Freshman Academy gets mixed reviews from students.

"The academy [isn't] very useful for me personally, but I know it [will

be] really helpful for others," freshman Odelia Peña-Pathan said. "But it really helps me getting around school and being more confident to find my classes."

Peña-Pathan also said that having club signs and posters near Freshman Academy helps her peers get more involved and included at Stevens. She said that she feels less stressed about high school, and it was not that big of a shock going into high school.

"[The Academy] could have been better, because it's really restricting with the freedom to choose," freshman Miguel Hernandez said.

Look to Future

Hernandez said that he is looking forward to his sophomore year to be more involved with the upperclassmen.

"Having fourth period lunch is restricting, because we only get to be around people from our class," freshman Alexandria Benitez said. "But for next year, I'll

probably be more comfortable to know more people when we're thrown in with the upperclassmen."

With Freshman Academy in place for its first year, there are high expectations for the Class of 2019. Whether the data shows any significant difference between the academic success of the Class of 2018 and the Class of 2019, Halle said that Freshman Academy will continue.

Stevens is the latest addition to the list NISD high schools with a Freshman Academy, joining Taft, Marshall and John Jay



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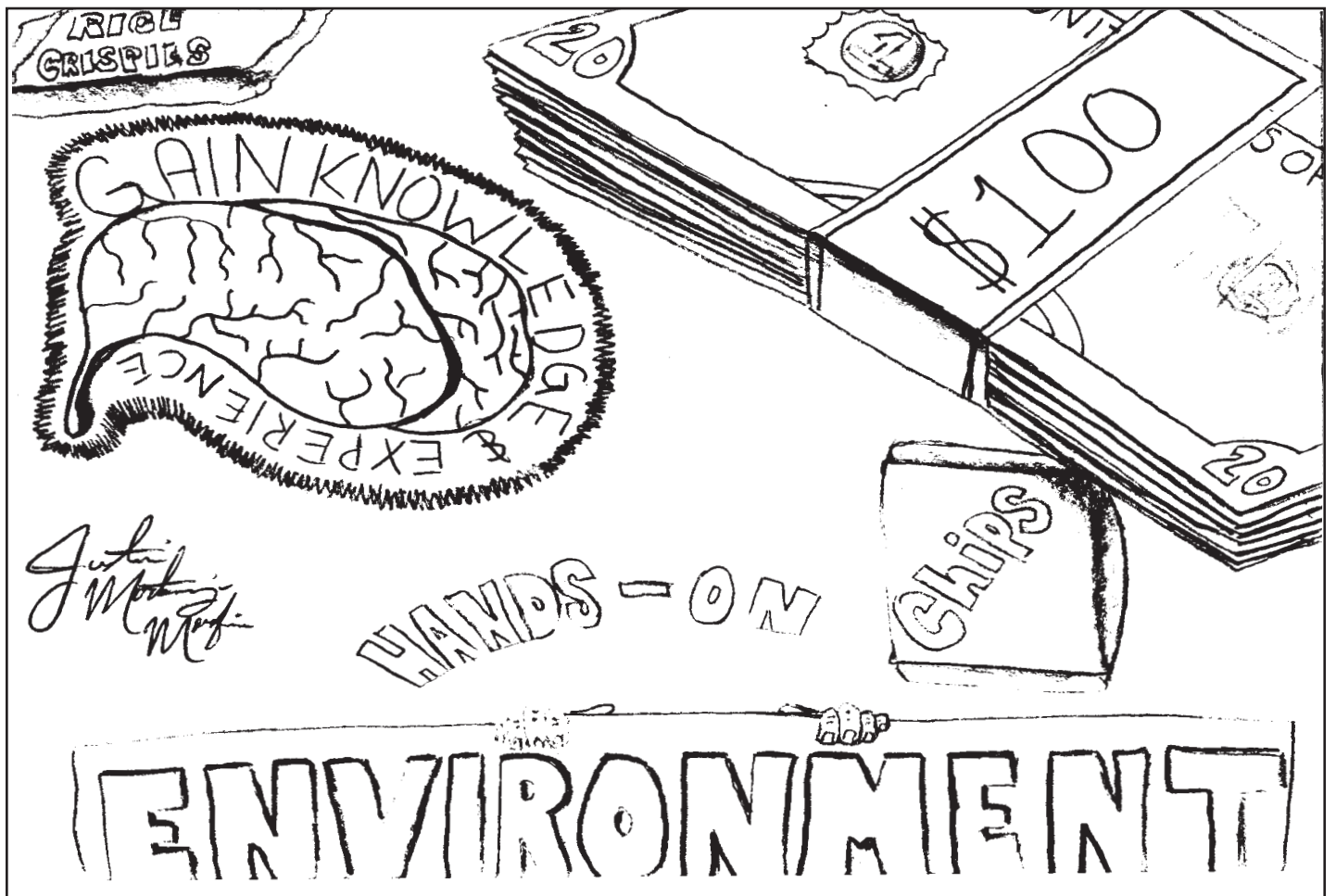
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State amends school nutrition rules NISD refuses six-day snack sales

The new Texas School Nutrition Policy needs to be implemented in all NISD schools. The policy would allow students to sell “Non-Smart Snack Foods” during the school day for a maximum of six days during the year.

The “Smart Snacks and other Food Rules” policy was updated in August 2015. It applies to all public schools in Texas for the 2015-2016 school year. However, district leaders decide whether or not to apply this to their schools. In this case, NISD has decided not to change their rules.

Snack Sales Could Fund Clubs

Although there are no restrictions on food given to students, being able to sell snacks and drinks would enable many school clubs and organizations to raise money for their programs. Many of the schools clubs and organizations receive little or no funding from the school. If students were able to raise their own money, they would have the opportunity to purchase new equipment and supplies to improve the quality of the program. This would

lead to an overall exemplary school.

This policy could also make it possible for students to take more educational trips. Teenagers tend to lose interest very quickly. If students were able to raise enough money, it could be used to get them out of the same white-walled rooms and into a more hands-on environment. There, they would be able to gain more knowledge and experience, all of which is worth the money.

Out of all the reasons to implement this new policy, the district seems to be missing the most important one. Fundraising during school hours teaches students something no teacher ever could teach in a classroom setting. It teaches responsibility and encourages self-confidence. When students are expected to work for the money that fuels their programs, they learn the importance of earning something. This can really open the eyes of otherwise passive students who wait for others to provide for them.

Junk Food Consumed at Home

Part of limiting students’ diets during the school day is to ensure every-

one is having “healthy” meals. Some people may argue that this is the cure to obesity in America, but when teens get home it is an entirely different idea. Taking “Non-Smart Snack foods” from students only increases their intake when they get home. They will eat what they want either way.

Instead of taking higher calorie foods from students completely, give them the knowledge of what the consequences are when they eat those higher calorie foods. Knowing the possible consequences can limit what they allow themselves to consume. Rather than controlling their diets, allow students to take responsibility for their own health, through knowledge and self-monitoring programs.

Board of Trustees Should Adopt New State Guidelines

Implementing the newest update of the Texas Nutrition Policy in all NISD schools would benefit and enhance clubs and organizations in need of funding. The NISD Board of Trustees should act in the best interest of NISD students and consider the adoption of the new guidelines set for the Texas Secretary of Agriculture.

Viewpoint

Q: Should NISD adopt the new state Nutrition Policy?



Jason Lee Rodriguez
Freshman

I would stay with the healthy stuff. Join sports [to stay healthy].



Cruz De La Serna
Sophomore

I’m happy with the food, but they shouldn’t cut us off. There are obese people who need it. There should be options. We are deserving of options. It’s America.



Jacqueline Gonzales
Junior

I think there should be junk food. It’s better to have unhealthy food than no food at all.

Compiled by Isabelle Seay and Daniella Flores