

The Rambler

RIVERVIEW GARDENS
HIGH SCHOOL
1218 SHEPLEY DR.
ST. LOUIS, MO 63137
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*Micah
Long:
Top 10
Apparel &
Accessories
Marketing
student in
MODECA*



Welcome Rambler readers!

🌍 byLady Mariposa

We are *The Rambler!* For those of you who did not see our first issue, which was published last year, you can find it online. To catch you up, we are a publication unlike any other. We call ourselves a “new’zine,” which means we are more than a newspaper or a magazine.

When we began, we noted: “We are an outlet for the young, an insight for the elder. Most importantly, this publication is our chance to grow and expand the way we think, entirely. Not just for you, but for everyone around you, to feel something. Something that’s new. Something that’s bright. And most notably, something that is worth your time and attention.”

We continue that mission, this year with a recap of First Semester. We hope you find something that meets our goals and piques your interest. Enjoy exploring our pages and keep an eye out for our next issue, featuring Second Semester!



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Cover photo: “Selfie” by Micah Long. (Story on page 16.)

This page: Top photo: “GOV” performs at Riverview Gardens’ District-wide Back to School Bash August 22, 2022 at RGHS.

Middle photo: “Ramblers, attend Journalism Convention” both by The Rambler staffers. Logo art by Deanna Taylor.

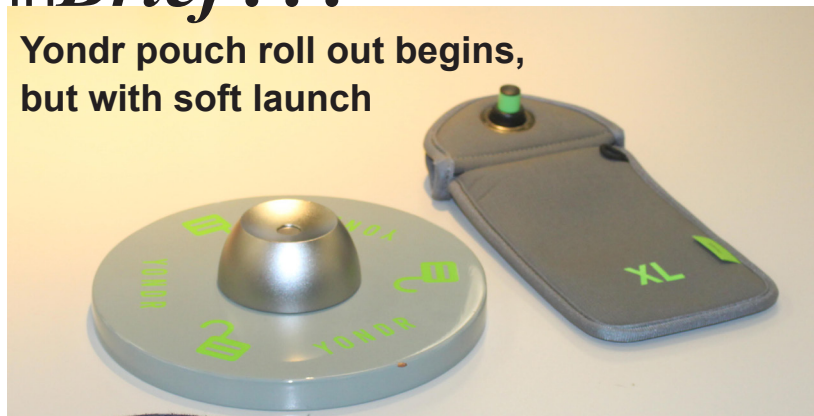
Opposite page: Left photo: RGHS Football’s winning-est season in years! Right top photo: Yondr pouch and release mechanism. Bottom right photo: Teachers and staff gather in the library after school last week to learn about Yondr pouches. ... Story coming in Issue 2.

inside *Scoop* . . .

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in *Brief* . . .

Yondr pouch roll out begins, but with soft launch



When Riverview Gardens High School students returned to school after Spring Break, they learned that Yondr pouches will only be used during “ISS, EOC testing, and in a piloted classroom,” said RGHS principal Traci Nave. The plan is to have a soft launch of the program, which requires students to place their cell phones in Yondr pouches, she said.

Originally the plan had been to give every student a pouch when we returned from Spring Break, but Nave said there were policy details that needed to be sorted first. The postponement offers time to build an understanding of the need and intended use of the Yondr pouches, she said.

In her March 27, 2023 email to the high school staff, Mrs. Nave wrote: “After careful consideration, the high school has decided to delay implementation of the Yondr pouches on our campus.” To support the program, school leaders must have “a Board-approved district policy that addresses the rationale, process and subsequent consequences; an updated Behavior Guide with protocols that support building level consequences; [an] increase in parent and student notification of the process, [and] support for personnel identified as the leader team for Yondr pouch implementation at the checkpoints.”

As the soft launch begins and continues throughout 4th Quarter, District leaders continue to shape plans for expansion into all-school use in the 2023-24 school year, Nave said. In anticipation of the policy shift, Nave gathered staff to meet with a Yondr company representative and learn about the pouches after school on March 8 in the library.

Though some seniors say they are relieved to know the soft launch is not likely to impact them, Nave said use of the pouches in the 2023-24 school year is a matter of *when* it is coming, rather than *if*.



Mrs. Traci Nave discusses Yondr pouches with staff.

Teacher shortages = creative solutions

by Fantasia Doll
and Emilee Weaver

Riverview Gardens High School has operated with a shortage of 15 teachers this year. While this is not news to anyone who attends school here, it is still a staggering statement that has administrators finding creative ways to provide students a solid education.

“We pretty much started out this way,” said Mrs. Traci Nave, RGHS principal.

Nave said a couple teachers left shortly after the school year began.

As there is a national shortage of teachers, we have faced challenges finding certified educators to fill those posts, as have many districts in the St. Louis region.

We have approached the problem by having some teachers cover more than one class at a time, using online course options and even bringing one teacher out of retirement.

Mr. Ronald Pinto, chair of the math department and the only certified geometry teacher in the building, said the shortage is significant. Ideally, he said, the school should have many more math teachers than we currently have.

“We should have



Sr. Chief Nathaniel Hernandez teaches larger classes this year, to resolve a teacher shortage at RGHS (Photo by Serjei Williams).

between 10 [and] 13 certified math teachers for this school,” he noted. “Currently we have only 3, plus one only on B days.”

To help carry the load, Mr. Steve Lutker, who retired two years ago, returned to Riverview this year to teach Algebra II. Meanwhile, Mr. Pinto teaches all of the Geometry classes.

“I am the only certified math teacher for Geometry,” Pinto noted. “The other certified math teachers are Mr. [Steve] Metz (Alg II, Trig, Calculus) and Ms. [Naomi] Miller (Algebra I). Mr. Lutker is for Algebra II. I also do Algebra II A1, A2 and B5. My Geometry classes are B5, B7 and B8.”

Pinto said there are three “permanent subs/non-certified math teachers who are monitoring some math classes.”

To help him, he has a student teacher who is taking on one of the classes as he teaches the other. He checks in to see that both classes are moving forward.

This is the challenge the high school math teachers and district officials face because math is a very important skill and a core subject.

Every student in any United States high school or high school program is required to complete at least three years of math. That is the standard -- what the teachers call the Common Core Standard, and it is expected by the state and the parents, as well as the students, at RGHS.

More than that, math is involved in every life, as senior LaTia Taylor, points out.

“I find it troubling that we don’t have enough math teachers because

I had to be in Rams recovery which goes on my transcript, which makes it look like I failed a class. And kids need help with math. Math is important,” she said. “People need math to handle their finances, pay their rent, budget, calculate payments, run a business, buy groceries and anything else,”

Taylor just completed Algebra II online through Edgenuity to meet graduation requirements.

The shortage is not limited to math teachers, as the adjacent story states. We also are missing a drama teacher. We also are missing an ROTC teacher.

Senior Chief Nathaniel Hernandez has 60 new students this year, all juniors and seniors.

When a teacher left at the beginning of the year, two classes that met during the same class period were combined into one.

Sophomore Havanni Norman said that her B6 Naval Science class expanded from 17 to 24 students.

Similarly, in his B7 Naval Science class, Hernandez said two classes were combined, which more than doubled to the number of students in that class.

Now there are 31 students: 18 who were added to the class in which originally had 13 students enrolled.

Hernandez said the additional students have not significantly impacted his teaching because he said he works better with larger groups.

“I can teach better when I have students who want to be in the program. Kids who do not want to be in the program, that’s a different story. Taking attendance and putting in grades is more time-consuming.”

Pulling back the curtain ... no drama here

by Micah Long and Jaylen O'Bryant

Teamwork makes the dream work when it comes to the innovative world of theatre. But what happens to a “dream deferred” (as Langston Hughes famously asked)? What happens when there are no candidates?

Answer: Rooms stand empty. No students put on performances this year. Since the departure of Mr. Kendrick Hooks, the district has been unable to hire a replacement, though administrators have tried.

RGHS Principal Traci Nave said she has attempted to find a new drama teacher through advertisements and recruitment of recent and soon-to-be graduates to find a new drama teacher.

“The problem is,” Nave said, “fewer people are completing a degree in drama.”

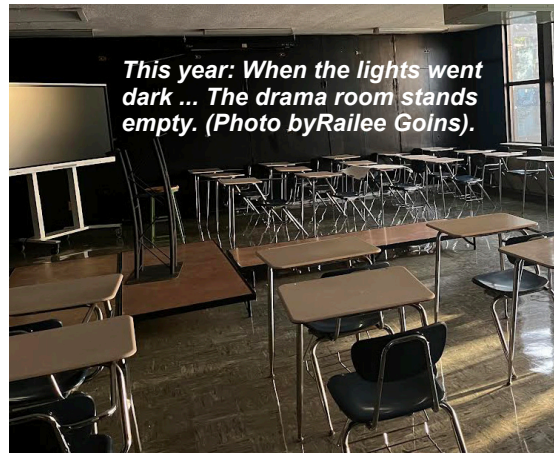
More than Drama:

Extra Duty Contracts put clubs on hold annually

by Jaylen O'Bryant and Micah Long

At RGHS, clubs do not begin to meet until midway through the first semester. The policy impacts the Yearbook, DECA, National Honor Society, Dungeons and Dragons and other clubs.

This is not typical practice in other districts, here and across



Nave said she expects to find a new drama teacher for the 2023-24 school year.

One reason for her confidence comes from conversations she has had with a substitute teacher this year.

A substitute teacher, has expressed interest in applying for the job after he graduates from a university in May, Nave said.

Still a lot can happen between now and then. This raises one big question: Will RGHS have the teacher we

need to reestablish dramatic arts classes and the club next year?

It is important to bring this situation into light. There are numerous creative souls here at Riverview Gardens High School who have said that they would greatly benefit from the life-altering club.

Marcus Alexander Jr. and Jocelyn Johnson, both seniors, said they were greatly impacted by the club.

The combination of cultivating creativity, playing into the dramat-

ics, and exploring flamboyant ways to express themselves drew them and other students into such the unique craft of acting and performance, Johnson said.

“The club allowed lots of students to connect with each other and bring out the best in one another,” she said.

More than that, it sparked a desire to pursue theatre in college. “I am interested in acting,” she said, “but it is hard when there is no club and no sponsor to guide us.”

The former president of the Drama Club,

Alexander said the extracurricular played an important role in his life. From his point of view, the atmosphere was engulfed with humor and admiration, beautifully crafting the aura of a found family for its participants.

While the loss of the club this year heavily impacts him, Alexander said its positive influence has an everlasting effect that simply cannot be overlooked.

“It changed me into who I am today,” he said. “Drama Club is the exact reason why I have a passion for acting.”



the country, where clubs begin at the start of the school year.

Why the delay?

Contracts.

Before teachers can sponsor extracurricular activities, they must sign contracts, which have been approved by the Special Administrative Board (SAB).

Some teachers said they received their

contracts for their club responsibilities in the first week of November.

For many clubs, the delay until November means more than losing time. Students are also losing opportunities to learn, lead and grow.

“Historically it has been like that,” said Mrs. Angela Williams, Business and Technology teacher. “It is

better for students to get involved in clubs early. The sooner we get them interested in the club, the more viable the club and the more students accomplish.”

“Clubs help make scholars more invested in learning. They give them something to be engaged in after school,” said Precious Barry, senior and student SAB

Member.

“It gives them connection to the school and school spirit. It provides a different connection with their teachers. It is essential that we make this a priority so students get involved at beginning of each school year.”



HOMECOMING SPECIAL SECTION



(Photos by Talisha Crawford, Lady Mariposa, Ebony Parker, Emilee Weaver, MacHai Daugherty.)







PowderPuff:

Let the games begin!

byEbony Parker

For the first time in recent history, junior and senior girls came together to face off in a PowderPuff football game. That's right, *girls* playing football.

I know what you're thinking: "females playing football, that's insane!"

Well, indeed it was. But there they were after school on September 27, on our football field – well half of the field. (The organizers set up orange cones to designate the second endzone at the 50 yard line.)

True, it was flag football, so there wasn't supposed to be tackling. And there was a referee on the field. And each team did have coaches. I know right! This event was precisely planned.

Well the thing about this event is that it only gets better: Not only were girls playing foot-

ball, but some senior and junior boys, dressed in tutus and bedazzled with bows, took up the pom-poms as cheerleaders for the game. And they did NOT disappoint!

As the girls passed and ran and blocked their way up and down the field, the boys, in their glitzy cheer outfits, stoked the crowd, cheerflipping and shouting to wow the crowd and encourage the players on the field.

The first quarter went by super fast, without either team scoring.

By the second quarter the girls senior team had scored a touchdown and our junior squad were working fiercely to catch up to the seniors.

The girls were doing a great job. working hard, running, sweating, and showing out on the field.

In the third quarter the game where get interesting.

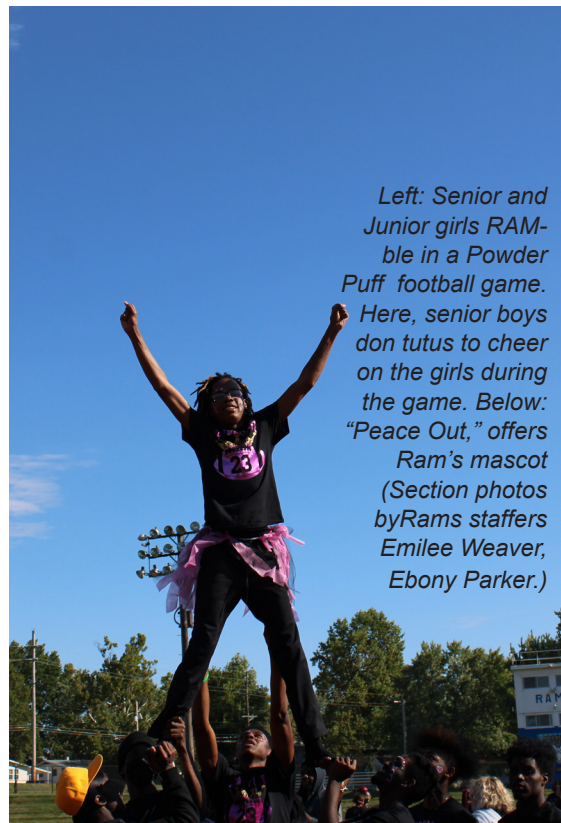
By now things were getting warmed up--even heated. Both teams were now working exceptionally hard to score touchdowns and take home a W, not just for themselves and their team, but for everyone in their grade/graduating class, as well.

So here we were in the 4th quarter and unfortunately the game had to be stopped early because of fighting.

It started when a junior and senior player got into a fight.

Mrs. Jen Roberson, English Department chairperson who coached the senior girls team, tried to break up the fight. That's when she got hit in the face.

Within minutes, the game transformed into a brawl with several



Left: Senior and Junior girls RAMble in a Powder Puff football game. Here, senior boys don tutus to cheer on the girls during the game. Below: "Peace Out," offers Ram's mascot (Section photos byRams staffers Emilee Weaver, Ebony Parker.)



students getting into altercations with each other.

Red and blue lights filled the scene quickly, as more and more girls got into the mix.

Once the police got everything under control, everyone was sent home.

Even without the fight, this game was exceptionally memorable. The game itself went really well, despite its

unfortunate ending.

The females who were on the field did a great job at playing this sport that traditionally has been a man's game.

And the male cheerleaders brought the moves and the attitude. Still the stars of the day were the women.

That's right, don't ever underestimate a woman's worth or what she is capable of doing.

Ram-blin' Rams on Parade



(Photos by Rambler staff.)

by Ra'Kiyah House and Kimberlan Perkins

For the first time since before the pandemic, the Riverview Gardens community paraded from Chambers and Bellefontaine roads, down Shepley Dirtve to Riverview Gardens High School for the Homecoming football game.

Led by the Color Guard, the parade featured the marching band, cheerleaders, Sapphires, Steppers, floats, local and district dignitaries, as well as elementary and middle school students.

The day began with cool temperatures and breezy conditions that initially sent chills down the spines of many, until the parade got underway.

Then the sun and smiles of participants and welcoming crowds brought warmth and joy to all.



Ram-tough team scores



(Photos by MacHai Daugherty, Ebony Parker and Emilee Weaver).



by Phillip Guest and MacHai Daugherty

For the past four years the Riverview Gardens Rams Football Team faced disrespect: Fans, other teams, some adults and many students looked at the team as unfocused, undisciplined, under-achieving and unworthy of respect.

As in seasons past, the first game of the season—against University City—was a loss.

Unlike before, we truly challenged the U City Lions. The scoreboard at the end of the game told the story: U City: 42, Riverview: 34.

Clearly, we did not go quietly or easily into the losing column. In short, we were a force. And that force came

to play the following week when the Rams beat Gateway Tech and broke the team’s losing streak.

The following week was the first home game of the season, and sadly the Rams came up short, losing to Lafayette, 62-24. Another disappointing loss followed. This time to Jennings, 41-6.

Despite these tallies in the “L” column, we came back the following week with a huge victory over Affton, 52-32.

That win propelled the team to its first Homecoming win in six – that’s 6 – years. And what a win it was, racking up a score of 29-14.

Making the victory even sweeter for the Rams seniors, this was their

last time playing on their home field.

Jareese Howard, senior running back, said the context of the win made the win even better.

It was amazing knowing we had not won Homecoming in years,” Howard said. “It was phenomenal.”

As you can imagine, the energy at the game was ecstatic after the Rams won. Fans were shaking the stands with their feet as they chanted for their team.

After the game was done the triumphant Rams walked off the field chanting and the fans joined in with the team creating one large voice screaming “View Time”!

They also earned the re-

spect of fellow students and created a lot of hype around the team.

Senior spectator Isaiah Grant was surprised by the win.

“Honestly, I didn’t expect them to win,” he said. “I honestly thought they were gonna lose, and when they won, I was shocked.”

When asked how he felt about the Rams past history this is how Dayvon Welch felt about it:

“In the past I feel like they didn’t have a lot of team chemistry to be winning,” he said, “but now they’ve been doing good, they broke the losing streak.”

Coming off that win, the Rams showed up to play and shut down Clayton at the Greyhounds

Homecoming game, 27-0.

Brandon Robinson, senior kicker, said winning at another team’s Homecoming game was a great moment in the season.

“It was exciting,” he said. “It was real energetic—it was lit.”

Riverview Rams’ last two games were losses, making them come into the playoffs with a record of 4 wins and 5 losses.

Riverview Gardens’ first game of the playoffs was on a cold Friday night. The Rams suited up to play Francis Howell North at their field, but things did not go according to plan for Riverview.

Both teams had a lot at

Homecoming victory



stake because whichever team lost, was done for the rest of the season. So for both sides, it was a “go big or go home” moment.

The first half both teams scored, but the Vikings lead the Rams with 24 points to Riverview’s 12.

Coming out the second half, Riverview couldn’t find its horns, and the Vikings continued to

roll over the Rams, resulting in a final score of 63-12, with the Vikings clearly dominating.

Despite the disappointing ending to the season, the Rams left the field with a number of notable wins, particularly two Homecoming triumphs: our own on home turf and against Clayton on the Greyhounds’ field.

For Cornelius Thompson, senior receiver, the season was a bit of a rollercoaster, at least at the start.

“In the beginning, it was kinda shaky,” he said. “I feel that like going through the season we came together as a team—we created some unbreakable bonds, made lifelong friendships.”

Both Thompson and Howard plan to play football in college and hope to announce the teams they’ve signed with in the spring.

Thompson credits a lot of people for his success.

“It is something I will never forget,” Thompson said. “I appreciate the help from my teammates, coaches, staff and administrators for being blessed to receive First Team All-Conference for two years straight.”





(Photos by Emilee Weaver.)



One Queen's rise

🌍 by Jocelyn Johnson

You probably know me as Homecoming Queen, but before the crown, I was just Jocelyn.

Deep down, long before high school, I always told myself I want to be a Queen.

Then in my freshman year, I saw a chance to actually become one. It was 2019, and I had just arrived at high school.

One day I was roaming the hallways on my way to class, and I saw a sign for homecoming court. I was so excited and I just knew at that

moment I wanted to win a spot on that court, win my crown.

But sometimes wanting is just not enough.

The reality was that nobody knew who I was. I was a stranger to the school And I learned that when they counted the ballots.

No surprise—I didn't win. I was a little embarrassed, but I moved on with my life. I figured I'm a freshman and there will be other chances at that court and that crown.

Three years later, after

not having a sophomore year and not having a Homecoming game, let alone dance and court-for my junior, I finally got another chance. ...

The same opportunity that was offered freshman year, was offered my senior. But the difference was that I felt more confident that people knew who I was. So I signed up. But the people I was going against I knew it wasn't going to be an easy win. So I campaigned hard and I got my name out there. Everyday I did something different and creative to get people to notice me.

Then it came down to homecoming day. I was excited to the point I couldn't explain the feeling. I was so happy to be a part of the whole homecoming committee, knowing that it might be a chance that I might win.

I just love the celebration that comes with being on court. What made it better is that our football team won their first homecoming game in years.

That whole day I couldn't stop smiling.

Until homecoming night it was time to

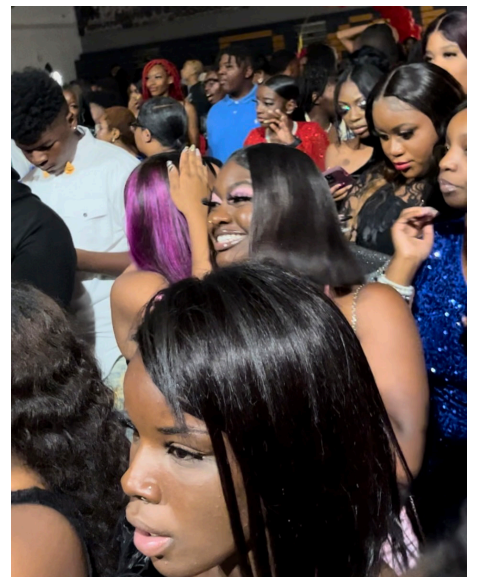
know who won Homecoming court. I was so nervous with thoughts in my head telling me I couldn't lose for a second time. Hearing Ms. Whitney jump in the microphone made my heart skip. Then hearing my name made me wanna scream for joy.

I was excited but more importantly proud of myself winning and the hard work.

Now I'm officially a Queen for Riverview high school, but now I know I was already a Queen before the crown.



Red carpet ready!





Left: Senior Precious Barry; Right: Senior Laniah "Lady" Hill (Photos courtesy of their subjects).

School Board appoints seniors to serve

 by Railee Goins

For the first time, two Riverview Gardens High School seniors joined the District's Special Administrative Board.

Precious Barry and Laniah Hill were selected to serve as a non-voting member and alternate, respectively. Their appointments came as the result of the district's decision to add a student to the Board to share their opinions and to provide representation of the student body. The Board's ad ran as follows:

"The Riverview Gardens School District's Special Administrative Board is seeking a Student Representative to join the Board. The student representative will give the SAB and administration the opportunity to listen to the opinions of our scholars regarding their learning, as well as issues that impact them from all aspects of the educational arena. High School seniors only APPLY."

The Board was so pleased with the qualifications of both students that its members chose to create two positions instead of one.

Both Barry and Hill said they got involved to be a part of the efforts to improve the school district as a whole and in specific ways. Among them were the chance to share their views regarding extracurricular activities, food options in the cafeteria and the creation of safer schools and a wider range of electives and course offerings.

For Barry, the experience provided her a chance to learn, as she has in every level of her education. As a Board member, even a non-voting one, she said she relished the opportunity to engage.

"It has been a wonderful pleasure to represent students in Riverview Gardens School District. I appreciate my school district for contributing to mold me into the person I am today," she said. "This contribution has allowed me to see the importance of my district. Establishing young voices has always been at the heart of my endeavors to cultivate Riverview Gardens School District."

Barry said the Board appointment was an extension of her education and a chance to gain mentors.

"I formed wonderful relationships with my nurses, counselors, teachers, and most importantly principals as I moved from elementary to high school. I am appreciative of their participation in my life's path," she said. "With these ideas, I realize that raising a school district requires a village, and that supporting 'A New Perspective On The Horizon' will only benefit."

Hill said she found the experience as an alternate a chance to share her ideas with people who can make change at the top level of the district.

"I chose to be a Student Board Representative for RGSD to advocate, acknowledge, and better the school district," Hill said. "For myself and, most importantly, the students that highly contribute to the flourishing of the district."

Other students say they are pleased that Barry and Hill have represented them.

"They are truly two of the best people I know," sophomore Emilee Weaver said. "I think this is an amazing step for our school to allow something like this to happen, and I do believe they made the best choice in these two women."

First Semester School Report Card

For this school year, *The Rambler* has chosen to present the Riverview Gardens High School's Fall Semester report card. The goal of this evaluation is to acknowledge the successes, struggles and strifes we face at our school. We, as *The Rambler* staff, offer suggestions on where improvements can be made. Finishing, we invite you to participate in this truthful experience, hoping that you'll gain perspective and an unbiased view of seeing. We invite your comments in the form of Letters to the Editors, which will will share in the next issue.

<i>Area of Review</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Student Academic Excellence	C+	Many students passed core classes and electives. Others worked hard to gain passing, proficient grades. We are improving, but we must be consistent for success.
Student Behavior	C-	Poor student behavior has increased, unfortunately. This could be a result of skipping, social media, and having an immature mentality. To refine this behavior, students must compromise with school requirements.
Teaching	C	Teaching data at the moment is loading, meaning we need more teachers. Teachers play a major role in the progress within our school. The more excellent teachers we have, the more excellence we'll have.
Facilities and materials	C+	Increased enrollment impacted by supply shortages left some waiting for their computer devices and everyone had to improvise. We should have enough devices for as many students as we have at all times.
After School Activities	C-	While the school offers many after school activities, they aren't all spoken about during the announcements. Also students are not aware of all of the sports and programs available. We should hold an activities fair during the first weeks of school, and we should find a theatre teacher as soon as possible. So many students want performing arts, but we have none.
Leadership/Discipline	C	Staff members do a decent job at disciplining students for misbehavior. But they must remember to treat students as individuals and not account for them as a whole. We are not all trying to skip. Some of genuinely need the bathroom. The addition of restorative justice seems promising. The use of Yondr bags is still up for debate. We plan to revisit this policy in the Fall of 2023-24, once the district fully implements the use of these pouches.
Student Support & Services	C	Most students feel that the school lacks practical support and leaves out information on how to get it. We end up piecing information to learn about services we are due to. Again, informative sessions at the beginning of the year would be helpful, and again, we are optimistic about restorative justice practices and circles.
Food	B	Many students feel that the food options are quite elaborate. Survey results state that students would appreciate more salads, fruit, plant-based options. Giving us more choices of what we want to eat. Specific food pulls: sandwich wraps, salad boxes, pineapples, watermelon. There has been more of that this year, and we want even more. And please cut back on the pizza and give us more chicken fingers in a portion.
Newspaper/Magazine	B-	We have been covering more, but getting the newspaper in front of everyone has been a major issue (no pun intended), and we need to do better. In terms of content, we have brought you a lot in only a few pages, and we proud of that. We are looking forward to our second issue later this semester. We hope you are, too!



(Photos courtesy of Talisha Crawford.)



Learning lessons from Jax, Lizzo & others

🌍 by Talisha Crawford with Lady Mariposa

Jax is the singer-songwriter who created a song and then a video called ‘Victoria’s Secret’ about body image that went viral on TikTok.

So many people were happy about the song because a lot of girls can really relate to it. I, myself, am one of them.

I get the body image issues. I battle with finding the courage and confidence to embrace my own body.

Living in a world where being bigger is sometimes a “problem,” I know that relationships are rugged. It can be hard for me to find

friends who’ll appreciate me and lift me up.

But this song—this song—lifts me up. It embraces me.

I feel that Jax made this song to help girls all around the world, and it’s having an impact.

The song got more than 13 million views on TikTok. With more than 20 million downloads and more than 30 million views on Amazon Music, it became one of the biggest songs on the 100 billboard!

It seemed as if everyone was talking about it, and I can see why.

It’s really not surprising. Body image has been hard on girls and wom-

en for centuries. In the 1800s girls wore corsets to slim their waists.

Then in the 1960s, super skinny women like a model named Twiggy became a popular image of how girls were “supposed” to look.

And then in the late 1970s, Victoria’s Secret showed skinny women in skimpy underwear and Bo Derek, a skinny white woman became the face and figure of the movie “10” about a man obsessed with a woman he thought rated a perfect “10.”

Yes, in those days, men rated women based on their bodies and it really has not changed that much. Until Beyonce, Lizzo and Meghan the

Stallion, skinny white women were the definition of beauty.

It was 1984 when model Vanessa Williams, who represented New York, was crowned as the first Black Miss America. And it took another 10 years for Victoria’s Secret to sign Tyra Banks as its first Black model. Still in both cases, these women did not represent my body type -- or most girls and women in America or anywhere for that matter.

Even today, companies are just beginning to have big women like me as models, and even then the majority are still promoting skinny as beauty.

That’s why a song like Lizzo’s “My Skin” takes it a step further not only celebrating larger women, but as she sings in the song, “Black Girl Magic.” Both of these women, Lizzo and Jax, mean so much to girls like me.

I know most of the kids in our school know Lizzo, but I wonder how many know Jax.

So if you haven’t heard “Victoria’s Secret,” you should listen to it – better yet, watch the TikTok video, and let me know what you think.


For me, this song, “Victoria’s Secret,” is truly a 10!

Fashionista finds: frills & fun



I don't mean to dramatize the way that I dress. I'm not the only person at RGHS who enjoys dressing up for a school day. For me personally, I do it for fun, and I've noticed that when I look good, I feel better, which leads me to perform my best academically.

When I first started wearing clothes that I thought were gorgeous, people would ask me who I "dressed up for," and I would always answer with "me." There's a big misconception that women and girls couldn't possibly want to look cute for themselves and that they must be trying to look cute for someone they're interested in.

Story & selfies:
 by Micah Long

Believe it or not, fashion never stood out to me when I was a kid. I was less concerned about what I was wearing and more concerned about whether or not I was making my parents proud by performing well in school.

I'm originally from Normandy (shout out Barack Obama Elementary School). It was a uniform school, so my outfits really weren't much of a concern.

My adoration for fashion and dressing up started in the beginning of 2021. No question: 2020 was a year of chaos for the majority of us, but the pandemic gave me some time to sit back and think about my life thus far. I had a lot of time to reflect on myself and how I wanted to express myself. I want to be clear that



It's either that or there has to be some sort of "special occasion" for us to dress up or show up in what feels comfortable to us. I dress for me, and only me, though I appreciate every compliment I receive.

There was a time where



I didn't feel pretty enough to wear certain clothes, or I didn't want certain parts of my body to be shown for fear that everyone would notice how something just wasn't "sitting right."

The increasing rise of body neutrality on social media helped me be okay with the way I look. I don't have to love my body every second of every day. I'm just practicing being okay with the body I was born in.

Lately, I've been feeling very comfortable in my body. I'm grateful for that, but we all have days when we look in the mirror and are disappointed. I think it's a good thing to recognize

that, rather than forcing a positive view 24/7.

Originally, my inspiration for the way that I dress came from Pinterest and Instagram aesthetics and "___core" accounts.

But, trying to fit all of who I am into one little box felt suffocating.

I recognized that I like different styles and embraced that with the way that I present myself. I wear whatever makes me feel pretty, regardless of price.

I mainly shop at places like Ross and TJ Maxx. I used to buy from fast fashion companies, but I discovered issues in the working conditions of



their employees that led me to stop buying from them.

I love clothes, but I'm not a shoe person. I've got two go-to pairs of sneakers, two pairs of Doc Martens, and a few heels.

My staple items are simple, so don't be surprised to see me in black wedges, bell bottom jeans, skirts of any kind, long coats, and hair clips.

While I love to dress up, I don't take many pictures of my outfits. Instead, my Instagram, @femmeclawws, focuses on the books I'm reading, so check it out!

Editor's Note:
Micah Long was named one of the Top 10 Apparel & Accessories Marketing students in Missouri's DECA chapter this month. She came in 2nd at District's in February.
Way to go, Micah!

Softball sistas



(Photos by Emilee Weaver.)

A young team, the Riverview Gardens softball Rams worked on team-building, as well as performance on the field this season.

With Ke' Ani Jacobs and Trinity Roberts as the only seniors on the team and only two juniors and two sophomores, the team was primarily freshmen.

Though this was far from a winning season, the team did beat Normandy on their opponent's home turf. That day the Rams brought home the team's only victory for the season with a 17-8 win.

Still the season was a bit of a struggle with a 1-10 record for the year. Members are looking ahead to next year.

Volleyballers in action



In a bittersweet year, the Rams scored 5 wins for the season, beating Steam Academy, Jennings, Vashon, University City and Normandy.

The team bid farewell to seniors Precious Barry, Teanna Hoyer, Jocelyn Johnson, Kellyn Lenard and Mykale Gladden, all pictured on this page.

Farewell Friend: Tragedy Takes Jaylen Miles

On a chilly Saturday morning in January, members of the Riverview Gardens High School football team and their coaches gather around on the football field.

Carrying pink and purple balloons, they came together to pay tribute to the sophomore who had touched the hearts of so many in our Ramily.

Tragedy struck on December 29, 2022, just two days before his 17th birthday, when Jaylen Miles was found shot to death in the backyard of a vacant house in the 10600 block of Spring Garden Drive.

No arrests have been made in the case and no resolution can bring Jaylen back to his friends and family.

Jaylen's best friend Abdul "Dre" Ivy, sophomore, remembers his friend "was fun to be around." Dre said he admired Jaylen's commitment to the game and the team.

"Jaylen played wide receiver," Dre said. "When it comes to sports, he wouldn't give up easily. I wanted to give up at one point, and he wouldn't let me. He kept me in it. Losing Jaylen was like losing myself."

So on that still morning, coaches and teammates came together to remember Jaylen and acknowledge him.

Head Coach Pablo Castillo spoke of Jaylen and his participation on the team. He men-

tioned that though this was Jaylen's first year at RGHS, he had made strides as a player and had been a valued member of the team.

Linebacker Coach Patrick Immken told the players that he had had enough of losing students to violence. Immken urged the players to watch out for each other, to be a team on and off the field.

Then together, everyone released the balloons. Silently, they rose through the air. The sky lit up with pink and purple bulbs that trailed silvery streamers in their wake.

For a while, no one spoke. All eyes gazed upward.

As the balloons continued rising and drifting, the team huddled for a final farewell before parting.

Ramblers Phillip Guest, Lady Mariposa and Emilee Weaver contributed to this story.
(Photo by Emilee Weaver.)