

AT A GLANCE



Seniors Janvi Huria and Rincon Jagarlamudi are among 1,609 students to be 2020-2021 Coca-Cola Scholarship Semifinalists.

Winter Break starts Wednesday, Dec. 23, and ends Monday, Jan. 4.

Thursday, Jan. 14, is an Early Release Day and the end of second quarter.

There will be no school Friday, Jan. 15 and Monday, Jan. 18.

Second semester begins Tuesday, Jan. 19.

Curriculum Night will be Wednesday, Jan. 27 from 6:30p.m. to 8p.m.

2021 AP exams will be administered in-person with full course content Monday, May 3 through Friday, May 14.

RSD offers pronoun, name changes

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DR. TERRY HARRIS, executive director of student services, received a call from a concerned mother on the verge of tears because her child wouldn't log onto Zoom.

This child is transgender and had to log in every time using their dead name, which the teacher would not allow them to change. So eventually, they just stopped logging in.

Dr. Harris set out to change this student's name within the system.

Soon after, the mother called back, in tears, saying for the first time in months her child was logged into online school and was thriving.

"For individuals who are not being oppressed, we don't seem to think about these different things," Dr. Harris said.

Dr. Harris has been working with other administrators to implement RSD's Initiative for LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Equity, a work in progress for five to six years that has made advancements despite being in its early stages.

A priority of the initiative has been to create visibility for the LGBTQ+ community. Telling stories is only the beginning, as professional learning on the subject is being pushed for as well.

"The decision that we will make will always be for the safety, happiness and love of students," Dr. Harris said.

Now the district is able to offer the option to have pronouns listed on Infinite Campus for both students and staff.

Outside of school, students have taken it upon themselves to take similar measures by putting their pronouns in the bios of their social media accounts.

Noelle Gratzter, junior, has her pronouns listed in her Instagram bio and uses her platform to spread awareness.

As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, Gratzter has encountered many people who seem close-minded regarding the topic of sexuality and has witnessed slurs casually thrown about.

Multiple students have reached out to Gratzter for explanation on why her pronouns are in her bio, which has caused more people to participate in the movement.

"It's important that RSD continues to create a safe space where people are



free to be open about themselves," Gratzter said. "This includes responding to discriminatory behavior in a way that helps to reduce it and prevent it in the future."

Emma Naes, junior, has had multiple teachers who ask students for their pronouns and one who changed their Zoom name to include their pronouns.

Naes is grateful for RSD's recognition of the social divide.

"I've noticed that a lot of LGBTQ+ people tend to stick together, but a lot of the 'popular kids' groups don't have a lot of diversity," Naes said. "I wish that there wasn't such a divide between

straight cis people and people with differing identities."

Lauren Williams, language arts teacher, has been an advocate for surveying students on their pronouns and is also a sponsor for the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA).

Williams has led professional development for staff members on the topic of LGBTQ+ inclusion where faculty is made familiar with what is acceptable among younger generations.

Discussions take place during GSA meetings about the different identities the LGBTQ+ term covers and the intersectionality in the community.

Williams recommends using the beginning of the year as a good time to ask students their pronouns.

"My message to the Marquette students would just be my message to anyone their age," Williams said. "Just find people that accept you for who you are, and ignore everyone else."

"It's important that RSD continues to create a safe space where people are free to be open about themselves."

**NOELLE GRATZER
JUNIOR**

Dr. Terry Harris, executive director of student services, presents an initiative for LGBTQ+ equity, access and inclusion to the Board of Education Thursday, Nov. 19. Mal Tockman, junior (left) and Liv Kalemis, junior (right) hold their posters at the Woman's March last January in downtown St. Louis to support the LGBTQ+ community. Photographs by Jordan Ring and Waha Siddiqui

At the Thursday, Nov. 19, Board of Education meeting, Jess Jones Education & Consulting presented about equity, access and inclusion for LGBTQ+ students. Scan the QR code to view the presentation.

