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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.

Full PDF available [here](#)

fuel to the fire?

Teachers discuss 'losing' their autonomy on campus

As the faculty and students of the Houston Independent School District stepped foot onto campuses this August, a new challenge was added to their agenda: mandatory changes due to the Texas Education Agency takeover.

TEA cited issues with HISD board members' behavior and special education compliance as partial reasons for the district takeover. Following Phillis Wheatley High School's seventh year of failing to meet state education standards, TEA officially launched its campaign to take over HISD, stating that it was necessary to begin adjustments.

While some parts of the education community perceived the takeover as a step toward the right direction, others believed it was nothing but an infringement on the school system. During a meeting with district administrators, new superintendent Mike Miles made it clear that anyone who disagreed with his vision should leave HISD.

Although principal **Michael Nippitt** declined to comment on the takeover, other members of the faculty voiced their opinions.

"I already knew something was going on with TEA warning to take over for a long time," Teacher 1 said. "But when I saw that they actually did take over, I was pretty disappointed. I didn't realize we would ever come to this point."

"This aligned with the sentiments of concerned faculty, parents and students who had spoken against the takeover at numerous protest events across Texas over the summer months."

Teachers were granted anonymity to protect them from potential retaliation.

On June 8, protestors gather to chant in unison outside of the Harriet Mays White Education Center. The event was held prior to the first Board of Managers meeting since the TEA's district takeover.

PHOTO BY RILEY REXFORD

009

STATE TAKEOVER

Our T Our C

SAVE OUR SCHOOLS

HOUSTON DESERVES DEMOCRACY

Test Prep

Pepper Spray

Scandals

F-Mess

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.

Full PDF available [here](#)

STATE TAKEOVER

PUSH FOR protest

continued from page 8

"To standardize anything across all of education was where it started going really, really, really wrong," Teacher 2 said.

Teacher 2 further expressed their concerns about teachers' declining autonomy within their own classrooms.

"I would never want to walk into somebody else's classroom and tell them they have to teach the way I do," they said. "There was a lack of honoring the expertise of the person that you chose to put in charge of that classroom. All of the mandates and policies were really signs of fear-based leadership."

In spite of all these challenges, they believed that there was hope for the future of Belaine.

"We needed to make sure that it was clear to those in power: this was unacceptable," Teacher 2 said, "but we would not allow it to stay this way."

TEACHERS ARE ESSENTIAL

PROTECT INNOVATORS AND STAFF

READ EM + WEEP

ABOTT HATES YOUR KIDS

Greg Abbott

52 million budget

HISD

Abbott

52 million budget

TEA

ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN JIANG

274 SCHOOLS IN HISD

57 NES-ALIGNED SCHOOLS

28 NES SCHOOLS

A "New Education System" (NES) school is one that follows a model with extended school hours, a pre-scripted curriculum, staffing and master schedule. Under this model, campuses are prioritized and regularly observed by district staff.

MILES AND tribulations

August 7, 2019

TEA accuses HISD's locally elected school board of misconduct.

August 15, 2019

Wheatley High fails to meet Texas education standards for a seventh year in a row.

August 19, 2019

HISD responds to TEA takeover attempt with a lawsuit, labeling it as unconstitutional.

January 8, 2020

State Judge orders a temporary injunction against TEA, blocking the takeover.

January 13, 2023

Texas Supreme Court rules in favor of TEA, allowing the state to assume HISD oversight.

March 1, 2023

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner publishes TEA plans to take over all of HISD.

March 15, 2023

TEA officially confirms its plans to replace the HISD school board and superintendent.

June 1, 2023

TEA Takeover officially begins; the new HISD superintendent is announced as Mike Miles.

After a brief lesson, Juliana Mills and Sevelebara Shaker turn and talk to discuss United States history. "The strategies were helpful for me to understand what we learned since I could learn what my partner thought and get her insight," said Mike. "I thought they could be really helpful sometimes. There were a lot of them."

During James Gannon's Spanish class, Sydney Nguyen and Laila Bakki practice conjugating verbs on a whiteboard as a district-mandated multiple response strategy. "It was a helpful way of self-correcting," Nguyen said. "Instead of getting graded, you could see what you needed and work with classmates to help each other."

PHOTO BY RILEY REXFORD

PHOTO BY ANASTASIA SHIH

ILLUSTRATION BY KATHERINE KEENAN

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](#)



your future starts here

Promptly after landing in Boston as vacation with her family, **Rilina "Tran"** poses outside of the Harvard library. "Before touring, I didn't have a big picture of Harvard other than it probably being a big and pretty campus," Tran said. "It fit those descriptions, but there was nothing that screamed out, 'This is so crazy.' But being there in the atmosphere, I thought it was worth it. It was a whole new experience."

PHOTO COURTESY OF RILINA TRAN

just wanna HAVE FUNDS

"The scholarship I got was more of a local scholarship, and it was volunteer-centered. I had done a lot of community service and wrote about my activities and honors related to that. They invited me to speak at their company event, and I talked about my volunteering experience. I would say that it was very helpful to focus on local scholarships because there wasn't a lot of advertising for them, so it was easier to get. Their monetary amounts weren't as big, but it was still a lot."

CAPST SCHOLARSHIP \$1000

Helena Wang¹²

"I received the scholarship for the STEM category. I talked about amateur radio where you built circuits and antennas, soldered things together and tried to contact people around the world. There was a lot of coding, but there was also a lot of engineering. This year, we had an amateur radio club at school, so I was excited to be a part of that. They gave me the scholarship by coming into my AP Economics class with balloons and a giant check and said 'got it.' It was a fun thing that happened in school, and I wasn't expecting anything like that."

CITGO SCHOLARSHIP \$5000

Akshay Kapur¹²

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO!



LOS ANGELES, CA
"I was interested in the LA Film School in UCLA. I wanted to do filmmaking and thought places like California would help me get introduced to that and improve on things I wanted to do in that set of subjects."
Samiya Ellis¹²

HOUSTON, TX
"I just thought I wasn't ready to let go of my family yet. Also, I was already involved with the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, so I wanted to stay here to be more involved with that."
Ivana Santiago¹²

SAVANNAH, GA
"My first choice, Savannah College of Art and Design, was there. I thought it was a beautiful city with good culture and a lot of people who I could relate to."
Rowan Murphy¹²

KEY:
each • represents one Bellare student
NOTE: the dots are placed based on the state of the college their students plan to attend

from a survey of 103 students
ICONS FROM ADOBE EXPRESS, MAP DESIGN BY ERIN HE

EARLY BIRD catches the worm?

UPENN



"I thought that the academics and extracurriculars to get into an Ivy, and UPenn seemed most appealing because the other Ivies were very academically oriented while UPenn was one that had more of a social life. Also, my academic interests were in the environmental field, but I also wanted to do something related to business with that. UPenn had one of the best business schools in the world, so it seemed like a perfect combination for me."
Dhruv Balivada¹²

RICE UNIVERSITY



"I toured the campus sometime in October, and I really liked how they had the residential college system. I thought that was super cute, and the residential groups all had their little traditions. One of the traditions was that their mascot was baranians, which I thought was cool."
Amanda Huttenbach¹²

UNC AT CHAPEL HILL



"UNC had been one of my dream schools since I was really young. I had been a fan of their athletics, specifically the basketball team since I was 3 or 4 years old. I took a visit up there two summers ago, and I loved it. It was really pretty, and they were a really good school for business."
Lucas Dolibois¹²

FLAG DESIGN BY ANGELA DE

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.

Full PDF available [here](#)

VIVA la vida

LULAC, Spanish Club and Latin Revolution merge clubs

Following the departure of several Spanish teachers after the last spring semester, the officers of Spanish Club and Latin Revolution were met with a predicament: Their clubs no longer had a sponsor. Luckily, the officers of volunteer club League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) came up with a solution. "We had the idea of merging the clubs together so we could all have our sponsor," Ms. **(Esther) Gale**, LULAC vice president **Gennise Carreon** said. "That way, we could be more united and hold more collaborations within all three clubs." Consequently, the clubs formed LSL, taking the first letter of each

separate club to form a collective organization. Since then, the officers had to implement several changes to their routine club meetings. "It was definitely different because we had to include more aspects of each club," Carreon said. Despite the changes, LSL president **Jasmin Garcia** was incredibly satisfied with the changes. "I was really happy because when the clubs weren't together the previous years, everything felt disconnected, but now we did everything together!" Garcia said. "People felt way better that they could attend all club meetings without having to deal with not going to another one."

As part of the final dance of the night, Kevin Yanez performs with his multi-talented dance crew. The inspiration came from Halloween. Yanez said, "The music we chose was Hispanic-themed, and the dances were Spanish related. There were Huasteco and Tribal dances involved."

PHOTO BY ANASTASIA SHIH

“LSL brought us Hispanic and Latin kids all together into one big community.”

Gennise Carreon¹¹

CAKED in culture

"The arroz con leche was made with water, rice, cinnamon, milk, condensed milk and evaporated milk. We put water and cinnamon sticks in a pot and let it boil. Once it boiled, we poured in rinsed rice and closed the pot to let the rice absorb the water. After, we took out the cinnamon sticks and added milk, condensed milk and stirred. Then, it was ready to eat."

Daniela Gonzales¹¹

"For the Dessert Club collab, I made the Flan. I melted sugar in the pot, then put the sugar into the pan to harden. I mixed eggs, evaporated milk, condensed milk and this Hispanic cream altogether. After, I put it in the pan and put the pan in a water bath. When it hardened, it was like a gelatin."

Angela Esquivel¹²

"I cut some fruit up since a very common dessert in Latin America was fruit with Tajin-Chamoy. I was also serving pan dulce which was usually eaten for breakfast with some coffee. The pan dulce was all the same flavor though the most common flavors were vanilla and chocolate."

Joselyn Esmeralda¹³

1 ARROZ CON LECHE

2 FLAN

3 PAN DULCE

<< On stage with her 10 Spanish classmates, Sophie Hall models for the Hispanic Heritage Month fashion show. "It was cool to see outfits from the different countries," Hall said. "That was the first time that I had seen the full outfits without people with pants or shirts on underneath. One of my classmates' clothes didn't fit, so his pants were really saggy, and that was funny!"

PHOTO BY ANASTASIA SHIH

<< Carrying Diana Espinoza Perez in the air, Jose Martinez strikes the ending pose. "I had already known the dance move because I used to be in dance groups," Martinez said. "The club needed an ending pose, so I was like, 'You guys should do this.' It took a little bit of practice for the performance, like a week. We definitely had to practice balance so the girls would not fall, and the girls had to know where to place their hands."

PHOTO BY ANASTASIA SHIH

ICONS FROM ADOBE EXPRESS

PHOTO BY CHLOE CHANG

PHOTO BY ANASTASIA SHIH

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.

Full PDF available [here](#)

As the performance comes to a close, Philharmonie Orchestra members stand for the audience's applause. "Polar Express" was the song we performed." **Kashika Adhikari** said. "It was a fun song that some people know, so I loved the moment when the audience recognized the song. We spent a lot of time practicing for it, and I thought we did really well. Just performing as a group was such a good experience. Everyone played very well, and they were really dedicated." **PHOTO BY RAYMOND HAN**

Locked in, **Breah Scott** and **Ilyria** members perform at the winter concert. "Out of all the concerts we've done, I thought this was the best one," Scott said. "We put our hard work into this performance because it had the hardest pieces. It took a lot of time and hard effort, but we all enjoyed it. **Ms. Laurence Reynosa** prepared a Lyrica very well. My favorite piece was 'Calm and Bright' because it was soft, beautiful and not too fast." **PHOTO BY RILEY REXFORD**

During the Halloween concert, **Mingyi Chen** harmonizes with students from **Ladies Middle School**. "We helped the middle school kids with tuning their instruments," Chen said. "Usually, their teacher had to do it for them. Everyone was paired together, a middle schooler with a high schooler. That was really good because I thought we could get things done a lot faster." **PHOTO BY RILEY REXFORD**

While prepping up on a high chair, **Raiden Mosier** passionately bows the bass. "For the Halloween concert, I was playing the bass for **Tai Rogers**," Mosier said. "I mainly played cello but I switched to bass for that concert. Though they were not too similar, switching was not that difficult because they were very similar in difficulty. However, being the only bass was kind of stressful. Any kind of mistake was very nerve-wracking." **PHOTO BY RILEY REXFORD**

HALL OF harmonies

IB Music students produce new variations of classic pieces

Letztter Frühling, Indian classical music. **Billie Ellis**'s "Bad Guy." Though seemingly unassociated, those three tunes each played a unique role in four Sinfonia seniors' IB Music presenting project. From the start to the finish of the fall semester, musicians **Raiden Mosier**, **Grace Pravinkumar**, **Pranav Praveen** and **Meiling Yang** experimented with these peculiar melodies in their quartet before performing for their entire orchestra. "IB Music in particular was very useful in helping us understand different facets of music," Praveen said. "Instead of just playing the pieces, we understood the intricacies and why someone composed the piece. Seeing what the composer wrote affected us all as musicians."

Despite the major progress that the quartet made in brainstorming with their director and composing the final arrangement, they were confronted with several minor, musical setbacks. "There were some really tough rhythms in the piece between parts," Yang said. "For example, one part came in off-beat, and during rehearsal, that threw people off. There wasn't much that you could do, except spend a bunch of time rehearsing those sections." Fortunately, the persistent practices eventually paid off, and the group executed their project successfully at a recital for IB classmates and orchestra students. "[The classmates] enjoyed it," Yang said. "They were amused by the choice of music we made."

ILLUSTRATION BY ANGELA LEE

all	strings	attached
"I had a wood bow. My preference was heavier bows because I felt like I had more control over it. I got the bow last year, and I decided to buy it because I was getting a new violin too."	"My bow for school was an M. Pereira viola bow. This bow had been with me for several years. Most of the time I just had bow hair replacements that cost around \$30 to \$40."	"I've had my bow since sixth grade. I had it repaired but that was it. It wasn't too cheap or too expensive. It was something reliable and decent that I could get for not too high of a price."
Annie Kong	Joseph Kim	Gael Tzul Reyna
\$300.00	undisclosed	\$120.00

PIECE BY piece

HAYDN: CELLO CONCERTO IN C
"Compared to Haydn Concerto in D, it was really vibrant, and the passages resembled rolling hills. The piece let the cello shine on the high notes, which you didn't really get to see too often."
Andy Shen

JANACEK: IDYLL
"Every single section got their moment in the music, from the first violins to the cellos. It was very colorful and had a strong accent, and I felt really empowered while playing it."
Veda Manikonda

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANGELA LEE