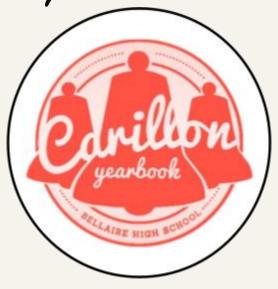
# featuring emerald tang.



# **DESIGNER'S STATEMENT - BELLAIRE HIGH SCHOOL**

When I applied to my school's yearbook staff as an "editor," I assumed that I would solely be writing. After all, that was what the word "editor" implied, and quite frankly, writing was the reason I had applied. However, through my past two years on staff, I have been exposed to a new concept from a plethora of perspectives: design.

The very first day I set sight on Adobe InDesign, I was told to design a module. There were guidelines, samples, and a design instruction guide, yet I found myself lost, staring at the blank file, waiting for some semblance of inspiration to manifest itself. That moment never arrived, and I would spend the next two hours arranging hexagons, ultimately crafting what appeared to be a giant purple version of the "Very Hungry Caterpillar."

My first year on staff was followed by struggles. I spent late nights fiddling with polygons, staring at my screen, then fiddling with even more polygons. In the beginning, it felt like I was trying to solve a puzzle with all of the wrong pieces. There were all of these aspects that looked strange, and I had no idea how to fix them.

One year and five deadlines later, there was growth. Extensive time spent deliberating on a spread design transformed into firm decision-making to become one of the first staffers to complete their assignments. I became one of the heads of a whole section, the clubs section.

When confronted with the theme "as always," I thought about how to reflect the continuous nature of my school. As a section editor, I attempted to elevate my spread designs with a combination of organic and rigid shapes. For me, the organic shapes and the line FBL resembled the ever-changing dynamic of the school. My counterparts and I encouraged the other staff in our section to use the line as a guiding measure, traveling from one edge of the page to another. Conversely, the rigid rectangles represented the "always" portion of our theme. Despite the evolving dynamics of the school, some things are always certain. Our school's award-winning programs, brilliance, and diverse student body.

A key distinction I've made this year as a section editor is independence. Before deadlines in the preceding years, there was no template, no preset designs, and no samples to glean any inspiration from. It was up to me to interpret the meaning of the theme, and it was also up to me to execute the theme. Even so, I felt more confident in my stylistic choices, offering other people advice based on my understanding of design. Contrary to the previous year, design became my friend. Blank pages were not to be feared; the white space was another opportunity for me to paint a narrative of my school.

As I'm approaching the next year as an editor-in-chief, I have a new definition for the word, "editor" in yearbook. An editor is a storyteller; their role is not limited to telling a story with a mixture of intricately woven words, but rather assembling a beautiful exhibition with photos and decor to form a delicate narrative. An editor can communicate. An editor can lead. And an editor can definitely design.

# **MY PAGES**

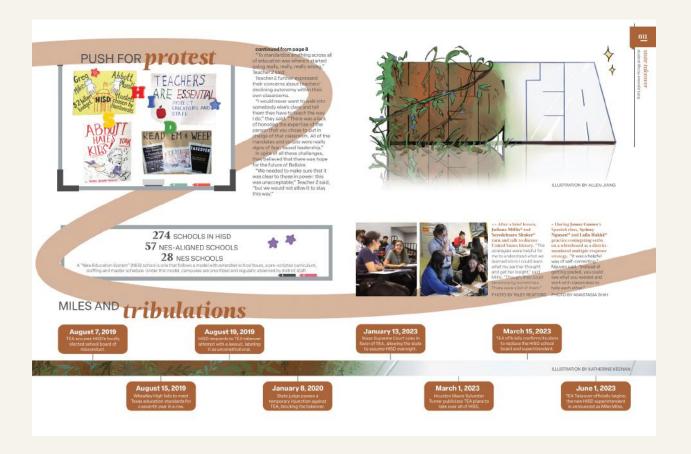
#### **STATE TAKEOVER PT 1**

The state takeover encapsulated a large part of our community's year; consequently, as my first deadline of the year, my goal was to hone in on the storytelling of the event. I started off on the right half of the spread with a large dominant photo that captured the emotions of district protestors and utilized the line FBL to emphasize the woman at the forefront who directed the crowd with her megaphone. On the left side of the spread, I inserted a large area of white space to draw attention to the thorough dominant copy that mirrored the emotions of the photo.



#### **STATE TAKEOVER PT 2**

Although a continuation of the previous spread, my second state takeover page was created to embody the different aspects of the transition under unfamiliar district policies. By collaborating with several designers on staff, I portrayed the physical shift through illustrations of "rags to riches" or "weeds to luxury" based on the promises and rhetoric of the new administration. Then, I used a mixture of shapes to design whiteboard boxes filled with information as an allusion to the photo-captions, referencing one of the "MRS" strategies that teachers were required to incorporate into their daily curriculums.



#### **COLLEGE APPLICATIONS**

The college applications spread was hands-down my favorite spread that I made in this year's publication; it felt incredibly special to me because I had suggested the spread topic to my editors-in-chief, and they gave me the liberty to execute it however I wanted to. From the get-go, I grouped most of my modules in rigid rectangle boxes to reference the idea that college applications were often a structured, resolute process. While the spread was certainly text-heavy, I sought to integrate a variety of visual elements to accompany the information: the pen, school flags, globe, and most notably the map of the United States, which had dozens of tiny dots for people to conceive the numerical information in a more digestive manner.

# Full PDF available here



#### **LATIN AMERICA**

I purposefully employed vibrant colors to match the ambience of all the brightly saturated photos used on the spread. The main pink FBL line travels behind the ankle of the dominant photo's main subject to highlight the "in the air" dance move performed by all the students. At the bottom left of the spread, there is an alternate beige line to consolidate the different elements of the module, including the visual representations of desserts and cutouts with flower icons as another dynamic pop of color.



#### **ORCHESTRA**

As my final deadline of the year, I replaced the letter "i" in the headline with the neck of a violin, tying together the spread topic. Also, I wanted to depart from the typical cut-outs of people in our yearbook, instead opting for cutouts of instrumental bows to create a catalog-esque design that is easy to interpret. The page comprises a multitude of deep purple rectangle blocks to contrast with the amber hue of the instruments, yet still maintaining the overall elegance of the page.

