



BROWN & GOLD

Haverhill High School

October 2022



Croft's Corner

Several members of the **Girls Swim and Dive** team made it to sectionals this season: sophomores Sophia Caruso and Kailyn Aquino, junior Kenzie Hillsgrove, and senior Ella Clohisy.

Cross-country runner Finleigh Simonds will be competing in sectionals and possibly states in the upcoming weeks. Simonds currently holds the Haverhill record for the 3,000 meter race.

Haverhill High Cheer had their first competition on Sunday, October 23. JV and Varsity placed 2nd in their division and 3rd overall.

The **Crew team** persevered through the season after their boats had been destroyed by a city moving truck. The incident resulted in the team gaining three new boats, all bought secondhand from Boston University.

Many accomplished Hillies attended the **Cultural Appreciation Week** ceremony at the Haverhill courthouse last week. The festivities included speeches, dances, chorus and band performances. The **Haverhill JROTC and Color Guard** also performed at the event. There was also a cultural fashion show.

The **5th Annual HHS Thanksgiving Meal** will take place on Thursday, November 17th from 6:00 -7:30 pm

The **Annual Turkey Toss** will take place on Wednesday, November 23. Only seniors are permitted to sign up for the field trip.

The **Thanksgiving Day Football Game** against the Lowell Red Raiders will kickoff on Thursday, November 24th at 10am at Trinity Stadium. Last year the Hillies lost in the final seconds 41-36.

The **Drama Club** is holding auditions for their winter one act performances "Completely Absolutely Normal" and "Men in Boats" on November 1 & 2. Auditions are open to everyone, no experience required.

The **class of 2024 basketball tournament** is set to take place on Tuesday, November 15th at 3pm in the HHS gym. Teams should be submitted to junior class officers no later than November 10.

Term 1 closes on Thursday, November 10. Report cards will be issued on Friday, November 18.

New lunch policies aim to foster better behavior

Administrators hope upperclassmen can model maturity

By Adam Zujewski

HAVERHILL—The current school year has brought a slew of significant changes: an entirely new administrative team, a four-day teachers strike, modified tardy policies, open and accessible bathrooms throughout the high school, and mostly clear hallways, just to name a few.

However, the biggest change on most students' plates are the changes to school lunch periods.

"Let's be honest, we had some issues with our

lunches last year, so we tried to think about what are some ways that we can kind of mix up our student population so that way we're not having the same types of issues," said Associate Principal Victoria Lu.

"Part of that is reducing the number of students at each lunch and part of that is distributing the grade 9 and 10 kids across all the lunches so that way they have some good peers to show them how to behave in the cafeteria."

Lunch, which is many students' favorite time of day, has undergone a number of significant changes. For one, there are now four lunch blocks instead of just three.

First lunch now begins at 10:01, and the fourth and final lunch ends at 1:10.

Lu said the additional lunch was added in order to reduce the number of students in each lunch.

"We were finding that our student population has grown since coming back, so we were looking at hav-

ing about 650 kids in each lunch if we continued with three lunches," Lu said.

The addition of the fourth lunch has produced mixed results.

Although it has reduced the number of students, Lu pointed out that the distribution of students throughout the four lunches is not as even as the administration had hoped.

This year students were placed in lunches based off of an algorithm that took into account both the requests of students and

constraints of teachers. Administrators hope to refine the algorithm to even out the lunches in preparation for next year.

Senior Kaleigh Longenecker, who has fourth lunch, finds that it's not just the numbers that may be imbalanced but the makeup of students in each lunch.

"My only problem with fourth lunch is that I'm a senior and I'm surrounded

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Schools, teachers strike deal



Teachers from throughout the city gathered at City Hall last month, protesting wages and work conditions.

Teachers get new contract after four-day strike

By Carina Archer

HAVERHILL—Late into the night, after vocal protesting on the steps of City Hall, months of negotiating and a four-day strike, Haverhill teachers and the School Committee finally agreed to a new contract on Thursday, October 20.

On Monday, October 17, Haverhill Public Schools teachers went on strike after arguing a lack of "good faith bargaining" left them without a new contract at the start of the school year. Protests were held across Haverhill's public schools and the steps of Haverhill City

Hall. The strike ended at approximately 9:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 20, with turnout and energy levels high going into the night.

"These fights we're fighting are not Haverhill specific, these are fights our whole state is fighting," said Barry Davis, the Vice President of the Haverhill Educators Association, who is a music teacher at Golden Hill Elementary School.

During the strike, teachers crowded the steps in front of City Hall and spread all about Main

Street, from the intersection of Main and Winter streets down to the Basiliere Bridge. It was a wave of protesters dressed in the red of the city's teachers union, the Haverhill Education Association, holding signs with slogans like "Fair Contract Now" and "Haverhill Educators on Strike."

Issues brought to negotiation revolved around the lack of education funding, with calls to increase school funding above the mandated 6-percent annual minimum and create competitive salaries.

These concerns called into question why a district with 8,000 students is underfunded.

At the start of 2022, new contracts for educators were proposed to the School Committee, and no response was given until May. When the school year started, teachers were without a contract, with salaries based on the recently expired deal.

The strike over the expired contract was not just about salaries. The union, as part of its platform,

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SPIKE DROP: V-ball wins MVC again

After final four finish last year, girls ready to serve it up at states

By Abigail Brown and Rowan Kelly

HAVERHILL—More familiar with high stakes competition than any Hillie team in recent memory, the girls volleyball team won the MVC title for the fourth year in a row and, at time of publication, was ranked as the 11th Division I team in the state.

They are set to begin the state tournament during the first week of November. Last year they made the final four where they lost to a formidable Newton North squad.

Senior Morgan Flaherty, one of the captains of the girls varsity squad, reflected on having to share the MVC title with Billerica last year and the tough loss in the final four.

"Winning the MVC championship was really exciting for us this year as we had to share the title

with Billerica and now, after beating Tewksbury, we get it to ourselves," said Flaherty.

"Last year we made it to the final four so I'm hoping this year we can be just as successful and maybe even better."

Junior Emmerson Cerasulo, another varsity captain and a prominent member of last year's state title-contending team, says what makes the girls volleyball team so successful is the energy they bring to the court every minute of every game.

"I think it's our energy," Cerasulo said. "We're just really excited and we always celebrate every single point which gets in the other teams head a lot."

When asked about other factors that have

contributed to the girls volleyball team's reign of dominance, she credited the work done at the middle schools throughout the city to encourage and support competitive volleyball players.

"We have a lot of girls that do club outside of high school and at the middle school levels," Cerasulo explained. "They start so early that by the time they come in freshman year, we have some girls already playing on varsity."

Cerasulo also wanted to remind Hillie nation of one major component of their success: "We thrive off the energy from the fan section."

At time of publication, the date and place of the girls volleyball first state tournament is still to be determined.



Courtesy Photo: Marilyn Caradonna
From left to right: Emmerson Cerasulo, Taylor Lewis, and Mia Valdez celebrating after beating Tewksbury to seal the MVC title.

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The mission of the Brown & Gold is to provide the Haverhill High School community with accurate, socially significant, and thoughtful news. As an organization of dedicated, conscientious, and curious journalists, we honor and revere our responsibility to ensure that our readers are equipped with all of the necessary information to make the mature and deliberate decisions that are the foundation of rich and ethical lives.

Bleacher Report

Half HHS bleachers still broken

By Sasha Orr

HAVERHILL— With the girls volleyball team about to embark on another promising state tournament run and the basketball season quickly approaching, Hillie athletes are geared up to compete, and wow their fans, if fans can attend of course.

At the end of last school year it was discovered that half the bleachers in the gymnasium cannot be used due to the failure of one of the motors that retracts the stands. Because of the age of the bleachers, the part required to fix them needed to be custom-made to repair the issue.

According to Haverhill High School's Athletic Director, Tom O'Brien, the school is hopeful the bleachers will be working in time for basketball season.

O'Brien was also grateful the school has been able to adapt thus far.

"This has had very little impact on our volley-

ball season. We typically only pull the bleachers out on one side for matches," O'Brien said.

The broken bleachers have also interfered with some school events, such as assemblies and the homecoming pep rally, which had to be moved outside to the track.

According to some students, the pep rally taking place outside did have an effect on the level of the students' pep ahead of the homecoming football game.

Junior Sara Tucker feels that the outside pep rally lacked engagement.

"I feel as though we couldn't be as engaged as if we were inside. Everything felt so far away," said Tucker.

The same problems with a lack of space could potentially affect the amount of people who can attend the girls volleyball games as they continue to dominate the Merrimack Valley Conference.

Staffing shortage short circuits Cyber Cafe

By Jaylene Viera

HAVERHILL— Once a beacon for the student body, the Cyber Cafe has gone dark.

The Cyber Cafe, a popular student hangout for coffee, smoothies, baked goods, and socializing, has been closed since March of 2020.

"It really was a great community [hangout]," said Sara Tucker, a junior. "The snacks were great, and it was always a nice place to go in the morning."

Students were optimistic at the start of the year when they encountered signs that are still hanging on the glass doors: "We are closed but will return in September."

As the months have trudged on however, there has been no word or progress toward reopening the cafe.

According to Associate Principal Victoria Lu, the Cyber Cafe, like many restaurants throughout the nation, is

essentially another victim of the pandemic and the staffing shortages that have followed in its wake.

"Part of the reason it hasn't reopened is because we are understaffed," Lu said.

"We use our cafeteria workers to run the cafe, but our cafeteria has been understaffed since the pandemic," she added. "We also need to assign a security officer to monitor student passes going into the cafe, and our security team is also understaffed."

Luckily, Lu did provide reason for optimism.

"As soon as we are fully staffed and have those resources, we're definitely going to look into opening it again and coming up with a pass system for seniors who have studies," Lu said.

"But we need bodies. Hiring has definitely been a challenge since the pandemic."



Shuttered doors of Cyber Cafe at HHS.



STRIKE:

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sought funding to recruit and retain teachers more reflective of Haverhill's diverse population.

"Haverhill public schools are diverse, and we want our teaching staff to be diverse," Davis said.

With public word spreading about the lack of contract through September, many students became aware of the situation. A group of Haverhill High School students, Students for Teachers, organized a protest that happened on September 20, resulting in detention for those involved.

After continuous negotiations and a failure to come to a definitive agreement, along with rallies over the weekend, all educators and staff went on strike Monday, October 17.

During the protests, car and truck horns could be heard honking to show support for the cause. Students of all ages could be seen waving signs and chanting, dancing and

cheering. Many sported homemade signs in English and Spanish, injecting humor and biting opinion. Even teachers from across school districts in the Merrimack Valley area showed up in solidarity.

When protests died down on Thursday afternoon, people regrouped after word got out that negotiations were at a standstill. The crowd seemingly gained energy out of thin air as chants started and songs were sung. Punctuated chants referring to School Committee members and the whole crowd singing "We're Not Gonna Take It" by Twisted Sister, and even a rendition of the national anthem, echoed through the downtown.

Just after 8 p.m. the atmosphere reached a fever pitch. According to a source, police felt the crowd would not disperse unless the School Committee members left City Hall. They were subsequently escorted out by police to an undisclosed

location. Later in the night, negotiations resumed until the tentative deal was struck.

In Massachusetts, teacher strikes are rare since it is illegal for public employees, such as teachers, police officers and firefighters, to strike. However, Brookline teachers went on strike earlier in the school year, and Malden teachers went on strike at the same time as Haverhill.

Neither strike lasted as long as Haverhill's did, and the Haverhill teachers' union received anticipated fines for going on strike against state law.

A part of the frustration among many in the community is how the city's financial burdens in other areas have limited funding allocated to schools, particularly the exorbitant debt from the old Hale Hospital.

"The Hale Hospital debt has been a burden to this city," states Marc Harvey, history teacher at

Haverhill High School and member of the teachers union.

Hale Hospital had racked up debt, reported inaccurate numbers, and with the city paying pensions for the many former employees, the hospital was a strain on the city budget.

From fiscal 1988-2002, Hale Hospital was profitable only one fiscal year during that time, according to city records that were pulled by the Eagle Tribune. For seven years, after the Hale Hospital loan in 2002, Haverhill educators took 0-percent raises with roughly \$11 million of the city budget going to the loan per year.

With the protest over for educators, school went back into session Friday, October 21, now with new changes on the horizon for the Haverhill Public School system.

LUNCHES:

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Students enjoying their meals during the new fourth lunch.

by a bunch of immature freshmen that make the lunchroom very noisy and uncomfortable," Longenecker said.

In addition to the added lunch, students are now also required to use their student ID number to get lunch.

According to Lu, requiring students to swipe for lunch is necessary for the grants that provide free lunch for all students.

"We have grant money, and that helps us pay for the free lunch for all students," she said. "But we need an accurate count for students receiving in order to have the data to support the continuance of the grant. That way we're making sure that ev-

erone is accountable for what we're doing and the money we're spending."

Lu mentioned that administrators have also seen a reduction in write-ups this year regarding students skipping or showing up late for class during lunch. She was unsure whether that's a result of the new swipe requirement or other new policies such as not allowing food outside of the cafeteria.

Students are now prohibited from leaving the cafeteria with food. In the past, students have been able to eat lunch at tables provided outside, in the mall, in the stairwells and teachers' classrooms, and even in the library.

Veteran English teach-

er Joanne Baker spoke to the improvements she's seen in the hallways as a result of the new rules.

"It's hard to keep track of kids when you have huge crowds in the mall," Baker said, "but the student mall area is definitely improving even if I still occasionally see a student there with food."

Although some students feel constrained by this new rule because it infringes upon their ability to freely socialize, there are others who feel that if more strictly enforced the new policy would take away from important learning time.

Senior Jesse Looney is one student who daily

carries his lunch to the library, where he gets to work on his linear algebra independent study.

"I don't go to my lunch, I instead attend a different class in the library and just eat my lunch there," said Looney. "I would rather eat and learn at the same time."

Lu did mention that eating lunch in alternative places may become a privilege reserved for upperclassmen come spring.

"There have been talks about letting juniors and seniors when the weather is nice in the spring use the courtyard for outside seating," she said, "but they will need to have IDs to show they are a junior or senior."

OPINION: i-Ready testing is a waste of time and money

By Meg Gardner

HAVERHILL— Are Haverhill High students ready to ditch iReady?

As a high school student, I hear a lot about the "i-Ready" testing. I am also forced to devote a great deal of time to taking it. Between testing, emails about re-taking tests, and our scores, students in the district actually never hear the end of it.

"i-Ready," if you are somehow unfamiliar, was brought to Haverhill High School during the Glenn Burns administration. The purpose of the testing is to collect data to be able to target areas where students need improvement and then create a specialized learning program for each student via the "i-Ready" application. The test itself was also intended to create a more relaxed testing environment for students, using mod-

ern computer cartoons and animation with the prompts and questions.

The duration of "iReady" throughout the year adds up to at least 360 minutes of class time each year. At Haverhill High, this is the equivalent of eight classes just for the testing alone, nevermind all the other stuff that revolves around the test.

But not only does the "iReady" waste high schoolers time, it is also a major waste of money. According to educatorstechnology.com, the "i-Ready" licenses cost a minimum of \$6 per student per year. While this may not seem very costly, Haverhill Public Schools has just under 7,800 enrolled, as of 2022. This would add up to nearly \$50,000 annually for "i-Ready," which provides little more information

than the yearly MCAS results in the hands of the many competent educators employed throughout the district.

Furthermore, and maybe most absurdly, the "i-Ready" tests do not provide strategies or materials for math or reading above an eighth grade level, so why are 9-12 graders taking it?

Granted, the recent results showed that a vast majority of HHS students read at a middle school level or lower, with less than 40 percent of high schoolers reading at grade level or above; however, is that data accurate?

Take the interesting case of senior James Zbitnoff, for example. Zbitnoff managed to deliberately score at the lowest reading level possible—kindergarten—without being flagged for flying through

the assessment. James, of course, is in English IV Honors.

When asked about his sacrilegious act, he simply said, "i-Ready isn't beneficial for anyone at the upper-classmen level," and added that "students at the high school should complete assessments that help them prepare for college."

Although James is probably an outlier in his ambition to score as low as possible on the iReady, I think it's safe to assume that there are many other students who simply do not take the i-Ready all that seriously.

If this is in fact the case—which I personally believe it is—what is the value of the data? Of i-Ready? Of the instruction it encourages?

I know I'm ready to be done with iReady.

OPINION: The revolving door of staff at HHS is leaving students in the dust

By Sheeba Nabiryo

As invigorating and unifying as last month's strike was for students, teachers and much of the community, let's hope the end result was enough to keep many of our beloved educators in Haverhill.

As a "scholar" at Haverhill High School, it can be easy to think that nobody wants to be here less than you. However, the inconsistency of administration and staff at HHS in recent years has made it clear that we aren't the only ones who would rather be elsewhere.

Upperclassmen especially have bore witness to this, as we have seen not one, not two, but three different principals. A principal, as the figurehead of the administration, has more impact on the culture of the school than some may realize.

The Meland administration can best be described as a fever dream, where student activism and inclusivity thrived in the student body, but violence also festered within the same free-for-all system. Now, going into my senior year with "Interim" Principal Soraghan—interim of course being the key word—we've been promised a swift return to good ol' Hillie values, such as strict monitoring of the halls by our also understaffed security team.

Sometimes it can feel as though our principals,

teachers, and other educators have already left before we could even finish those painful beginning-of-the-year icebreakers. It is undeniable that the constant revolving door of staff has given students whiplash, and we students have become more aware of the issue, both from personal experience and recent events.

One Haverhill High senior has had multiple beloved teachers leave in her four years at HHS. Celia Schoenfeld's freshman year English teacher and ceramics teacher both left Haverhill High in the past year for other opportunities. While Schoenfeld only had a few classes with these teachers, she quickly formed bonds with them, spending time with them outside of the classroom setting.

"Each teacher should be able to leave if they want to, but I feel like bonds being created with students are hard to leave behind, especially when you get so close to a teacher," she explained. "I get that students are also going to leave, but having that support in the building throughout your years of high school is very beneficial. [Teachers] motivate you to do better in your classes and come to school everyday just to see them."

Staff leaving the school affects students



Photo illustration

not only emotionally but also academically. Virgil DeAngelis, another senior at Haverhill High, knows this impact all too well. This past summer, his guidance counselor left the school without a trace, leaving him without the 504 he'd been trying to get for months to support his learning.

"He was missing and it wasn't until August that someone was like 'yeah, he left.' We were shocked, and apparently he had taken all of my information

with him so no one knew I was supposed to have accommodations," DeAngelis said. "That whole time I was struggling because he left and no one had communicated with us. We never got a reason."

The lack of guidance counselors in particular can drastically affect students' academics due to scheduling issues.

"People don't have classes available to them," he said. "There are classes that we need that aren't in certain blocks cause

there's no teachers, and kids are being shoved into whatever classroom. Everything's so disorganized."

So, what can we do to fix this? DeAngelis proposed, "Supports for the teachers would help, not just leaving them to their own devices."

"My math teacher doesn't even have enough seats for the kids in his class, and there's over 30 kids in there," he said. "What they need to do is become more organized so teachers don't have to work out the administration's messes. The pay raise is also an obvious fix."

This "pay raise" DeAngelis is referring to is the one detailed in a new contract for Haverhill educators, recently settled after many months of "bargaining," petitioning, and other slightly less legal activities. With a new contract finally on the table, it's hoped that this more competitive salary will entice more teachers to stay when they would've otherwise left the district in order to make a more liveable income.

If this outcome demonstrated anything to students, it's that if we're unhappy with the way our education is being handled by the Powers That Be, we have the power to help things change. We won't allow the issue of teacher

retention to be swept under the rug.

Those who aren't in Haverhill schools everyday may not see this turnover as an issue unique to Haverhill; however, this shouldn't be used to dismiss the struggles that we as a community have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. It's a simple fact: students need consistency. An environment where teachers leave in the middle of the year, guidance counselors disappear into thin air, and principals could change any second is not one in which students can be expected to thrive academically or emotionally.

It's clear to all HHS students, especially upperclassmen, that one of the biggest reasons why we drag ourselves out of bed at 6 o'clock in the morning to get ready for school, or register for that AP Government class that we know is going to be hell, or push ourselves to turn in those last few assignments towards the end of the year, is because of our teachers who motivate us to keep working hard every day until we graduate.

If we as a community want to keep great teachers in Haverhill, it's imperative that we continue to take the measures needed to ensure that this is a place where our current teachers want to stay, and our future teachers want to come back to.

OPINION: If arts matter to Haverhill High, where's the funding?

By Maya Bennett, *President of the HHS Drama Club*



Half of the bulbs burnt out on one of the HHS stagelight fixtures.

The Fine Arts Department and the Drama Club have been on a roll these past few years, putting on sold out performances of dramatic gems such as "This Is A Test," "The Wizard of Oz," and our latest production of "Treasure Island," just to name a few. But just as with artistic performances in general, things

are not always what they seem.

When people from throughout the region come to the high school auditorium, they are often dazzled by the pageantry and skill of the students before them and behind the scenes, but when the curtain closes and the lights go on, it's clear the glam is a sham.

Take for example the wonderful stain on the ceiling right above the small, outdated technical booth. Or the fact that the spotlights only work sometimes, if we're lucky, and that most of the stage lights don't work at all. The white cyc, the sheet that projects colors as a background onstage, is as damaged as it is stained, defeating the purpose of it all together. These are only a few of the repairs that need to be made to our auditorium just for it to match the quality of the performances that are put on every year.

Go outside, however, and it's a different world. In the past few years an entire athletic complex has been developed around the high school track, not to mention the first-class renovations that have taken place down at the stadium. Let us also not forget the rumors that indoor tennis courts may be coming to replace the perfectly functioning outdoor ones beside the student

parking lot. This is truly a tale of two cities, as clearly demonstrated by a glance of the school budget.

Take just a quick look at the most up-to-date proposed operating budget for the 2022-2023 school year. The facilities section under the Athletics Department, which lists all the improvements that were made and how much each cost, proves that the department is thriving. Over \$10 million was invested to support athletic programs over the years.

Then scroll down to look at the Fine and Performing Arts facilities section. It's nonexistent. The section doesn't even appear on the page. Surrounding schools, such as North Reading and Chelmsford High, have spent over \$21.2 million dollars combined on professional technology systems for their students over the years. This is astounding due to the current physical state of the auditorium that anyone could point out using

only a naked eye.

Melissa Allen, a veteran teacher and the advisor of the HHS Drama Club states: "We don't have anyone, to my knowledge, who manages the space for all the groups that use it." She also pointed out that "the lack of consistency is tied to a lack of funding."

For those of us who have dedicated much of our young lives to the pursuit of the arts, the sense of frustration increases with each new addition to athletics, be it the new soccer field, track turf, and even new crew boats, while students whose passion lies in endeavors other than sports are forced to compete, yes compete, in the same facilities their parents and even grandparents did.

The HHS Drama Club has competed against both North Reading and Chelmsford in the Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild Festival in years past, even advancing

with them in the competition. We also draw larger crowds than Hillie sports teams on many of our show days, so why wouldn't more funding be sent our way? If we're so concerned with how our schools and facilities appear to parents, fans, and guests, why wouldn't we invest in the auditorium, where so many people convene for so many reasons?

The productions at Haverhill High that get shared with our community reflect the hard work, effort, and talent of the students who spend so much time putting it all together. Yet these young thespians are being neglected by those who choose not to invest in the arts after we do so much to bring the city together.

It's time that Haverhill High programs that don't take place in a gym, on an athletic field, or on a court get the support and recognition that they deserve.

OPINION: Skater kids in town need a new place to kickflip

By Avery Becker

Haverhill—According to a recent WHAV article, city councilors celebrated \$210,000 in park grants from the state to extend trails, restore monuments, and improve Round Pond, among other initiatives that will add beauty and accessibility to the city's parks. As nice as this will be, these aren't the type of parks that require our immediate attention.

For Haverhill youth older than 12 and younger than 21, there are limited activities to encourage them to get off their phones and create communities and experiences with friends. If the solution calls for a park area that is interesting enough for a teenager, then a skatepark in Haverhill is a necessity.

Considering the tainted reputation of skateparks, it isn't rash to assume that a call for a functional skatepark would fall on deaf ears. Their reputation as an open drug market isn't entirely untrue, especially when skateparks are

tucked into isolated dark corners and designed so that only older teens can skate them, which is exactly how Haverhill's existing skatepark in Cashman Park of Hilldale was constructed.

In 2018, the previous 25-year-old skatepark was torn up and a new one was constructed in its place. Haverhill did try to make the skatepark accommodating by bringing in an architect and taking the advice of a professional skateboard company, but they simply did not pour enough money into the project to make it a skatepark worth using. In juxtaposition to the \$2 million Swasey waterpark renovation project in 2016, the \$244,000 Cashman renovation is meager, given that the money was also used for a basketball court, walking paths, a playground, and benches.

Considering the most recent infusion of cash and the city's commendable willingness to spend on its outdoor areas, lack

of funds is not a worthy excuse for neglecting to invest in recreational activities geared toward our most important asset: the youth. Furthermore, should further funding be required for a worthwhile skatepark, grants like The Skatepark Project Grant provide cities with the funds to get started.

The polished, wealthier cities that neighbor Haverhill, such as Newburyport, Andover and Amesbury, have already accomplished what we have not. All three boast accessible, safe, state-of-the-art skateparks, and Newburyport has attached their skatepark to the Nock Middle School, where they throw an annual Skate Fest.

Even if Haverhill found it impossible to implement their skatepark in a more public place, like Newburyport has, a renovation of Cashman Park would help to mend its stained reputation. With remodeling and additions, the park would be welcoming to beginners. The more fam-

ilies and younger skaters that frequent the park, the more its reputation will change into more of a family-friendly spot.

In a world where the majority of young people's social interactions come from looking at a screen, the physical and vibrant community of skateboarding could improve the wellbeing and mental health of Haverhill's youth. An activity as physically and mentally challenging as skateboarding not only encourages commitment and perseverance but creates a community, as older skaters are characteristically encouraging and welcoming to anyone willing to even try, not at all the toxic gatekeepers one might expect them to be.

If Haverhill pours its resources into skateparks, we could raise a generation of young people who know the value of resilience and commitment, whether it's a commitment to landing a kickflip or changing the world.



Virtually unskateable rail at Chasman's skatepark.

Voices from the Picket Line



The following quotes are from teachers and students who rallied in downtown Haverhill on Thursday, Oct. 27. They were asked to share their feelings about the strike as it entered its fourth day. The strike would eventually be resolved later that evening.

Rachel White

Literacy Coach - Bradford Elementary

This rally has been incredibly empowering. To watch us as teachers stand together and stand up for each other and our students has been amazing. At the elementary level, I always say we're like a family. I've been at Bradford Elementary for 17 years, and the people that I work with truly are my family, and so are the students, and I feel that this has brought us even closer together. This has truly been one of the most empowering things, and I'm proud to have been a part of it. I'm proud my own three children have watched me stand up for what is right for our students and for us.

Michael Lavieri

English Teacher - Haverhill High School

I've been teaching English at the high school for 17 years, and my experience the last four days has been incredible. There's been more people out every day, including more and more students and parents coming out. I think it sends a clear message to the city that we need to be treated fairly. My students also deserve to be treated fairly. Teachers need to be treated fairly to be able to stay in the career for another 30-35 years and not be driven out by disrespect and poor treatment.

Maya Bennett

Haverhill High School student, class of 2023

Honestly, for the cause we're here for, everything has been so uplifting and happy. We've been playing music all day every day. I've been jamming out with my friends, and we're all here supporting such an amazing cause for teachers that we love and support so much, who have done so much for us, and honestly, I haven't seen any negativity here or at home online. It's overall just been a really good experience.

Jaylene Viera

Haverhill High School student, class of 2023

I think the biggest thing that's happening with the School Committee is that they're very much hoping that we burn out. I'm hoping that after a single rally, we've only gotten more encouraged and more ready to fight. So, I definitely think it's a useless effort from the School Committee to keep telling us they're going to add extra days or fire teachers. We have never lost momentum to keep coming out, so it's useless at this point.

Claire O'Malley

Haverhill High School student, class of 2023

There's been good energy. I'd prefer not to have to be out here; I'd prefer to be sitting in a classroom. But until the School Committee decides to act like responsible adults about this, I'm outside with my teachers because it's the right thing to do.



Jen Slater

Yoga Teacher - Haverhill High School

I am very proud of the unity of the school with the students and the unity in the community. I've heard nothing but positive things coming from parents and students. I've never seen anything like this before. It's very moving, and I think that by day four, we're here and we're going to see a positive outcome. Finally, because we stood strong together and people really spoke out and opened up, I think this is a very big deal. It's time. I'm proud of us.

Jordyn Britton

Weightlifting Coach - Haverhill High School

I've been here for five years, so it's been awesome. I'm a Haverhill resident, I was born here, so it's incredibly important to me. This city is my home. Everybody around me, this is what I care about so much and why I came to teach in Haverhill. It's been a great show of community from everybody that's here, and I feel like we've been lacking that since Covid because everybody's gone their own way. It's so special to see everybody come together and really advocate for our kids and for the future of this city.

Katie Erwin

Haverhill High School student, class of 2023

It's been incredible seeing how many students have come out to support their teachers, and getting to be one of those students has meant a lot for me because my teachers have done so much for me in the past. Seeing how they're struggling with all these contract negotiations and what they deal with on a daily basis in the classroom, it's really heartwarming to see that the community cares as much as I care, and I'm glad to do my part.

Sara Tucker

Haverhill High School student, class of 2024

I have been having a lot of fun with the teachers and getting the energy that they have been kind of spreading. It has been really inspiring, in a way, and I've been out here listening to music and dancing. Being able to support the people who have always supported me is incredibly important to me.

Connor Hayden

Latin Teacher - Haverhill High School

In general, it's been frustrating that we are out here and still out here and not getting movement, but it's also pretty inspiring. We think and talk about activism all the time, and oftentimes, things get in the way, but this has been a really good opportunity for the whole staff to come together. I see a lot of people I never see and talk to a lot of people I don't get a chance to talk to, and we're all out here for the same goal and the same purpose. So, I think that part of it has really been uplifting, and I just hope that we get a real contract and we can get back to work.



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