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Asa Stuart  
Reporter

## Departing Hellgate Staff Reminisce

As the year ends, several teachers and administrators have announced their retirement or move to another job. As we say goodbye, let's look over their favorite memories and what they have to look forward to.

### Why are you leaving?

"I wanted to pursue my Leadership Education degree and become a Principal. I was offered the Assistant Principal job at Whitefish High School, so when I am done with school this year I will move up to Whitefish and begin my career up there."

### How would you describe your experience at Hellgate?

"I feel very fortunate that I got to work with some of the most amazing staff. Teachers care about students and want to see success with all of their students. I was always so happy that I received a teaching job in Missoula because I knew it was hard to get into this district."

### Do you have a favorite memory or experience from Hellgate?

"I have had several..from the time I swam in the fourth floor swim pool, to talking to the printers with Mr. Linsted, becoming the DJ Jazzy K announcer, the shopping cart races, bonfires, and the Golden Goat games."

### What will you miss about Hellgate?

"I will miss the students and staff and how dedicated they are to academics. I will also miss my north side parking lot."

### What are you looking forward to most?

"I am ready for a new chapter and experience in my life. I am excited to become a Whitefish Bulldog and hopefully take some of the great experiences I have had here and apply it to my new position."



Hallie Koppang



Mick Morris

### Why are you leaving?

"For an assistant principal job at Capitol High School in Helena. I'm ready for the next stage in my career. It was a good opportunity, and my parents live over in Helena so it was a chance to be closer to family."

### How would you describe your experience at Hellgate?

"It's been awesome. I've been here for six years now, and it's such a neat, amazing school. I think it's a lot different than any other high schools that I've ever been at just with the amount of allowed freedom that kids have and how well they are behaved and take advantage of opportunities here at this great school, great teachers, pretty awesome."

### Do you have a favorite memory or experience from Hellgate?

"I think it was when we beat CMR (Charles M. Russell High School in Great Falls, MT) in football a couple of years ago and ended the losing streak."

### What will you miss about Hellgate?

"I'll miss the people I work with and the kids."

### What are you looking forward to most?

"New adventures."

### Why are you leaving?

"I've been having some hearing issues, mainly related to a car accident I had a while back. It makes certain frequencies really painful. So between that and the fact that I've been doing this for 25 years, I feel like I'm ready to move on to something new."

### What are you doing after leaving Hellgate?

"I'm still searching, I'm looking at possibly being involved in education in some way with either smaller music groups, or moving on from education completely. I applied to Tesla a couple weeks ago, for a mobile mechanic position, I love working on cars so working at Tesla would be an amazing new experience."

### How would you describe your experience at Hellgate?

"It's hard to encapsulate because it has been an amazing experience. I've loved every minute of it. Absolutely the best students I've worked with through my career have been at Hellgate."

### Do you have a favorite memory or experience from Hellgate?

"Talk about hard to choose. My favorite thing about Hellgate and being a band director is just getting to spend, normally, four years with people, watching them grow up and blossom, and then staying in touch with former students and hearing about what they are doing and what they've accomplished. It's an amazing connection to be able to have."

### What will you miss about Hellgate?

"Definitely the students. Just their eagerness, their work ethic, their desire to do things right. It's inspiring."

### What are you looking forward to most?

"I want to go travel the world. That's a major goal of mine. Just being able to go travel and experience parts of the world I haven't been able to yet."



Leon Slater

# Hellgate's IB Diploma Program Fails Students

Ali Caudle  
Co-Editor

I remember the day then-IB coordinator Christine Hiller-Claridge introduced sophomores to the IB Diploma Program (IBDP) ahead of course registration. Everything was so shiny and optimistic, and I was persuaded to pursue the IB Diploma.

Now, 27 months and a global pandemic later, I see things differently, as do several other former IB diploma candidates from Hellgate. Some finished the program and others dropped it.

Honestly, I prefer IB's method of teaching and testing to AP or standard level classes, as did others.

"I liked IB's 'holistic' approach: combining multiple disciplines, teaching you to be 'globally-minded,' etc. I also think that overall the IB method of teaching (more project based) was an excellent way to prepare me for college. I appreciate that IB puts an emphasis on 'what do you know? How can you apply it? Show us' instead of 'what can you memorize?" said one 2020 graduate.

"IB students perform better in college. I think they teach you to think... they make you more engaged with school," said another 2020 graduate.

Hellgate's fantastic teachers make IB courses bearable. I genuinely enjoyed my IB courses, and I appreciated the time and energy our teachers put into making them positive learning experiences.

"The teachers are what really made the program," said the first 2020 graduate. "I learned a ton in their classes, both about the course material and how to develop a proper work ethic. If it weren't for them and the amount of work that they personally invested into the program, it would not have been anywhere near as enjoyable of an experience."

While IB is a wonderful educational model, it's carried out poorly so it harms the very students it is meant to serve. The problem lies with the structure of the program at Hellgate, not the IBDP itself.

The IBDP has been dying a slow death over the last couple years as funding dried up and the administration neglected the program. The school district's refusal to adequately appropriate funds to the IB program at Hellgate marks a fundamental misunderstanding of Hellgate's educational model.

"It's very sad that the administration isn't dedicating time to it and... not being open or honest with its student body," said the second 2020 graduate.

IB students are driven, with a passion for learning. "I'm someone who does really well when I stay busy, and doing IB on top of working, an internship, and being a competitive athlete was the kind of grind that kept me sustained," said the first 2020 graduate. "Most IB kids are hard workers who stay busy; it's our nature, it's part of what drew us to a rigorous program like IB in the first place. Many of us were balancing extracurriculars with school."

The student from the class of 2023 lamented that all of her time was allocated to getting the IB diploma. "As the year progressed I began to fall behind. It became more and more challenging to manage my clubs and sports with my responsibilities for IB.

Responsibilities that were never clearly presented to me, but that I had to find out on my own."

"Miller himself has told multiple parents... that IB kids just have to 'choose' between the IB curriculum, or being involved in extracurricular activities. However this honestly goes against the whole IB philosophy of being well-rounded and open to new experiences, which I think demonstrates his overall lack of understanding of the program's goals in the first place," said the first 2020 graduate.

"Ultimately, there were times where I was ridiculously tired, overworked, and frustrated, only to be told I wasn't trying hard enough by some teachers and the administration," she said.

These graduates, and I, recognize now the immense toll attempting the IB Diploma program took on our mental health.

"I think the way that Hellgate structured their IB program made it so that they were putting their students under an incredible amount of stress. I barely slept in high school. I remember having that... zero period class and it was all the super depressed IB kids" said the second 2020 graduate. "I was incredibly depressed when I was in high school, I think probably the worst my mental health has ever been. There are literally periods of high school I just don't remember because I think my brain just blocked it out... I just think that's so [messed] up that the administration makes it so hard on students, and you're literally like 16 and 17. You're babies."

A mental health crisis was why I ultimately dropped the program last August. I wasn't the only one. "During my junior year... I pushed myself hard and in the process I lost sight of the point: to learn. Going into my senior year I had to make the decision to opt out of the diploma program, for my own physical and mental health. I was put in a place to choose between my passion, and having a leg up when it comes to college," said a fellow senior.

"I chose my passion, which is to learn, to adapt my perspective, to have an open mind. I feel like all of those aspects were lost in the pile of work and deadlines," she added. "I think the focus of the IB program, conceptual learning, was lost in the usual, mundane assignment process."

"Late nights staying up doing homework with early mornings turned into late work extensions, office hours visits, and staying late after school... we were all getting more anxious and more stressed," shared the 2023 former diploma candidate.

This was "terrible for my mental health," said the 2021 graduate. "IB students are praised as being elite students and expected to have our life together. The workload IB demands and the lack of communication between coordinators and students made for a very unhealthy environment."

"We were constantly being ridiculed for how 'lazy' we were if we were slow to keep up with the Extended Essay deadlines, or didn't show up to zero period on time," the first 2020 graduate remembered. "One teacher in particular... told us many times that he wanted to call our IB class 'The Minimalists' for how little work we seemed to want to put in. Keep in mind, he was generally addressing a room of zonked-out kids, many of whom were up

until midnight doing homework the night before, only to show up at 6:30 in the morning the next day. It could be incredibly frustrating and condescending, especially if we tried to advocate for ourselves, explain why we might occasionally slip up, miss deadlines, or show up to class a few minutes late."

Due to a lack of communication between teachers and the IB coordinator, a lot of the time students were still left to figure things out on their own.

"Some [teachers] care about IB and some of them don't, and the ones that don't have no idea how to teach it... I think because they don't get administrative support. I don't think it's the teachers' fault," said the second 2020 graduate. "Students are expected to fulfill the requirements for the IB diploma largely on their own time with their own guidance."

The 2021 graduate described IBDP, especially in her second year, as "unorganized." "It was a consensus among students that we felt out of the loop and confused as to what was expected of us," she said.

This is, unfortunately, still true. "Due to the limited number of IB Diploma students, our required preparative work was often pushed by the wayside or assigned to us on top of the class homework," shared the student from the class of 2023. "As if I had enough time as it was! It eventually became blatantly obvious to me that many of the teachers of IB didn't support or enjoy this program. They saw the flaws, and they saw their diploma students deteriorating from unnecessary stress."

IB is often presented as the way to get into elite universities. Many students dreaming of attending a top university will force themselves into the mold of an IB student, conforming to the strict limitations of the program with a very specific set of classes.

"There's indicators that individuals who are doing the IB program are also likely to be individuals that are accelerated in math or... other tracks," said the second 2020 graduate. "When there's failure from the administration to also cater to those individuals, I think it becomes a very cyclical problem."

"The actual classes that are currently part of the IB diploma are not classes that are necessarily something that students would want. It's like suddenly students are having to choose between having the academic boost of having the diploma versus actually taking classes that are going to get them into their colleges. It's kind of like the administration has created this really awful catch-22," she continued.

Classes like IB Math get cut halfway through, leaving students hanging. This happened to the class of 2020 and to me. I put so much time into the first year of the IB Analysis and Approaches course, only to be told that finishing the class was not an option. Hellgate wouldn't offer the Year 2 course, leaving students scrambling to choose between AP Stats, AP Calc, a different IB math studies course, or attending the IB Math course at Big Sky via Zoom.

"Because limited students signed up for the course, the school just decided not to offer it, effectively screwing us all over for our math requirement. They didn't seem to understand the implications of this at the time, nor try to correct it," said the first 2020 graduate.

"It also seems like it became very, very difficult

for students to take a credit load that would look appealing to colleges while also fulfilling the IB diploma," said the second 2020 graduate. "IB being removed also means that you're really limiting students who are on a STEM track."

I understand that scheduling different IB 'singleton' classes poses challenges under Hellgate's master schedule model, but these issues prevented the IB program from fully realizing its potential.

"The administration... didn't seem to have a clue how IB was supposed to function. They'd arbitrarily offer and then take away classes we needed, only offer certain classes as zero periods, and really failed to garner widespread support for the program and develop it as a result," said the first 2020 graduate.

While the pandemic was a factor, this is a key reason there are no remaining IB candidates from the Class of 2022, and reportedly only two remaining candidates from the Class of 2023.

"While I believe this program has the potential to be great, it can only be great if done well. If it can not be done well it is not worth doing at all," said the former 2023 diploma candidate.

Between the strict constraints of the IBDP, and the MCPS graduation requirements, it is nearly impossible to find a schedule that works for an IB student. And forget about trying to continue taking classes you're passionate about; whether that's art, journalism, or music, it won't work if you pursue the IB Diploma. Rather than help students achieve their goals, the IBDP only makes it more challenging.

"Having the scholarship I have is a life-changing opportunity," said the second 2020 graduate. "The fact that people who follow me, in generations to come from Hellgate, aren't going to have that, that I was kind of the tail end of the functioning IB diploma is incredibly sad and it's also inequitable."

Quite honestly, if we're going to run a dysfunctional IB program, Hellgate should stop offering it. We need to stop high achieving students from getting trapped in these horrible cycles, starting the IBDP and failing to finish.

"I think that the administration should either literally cut the IB diploma or go full-fledged into it. I think doing it half-assed is incredibly bad for a myriad of reasons," said the second 2020 graduate.

The school system has a responsibility to all of its students. If we can't offer IB in a way that truly benefits students, we should focus on building up our AP program. I may prefer IB classes, but I think it's more important that bright students have a chance to take a variety of rigorous courses without feeling pressured to be trapped in the diploma program.

"The failure of the IB diploma program speaks to the fact that Hellgate repeatedly fails to actually help their top 10% of students. And I think that it influences individuals on a micro level, but it also, on a macro level, is very bad for... Hellgate optically as a whole," added the second 2020 graduate.

I will always be an advocate for IB, but I believe we must preserve a stable and supportive academic environment for all. If we refuse to provide that for IB students, it's not worth it. If the choice is between letting IB die a slow death, or cutting it off now to save future students from the pain, let's end it.

## Hellgate - The Launch Pad for My Life

Ali Caudle  
Co-Editor

Trust the process - ah, the classic advice you get each time you move into a new phase of your life. It's cliché, but it perfectly encapsulates my high school experience.

When I started at Hellgate High School, I had only lived in Montana for a year. I was entering a high school out of district. Everything was new.

I remember the first time I checked my schedule. English 1 with Ms. Lurgio in Room 351. Earth & Space Science with Mr. Connelly in Room 287. My eyes skimmed through the names of my new teachers: Rholl, Zhinin Barreto, Cheney, Fields. I saw an elective class I had never heard of: Introduction to Journalism with Ms. Derryberry.

Last week, I gave many of those teachers my graduation announcements. I'm writing this piece in Room 351, as Ms. Lurgio tries to keep her second year IB English seniors focused on our lit circles (sorry Lurgio, you know I love you!). And I'm finalizing my last print issue of the Hellgate Lance newspaper, after two years as Editor.



In the fall, Ali will be attending Northeastern University in Boston, MA, to study journalism. Photo courtesy of Amy Vann.

In my four years with Ms. Derryberry, I learned that journalism is my passion. I remember even in the Intro course I would go above and beyond, pushing boundaries past what was safe. As a 14-year-old I was knocking on strangers' doors for interviews - picking houses based on the political party of the 2018 election signs in their yard.

Sophomore year, I joined the staff of the Lance. I wrote some controversial pieces, including one on the culturally appropriative practice of Spanish names. (I still do, see page 3.) I covered school news and community events, took photos at sporting events. I wrote features on Hellgate alumni and op-eds about issues I was passionate about. Journalism became my thing. I loved every minute of it.

I was devastated when the world shut down my sophomore year. I had just interviewed NYT reporter Nicholas Kristof, my team just placed 3rd at the 2020 Montana Academic World Quest competition, I had just competed in the MHSA state swim meet. But I refused to slow down.

Junior year I took a rigorous course load as an IB Diploma candidate. I continued my sports, participated in national fellowships and worked with nonprofit organizations outside of school. I took on the role of Co-Editor with Luke O'Connell, even though I was taking Newspaper as an independent study because there was no room in my schedule. I pushed myself past what any high school student could reasonably do.

This took a serious toll. I fell apart that spring. I've been open about my struggles, and for the first time, I'm sharing about them in this newspaper. I want other people in this school to know it's okay to share about your battles with mental health. We need to normalize this topic, because it's so prevalent among adolescents. It's a real crisis and it affects everyone; even, especially, students like me.

I fell into a deep depression. I stopped sleeping, staying up late until the early hours of the morning to finish my homework. I cried a lot. I experienced a serious relapse of my eating disorder.

But this school saved me. Teachers noticed the warning signs, took the time to talk to me and refer me to the school psychologist. I got help. I started therapy and medication. My teachers became my

close confidantes, frequently checking in with me. My soccer and swimming coaches were compassionate and let me be the team manager, since I wasn't cleared for physical activity. The love and support I received senior year carried me through a really difficult period of time.

If you asked me four years ago what I thought I would be doing now, it would be so different from reality. I was a different girl. School success and academic validation were my priorities.

But my plans for this summer bring me so much joy. I'll graduate high school on June 4, after a joint party with my wonderful Co-Editor, Maggie. On June 9, I'll fly out for a three-week backpacking trip across Northern Europe. I'll return to Missoula, spend some time soaking in the outdoors. I'll continue working as a lifeguard and swim instructor at the city pools. I'll take some college courses over an eight-week term in July and August on Contemporary Moral Issues and Macroeconomics.

Then the weekend before Labor Day, I'll pack up my belongings, ship them out east, and board a plane to Boston. I'll start a new phase of my life, as a Journalism major at Northeastern University.

For the rest of my life, I will remember Hellgate High School as the launch pad for my life. It's a place filled with memories of many highs and lows, a place with people I love, a place that saved my life. I would not have traded my crazy four years here for anything.

To those of you with more time at 925 Gerald Avenue, treasure every minute. And to the teachers who pour so much energy into the students of this school: thank you. Thank you for everything.



Ali and her Co-Editor Maggie Vann did a photoshoot together. Photo courtesy of Amy Vann.

# Lessons Learned In My Four Years of High School

Maggie Vann  
Co-Editor

High school: an era almost everyone nostalgically reminisces about later on in their life. Whether it's sports, lifelong friends, prom, clubs or other high school

experiences, graduation represents the closing of a memorable period in one's life. Here are some of the moments I remember from my time at Hellgate.

As I walked into the doors of Hellgate High School in August of 2018, everything was new, and... big, to simply put it. I had spent the previous nine years of my life at Potomac school with the same few classrooms and the same 12 students.

While I was beyond ready for more classmates and a school in a city with more people than cows, there were a few worries on my mind. To start with, I had never once used a locker. How would I remember my locker code?! How do you even open a locker?! I soon learned that with a simple right, left, right series of turns, it would open on command.

Secondly, the school I had been promoted from, contained a grand total of eight rooms. How on earth would I find my way around a school with three floors and different wings for different classes?! This proved to be intimidating, and I somehow managed to get lost between the second and third floor of the science building, but I soon discovered that putting a screenshot of my classes on my phone's home-screen was a lifesaver.

I spent most of my freshman year making new friends and finding my way through a school finishing its construction period. I also don't think I missed a single Tater Tot Tuesday at Taco Sano - amazing tater tots for only \$1.

I also found that I felt so small compared to the seniors I so greatly looked up to... where did time go?

Fast forward to sophomore year: For the most part, I had a fairly "normal" high school experience up to this point. However, that all changed when we began learning about COVID-19 in my block class with Ms. Hixon. I remember she told all of her students to go get masks before spring break, and we all rolled our eyes at her... so much for that.

Most of sophomore year was spent doing a couple online assignments and not seeing my best friends and boyfriend (who I met the summer before sophomore year). Honestly, much of sophomore year was a blur, it all felt like we were living in a time of a toilet paper apocalypse (good thing my dad made toilet paper for a living).

I remember seeing my boyfriend for the first time in a month after we said "good-bye" during spring break, but all we could do was hike outside... super exciting.

By junior year, I was used to the constant quarantine we were under, and I learned to appreciate only having two days of school per week, especially due to the fact that junior year is supposed to be the most difficult year of high school.

When we were able to attend in-person school towards the end of the school year, I forgot what it was like to see living people, not just online Zoom figures. While school was somewhat back to normal, I missed seeing the bottom half of people's faces and having prom in the courtyard was not the prom I had always dreamed of.

The summer after junior year, my boyfriend went off to college (we are celebrating our three year anniversary this summer), I continued doing things I loved like fly fishing, horseback riding, and I was even able to attend a medical camp called "Med-Start" (I would highly recommend it!). I also got early acceptance to my dream school, Montana State University, in July.

Everything was finally back to normal, for the most part. In the blink of an eye I had gone from freshman to senior year, in what felt like the span of one year; when in reality, it was four.

Now, I am finishing up the final weeks of my last year of high school. Where did time go? I am done with my ten-year volleyball career, almost done studying for my last high school finals, preparing for my final prom ever and my parents are moving across the country from where I'm going to college. Wow.

Basically, don't blink, because before you know it, one of the most memorable times in your life will flash before your eyes. Here are some pieces of advice and things that helped me survive high school:

- *Make friends with ALL of your teachers. From writing letters of recommendations for you to just being a great friend and future reference, you don't want to pass up making connections with them.*
- *Keep in touch with your friends. I'm not saying you need to Snapchat them every day, but soon they will be scattered all across the country, make the most of every moment with them.*
- *Keep an open mind. Although you may think you know what you want to do with your life, you really don't. Experiences from high school help you find your path for the future, so don't pass up on opportunities.*
- *Nobody is perfect, we are humans. Everybody is going to make mistakes so be sure to have a strong support system. Whether it is parents, friends, teachers or other staff, we are all here to help you. Be safe, but have fun.*
- *A few helpful discounts as a high schooler: Nike has a 10% student discount, Apple offers discounts for high school students and so do clothing stores such as Vans, Hollister American Eagle and so much more.*
- *Don't take life too seriously. We are all going to meet the same demise one day. So why not work to achieve your dreams and make this life one you fondly reminisce on when you are pruned and gray-haired?*
- *And lastly... the pool on the fourth floor is pretty cool.*



Maggie took photos in her graduation attire with Co-Editor Ali Caudle. Photos courtesy of Amy Vann.

## My Years At Hellgate High School

Gabi Wilson  
Reporter

Yes, you've heard it a million times before but they're really not kidding when they say high school goes by in a flash.

Let's go back to the beginning of my years in high school. Freshman year was interesting. I came from a small middle school and only knew one person when going into high school. I tried out for the dance team my freshman year and was unsuccessful; I didn't make the team. I started to meet people through different classes and clubs such as Cross Country and Intro to Journalism. My sister was a senior when I was a freshman and I relied on her a lot during this year. I became friends with her friends and found the ways of the school through her. I didn't have too many friends my freshman year, but the ones I did have were genuine.

My sophomore year I tried out for the dance team again and finally made the team. I started to enjoy school a little more this year and make more friends. Just when I was in the swing of school, COVID-19 hit and we were all stuck at home. During these spring months, I ignored the little online school work that I was given and I spent a lot of time with my family. I quarantined with my aunt and cousins. We had a blast taking walks outside, playing poker in the evenings, and staying up watching and making Tik-Toks until 2 am. I missed my friends, but I got to see them more during the summer.

Going back to school for junior year was different than any year I had ever experienced. Mondays were online, I didn't have school Tuesdays and Wednesdays and I would go to school on Thursdays and Fridays. I developed a routine. I would go to dance team practices on Monday mornings, go to Copper Mountain Coffee, and watch Game of Thrones at home. Much of what I remember from my first semester of junior year is a blur of Game of Thrones. By the second semester we were back at school (almost) full-time and with everyone A-Z. It was strange to see the other half of the alphabet after not seeing them for almost a year.

By the time my senior year started, things were pretty much back to normal. We were at school from 8:55 to 3:55 with everyone. I was in Link Crew and NHS for my senior year which made me feel like I was helping out my Hellgate community and connected me with a few more people. I was especially

busy this year as I was wrapped up in several dance commitments. I was taking my usual dance classes three times a week at Ballet Arts Academy, having three hour rehearsals on Sundays and Tuesdays for Bare Bait Dance, and having rehearsals on the weekends for The Nutcracker and Ballet Arts Studio Company. In December I completed my 12th and final year of The Nutcracker, which was just the beginning of many things wrapping up and coming to an end.

In March, I completed dance team alongside the other dance team seniors, Audrey Kurz, Sylvie Nelson, Keiana Griggs, Adarra Decker, Ana Ward and team captain Elena Vesovich. In April I performed my last show as a Bare Bait Dance apprentice with my fellow senior apprentice, Audrey Kurz. On May 29, I will be done with 15 years of ballet with some of my favorite people. The things that start to come to an end are sad, but I think that it's a time to reflect on the good things, and a good time to move on.

High school seemed to fly by, especially with COVID-19 and not going to school for a lot of the time. I am very grateful to have grown up in Missoula surrounded by a wonderful community. I am grateful for all of the friendships I made and the people who added joy to my life. I am excited for new beginnings. I will be moving to Canada in the fall and starting a new chapter of my life, but I will always remember this one and the people in it.

Here are some things I learned along the way:

- Surround yourself with people who bring light into your life and help you grow.
- Join clubs, activities, and sports! This helps you get to know people.
- Talk to people in your classes and in the halls.
- Say hi to people and be kind.
- Don't judge others because you most likely don't know them well enough.
- It is not about the amount of friends you have, but the quality instead.
- Taking care of you and your mental health is #1.
- Tell your friends that you are grateful for them.
- Sometimes it's okay to be late to school when you need coffee.

## Looking Back at Such a Strange Time

Darian Davalos  
Reporter

closing down. The NBA season was canceled. Many food businesses were closing down or going remote and Former President Donald Trump declared the U.S. in a national emergency.

After being in quarantine for a few months, there were speculations on a vaccine coming out. The FDA released two vaccine types that you can get when they were first released. Many people were hesitant on getting the vaccine with it being so new, but others got it right away. The vaccines helped bring down the cases tremendously.

When school started back up, nothing was the same. We would only go to school for two days a week and there would only be a few classes we would go to with extended times. Each class would be around two hours long. School started to get better for the students around the second semester when they started to add more classes to each day and dropped the two-hour block periods.

For the next year, everything was almost normal, besides being required to wear masks still in school for the first half of the year. Many places started to drop the mask mandate and things were starting to get normal again. Masks are now only recommended at most places besides some big public events.

What a strange time it's been!

Through four years of being at Hellgate, being a senior didn't seem to take that long. In our sophomore year, Covid struck in March and took out the rest of the year and gave us a late and rough start to our junior year. With Covid coming in the way of our lives through quarantine and especially changing our schooling, it's been a weird couple of years to say the least.

Looking back at the start of the pandemic, everyone was excited for spring break and hearing that we were gonna have an extended break. Many people were going to state for basketball in Bozeman to see the Hellgate Knights play in the finals. Covid didn't seem like a big deal for America before it was brought here. Once we started to hear about Covid coming to America, it got a lot more serious. Everywhere was getting shut down. The Hellgate Knights basketball team couldn't play their last game for the finals when one Covid case came to Bozeman. Once more cases came, it all went downhill from there.

Through quarantine, we had around six months of summer and many places were closed. Big sports teams were



Layne Cooney tries on masks.  
Photo by Darian Davalos.

# Senior Reflections

Sierra Meissner  
Reporter

**Say What?!**

## Aislyn Pappas



Photo by Eleni Babbitt.

“Senior year has probably been the most eye opening year I’ve ever had. It’s been both good and bad. I’ve learned a lot about health and fitness, as well as career choices, financing, adulthood, music, work ethic, and so much more. Not gonna lie, it’s also been scary, like dealing with health issues, social changes, and the concept of my entire life about to completely change, but in a way I think that it’s for the best and I cannot wait to see what my peers end up doing with their lives after graduation!”

## Dylan Adkins



Photo by Sierra Meissner.

“This senior year was my favorite year of high school. I made a lot of good memories and had a lot of fun. I played on the varsity soccer team and we won the state championship, and it was one of my favorite parts of this year. I really enjoyed the late start this year because I could sleep in and get a lot of good sleep. Now I’m ready to go to MSU and start a new frontier in my life.”

## Kaiden Cooke



Photo by Sierra Meissner.

“I would say senior year was definitely the best year of high school. I feel like everybody has matured a lot and almost everybody gets along pretty well. Everybody seems more unified as we all work towards graduation and our futures, and a lot of the annoying drama has been left in the past... This year was a blast and I’m sure it will live on in all of our memories.”

## Lars Thorne-Thomsen



Photo by Sierra Meissner.

“This year was great. My favorite part is that we won state soccer and now I get to continue my career at Seattle University. I am going to miss my friends, but I am excited to graduate and start a new part of my life. I liked attending sporting events, especially basketball.”

Maggie Vann  
Co-Editor

# Parting Advice from Seniors

"Sit in the student section,  
go to prom, dress up for spir-  
it week, and don't ever hes-  
itate to do what's right for  
you!"

Sunny Shoupe



*"Don't stress too much and  
enjoy being a kid. Be excited  
for your future though."*

Cara Wright



*"An 'A' is not the most import-  
ant thing, pass your class with  
good teacher relations and it  
will benefit you so much more."*

Marrin Kolczak-Hardy

*"Don't open the math  
wing vault. You don't  
wanna know what's in  
there."*

Tommy Nilson



*"Enjoy it while it  
lasts, and don't get  
a mullet!"*

Jordan Freer



*"Remember  
to be kind to  
yourself :)"*

Juliet Curtis

*"Just be  
kind :)"*

Ashley Young





*"If times are rough,  
just take it day by  
day. Stop stressing  
about tomorrow :)"*  
Aislyn Pappas

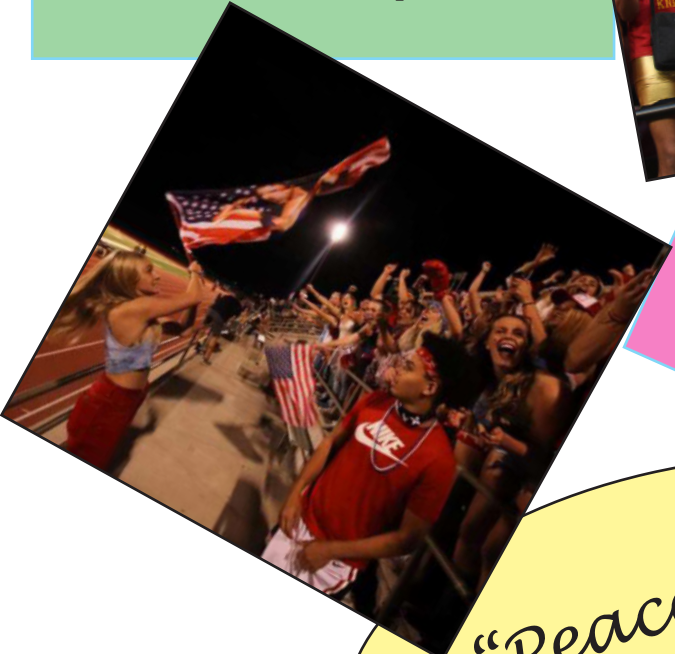
**"Don't drink your  
bath water."**  
Cam McNelis

*"Expect the unexpected  
and always remain con-  
fident in yourselves."*  
Grace Ludewig

**"The risk reward  
or whatever for  
skipping classes is  
totally worth it."**  
Jackson Triepke



**"No one cares."**  
Aryan Kabadi



*"Have the most fun  
you can, because high  
school goes by too  
fast."*  
Brogan Callaghan



*"Peace and  
love."*  
Elena Vesovich

**"Don't follow your parents  
expectations for you."**  
Nathan Ritchlin

# Hellgate Students Consider Gap Year

Gabi Wilson  
Reporter

Many students have different plans for their years after high school. Some will go to college, some will go straight to work, some will take gap years, etc. Here are some students who are planning to take a gap year and what they are planning to do!

Jake Adams is planning on taking a gap year. He said, "I'm really just trying to figure out where I want to go to school and what I want to study in college." When asked if he is planning on traveling during his gap year, he responded, "I want to go somewhere in Europe for a little while and see places where I might not be able to see if I go straight into college."

Many people take gap years to travel because traveling is difficult while you are also going to school. Adams finished, "I also want to keep working on music and expanding in that aspect of my life."

Freya Gooday said, "I honestly don't have many plans for my gap year yet. I think my overall goal is to figure out what I'll eventually do in college, but also save up some money and expand my artistic credentials. Over the summer I'm hoping to host art camps at the MAM or ZACC or the Clay Studio for young kids. I've always been interested in art and teaching so I think something like that could be a good way to try those things out in a more professional setting."

When going on to talk about traveling Gooday said, "I might travel, no big plans yet but I think going to Europe would be

really cool. I took two years of German so maybe I should go to Germany." Gooday finished, "After, or during the summer, I'm thinking of trying to find some apprenticeship or internship with some artist who wants to share a specific skill. Right now I'm pretty interested in ceramics and printmaking so I might try to find some veteran ceramicist or printmaker who's willing to teach me their ways."

Flint Miller is also planning on taking a gap year. When asked what his plans are, he responded, "I'm going down to California to be an EMT for a year. Specifically San Luis Obispo near the Cal Poly campus." When asked why he was interested in being an Emergency Medical Technician, Miller responded, "I really like helping people. Making others feel better makes me feel better in turn."

When asked about her gap year after senior year Kayla Wallace said, "I plan on doing some traveling definitely. I just haven't seen as much of the world as I would like to yet, so I want to take the time that I have to visit different places." There are specific places she would like to go. "One place I really want to visit again is Oregon. Oregon is honestly the most beautiful place I've ever been to and I want to explore more than just the coast. I'm not sure if this will happen in my gap year, but I want to go outside of the US as well and visit places like Africa and Europe and maybe some tropical places too," she said.

Students tend to take a gap year to travel and see more of the world before they have to hunker down for school.

For Charlie Conkle's gap year, he said, "As of right now I'm going to stay in Missoula. I'm going to travel to see some of my friends' campuses and see what's going on with them throughout the year. Mostly I'm just going to work through the year, relax and get more motivated for college the following year."

Else McCurdy said, "I'm planning to stay here in Missoula and mostly work to save up so that I can move and go to school the year after, but I know I'll definitely do some traveling here and there with all that time. Another reason I'm sticking around is all the friends I've got in Missoula, I'm not ready to say goodbye quite yet!" Moving on can definitely be a difficult time when we have all grown up around these people our whole lives.

Leah Maxfield explained, "I'm hoping to travel and to write a book. That's really all I have planned for the gap year, besides working that is."

Hugo Lonski said, "I'm not sure where in Spain, but I'm planning on going to either a language school or a subject specific high school there."

Gavin Goicovich said, "I'm going to travel to Thailand and California. I'm also going to work at a bank and do a road trip. Then I will probably apply to colleges."

Taking a gap year is a good decision for many. This gives students a break from school and time to do other things that they might not be able to do while in school.

# This Year in Pop Culture

Julia Key  
Reporter

This school year is going to be a memorable one in pop culture for this year's senior class. I talked to a plethora of Hellgate students to find out their favorite arts, entertainment, and pop culture happenings from this school year and these are their favorite moments from the past eight months.

## Movies and TV

This year brought many great movies, and with COVID subsiding it gave way to seeing movies in the theater again. Some favorites from the box office included Free Guy, The French Dispatch, Dune and Spiderman: No Way Home. This also gave us many movies that were disliked by audiences and critics



The French Dispatch was a major hit amongst Hellgate Students this year.

alike such as Dear Evan Hansen, The Batman, and Venom: Let There Be Carnage.

This time has been big for streaming, some movies that came out on streaming platforms this year are Encanto, Power of the Dog, Don't Look Up and Tik Tik Boom! This school year also brought us many great TV shows on streaming platforms; there were highly anticipated second seasons of both Bridgerton and Euphoria that both topped charts when they were released. We also got many great new shows like Only Murders In The Building, The Kardashians (reboot), and The Happier Than Ever documentary. We are also anticipating a new season of Stranger Things later in May, which is a long time coming after being postponed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Music

We received a few good pieces of music from artists since August. Some favorite albums include Solar Power by Lorde, Red (Taylor's Version) as well as Olivia Rodrigo and Silk Sonic's debut albums. We also got some great new rap albums like Megan Thee Stallion's Something For Thee Hotties and Earl Sweatshirt's SICK!

We also bore witness to some absolute flops this year. Machine Gun Kelly and Willow Smith released their song Emo Girl which was widely disliked. Justin Bieber also recently released a widely hated single called I Feel Funny, which is brain-rotting at best.

Overall the new music selection was bleak over 2021 and 2022, and we are hoping for some better music over the next few months.

## Pop Culture

Unlike the music scene, this year's pop culture moments were flourishing. Celebrity relationship drama has been exciting this



Olivia Rodrigo's debut album "Sour" played in our heads all school year.

year. Rihanna is pregnant with A\$AP Rocky's child and they are reportedly engaged. This year has also been big on Kardashian-West drama. After last year's shock about our favorite couple Kete (Kim Kardashian and Pete Davidson) the drama between Kete and Kanye has been wild. From secret "romantic" tattoos to extremely public fights between Pete and Kanye, we definitely got our fair share of Kardashian-West drama.

The celebrity legal drama this year has been front and center. Britney Spears was released from her almost 14 year conservatorship in November of 2021. After the uproar of the Free Briney movement we all got a happy ending, knowing that Spears is now in control of her own life. The one thing we definitely won't forget is the current Johnny Depp and Amber Heard trial, which no matter whose side you're on, has left us all shocked.

Overall this year has brought a lot of great memories, and I'm sure everyone including our seniors are ready for a great new start!

# Hellgate Sports Wrap-Up and Review

Wilson Freer  
Reporter

The 2021-22 school year has seen many different successes and accomplishments in all of Hellgate's sports and activities. Here's a look at some of the sports teams throughout this school year.

The cross country boy's team won state and the girls were able to get second place. Senior Kensey May placed first overall with a time of 18:16. She was also two spots away from qualifying for nationals. May said, "When I was done I was super happy about my race, just because it felt good to have everyone there and to be able to spend my last state [meet] in my hometown."

The football team had an enjoyable season, with some wins. Carter Polancheck, junior, said "It was a rambunctious bunch of boys, just lots of fun...after winning games the locker room was really fun."

The boys soccer team was able to win state again, and the girls went to the semi's for the second time in program history.

The golf team had a very successful season as well.

Although the volleyball team's season was filled with challenges, they were able to build a strong team and have a fun time. Camille Sherrill, junior, said, "I really think that we had a great team environment within the players and I think we all provided really good energy for each other even though we didn't win a lot."

Both basketball teams were able to make it to the state tournament where the girls took second place. Leo Filardi, junior, said, "There were some unexpected challenges this year, but we stayed together as a team. Unfortunately we lost (at state) but we all definitely got closer."

The wrestling team had a great season with the addition of the new girls program and even

had some individuals place at State. Layne Cooney, senior said, "We had a really young team this year and we have a lot of potential going into the next few years."

The dance team had a successful season in which they performed at many events and games, helped Hellgate win the golden goat game again, and even traveled to State with the basketball teams. Adarra Decker, senior, said, "The girls really worked together to make sure that we still had a really good year. To me the dance team is about the girls on the team and my love for everyone. All of the girls are such amazing dancers and people, so I love being able to showcase everyone's talent. I'm happy to leave high school but sad to leave all of my wonderful girls." The cheer team also participated in these events, and they also qualified for Nationals.

The swim team had a very memorable season and was finally able to return to in person meets. Kihla Lax, senior, said, "The most memorable part of the season was probably one of our 200 yard medley relays where we beat Big Sky and we weren't expected to. It was just really exciting for all of us."

While the tennis season is still going on it has so far been very successful. Ashley Young, senior, said, "The tennis season has been great and the team has improved so much!"

Both teams are really close, (boys and girls) and we are always cheering each other on through snow, wind and sunshine! I can't wait to see how our teams perform at Divisionals, and I'll miss the Hellgate Tennis team so much next year!"

Along with tennis, the track and softball seasons are also continuing through the end of this month. The teams have done well and look forward to finishing strong.

Even though there were some challenges faced by all of the teams, they were able to have great seasons and stay strong throughout.



Photos by Gabi Wilson,  
Maggie Vann and Ali Caudle.

# Senior Athletes Commit to Colleges

Win Duerk  
Reporter

As the year is coming to a close, seniors are spreading their wings, looking forward to college and a variety of different paths forward where they will pursue their goals and chase the things they love. Many student athletes who have grown to love sports have committed to play sports in college where their interest in each individual sport will continue to deepen and grow. Hellgate has 19 student athletes graduating this year who will all be advancing themselves in their sport through college.

Keke Davis will play basketball at Western and is looking forward to “the great school facility and the schooling system they have and knowing that when I go down there I’ll also play quite a bit and just have fun with the whole college experience.”

“The coaches that believed in me at Hellgate and taught me moves and implemented the whole team atmosphere/team dynamic has helped me grow playing basketball at Hellgate,” Davis said.



Bailee Saylor (left front) and Keke Davis (right front) on signing day.  
Courtesy of Bailee Saylor.

Jordan Freer is looking forward to playing volleyball at PLU. “I’m looking forward to right away having a team and a group of girls that I can spend time with and being able to continue the sport I like and get exercise everyday,” she said. While she is excited for moving forward, she also looks back on her time playing with Hellgate. “At Hellgate I’ve played with my best friends and so it’s made me love the sport a lot more. I’ve gotten a lot of great coaching and good playing time which I feel like has really helped me develop as a player,” Freer said.

Kensley May is looking forward to running at Syracuse and said, “I’m excited for new competition and being in a different area and I get to be with my old teammate Sage and it will be really nice to run with her again. Reflecting back she said, “Running at Hellgate has built my passion for running and I love my motivational team and coaches.”

Tommy Nilson, who will play football at MSU, said, “I’m really excited to see how I develop as an athlete and see what my potential is physically, and I’m really excited to see what college athlete experience is all about and to make a bunch of connections with a bunch of new people. I think I’ve learned to overcome many hardships and push through some hard times in athletics at Hellgate which really helped me become a leader.” Reflecting on his time at Hellgate, Tommy said his favorite memories were “bus rides with the boys.”



Clara Tallent (second from left) with the team this year.  
Courtesy of Clara Tallent.

Clara Tallent, who is going to Fort Lewis College, reflected: “Before my junior season I wasn’t sure if I wanted to play soccer in college, but I got some new coaches junior year and they really encouraged me that playing soccer in college is the right move for me and that this is what I want to do.” Tallent said she’s excited for “a team environment just to go in and have a bunch of friendly faces before school even starts on the team.”

Out of all the paths that graduating seniors will choose through college, being a student athlete is a rare and special opportunity. All 19 student athletes have worked very hard at their sport through the years and making the commitment to play in college is no small feat.

- Marcus Anderson** - soccer - Fort Lewis College
- Gabi Beaton** - soccer - Saddleback Community College
- Layne Cooney** - football - University of Montana Western
- Keke Davis** - basketball - University of Montana Western
- Emmaline Derry** - cross country/track & field - Colorado College
- Ian Finch** - football - University of Montana
- Jordan Freer** - volleyball - Pacific Lutheran University
- Kihla Lax** - swimming - Washington State University
- Trey Mattson** - golf - Montana Tech
- Kensley May** - cross country/track & field - Syracuse
- Cam McNelis** - soccer - University of Indianapolis
- Isabel Munro** - cross country/track & field - Vassar College
- Tommy Nilson** - football - Montana State University
- Aven Roberts** - cross country/track & field - Willamette University
- Bailee Saylor** - basketball - Montana State University Billings
- Jake Sweatland** - football - Carroll College
- Clara Tallent** - soccer - Fort Lewis College
- Lars Thorne-Thomsen** - soccer - Seattle University
- Jackson Triepke** - cross country/track & field - U.S. Coast Guard Academy

# Tickets to Success!

## Words of Wisdom for Graduates from Hellgate Staff

“Invest in experiences rather than material goods. There will always be the next new iPhone, nicer car, or pair of Nikes. Travel, do things you never thought you would or could... make unforgettable memories for yourself.” - Maureen Ojala

“Tell your parents, friends and teachers what they’ve meant to you. Say thank you and be specific! Words mean more than anything.” - Ellen McKenzie

“Learn how to cook something other than mac and cheese.” - Carla Hinman

“Have a little fun in life, because the stressful stuff isn’t going anywhere.” - Ashley Wineman

“Remember that you are not your major, you are not your job, you are not your family, or friends, or address. You are an amazing individual with so much left to learn about your inner self and the wider world.” - Darci Coffman

“I’m sure some of you are reading this hoping that the finance teacher is going to provide some killer stock tips or perhaps some advice around how to navigate these crazy economic times that we appear to be entering. If you wanted that you should have taken my classes (hint to you non-seniors). My advice to help you make it through this world is to always try to be a little nicer to people than is necessary. Don’t do it because of who they might be or what they might be able to do for you, but do it because of who you are.” - Steve Klimkiewicz

1. It’s OK to not have all the answers.
2. Success is more about persistence than talent.
3. Relationships matter.
4. Laugh.
5. Coffee”

- Laura Elliot

“Drink filtered water, wear reef-safe sunscreen, and be good to each other.”  
- Rhian Clark

“Be an active listener.”  
- Caroline Lurgio

“Figuring out who you are and how you’re strong and where you’re headed in the world is, thankfully, a lifetime journey. Pursue happiness. Take the time to find the beauty in all of life’s moments - especially the ordinary. You’re about to begin a lifetime journey of finding out just how many facets of you there are, how deep your roots can go, how high you can reach. This time in your life is sure to bring awe around every corner. Let life take your breath away.” - Katie Wyskiver

“Let your work be meaningful and make a difference in the world with positive actions. Take time to relax, travel, see the world.” - Laurie Mitzalis

“Take time to enjoy the simple things in life... the flowers, the sun, your loved ones, your favorite books... life moves so quickly! Slowing down can help you recognize all the amazing things in the world around you. Stay open to all kinds of unexpected possibilities as you make your way through adulthood.” - Camille Barraclough

1. Revel in the good times and seek out those good times!
2. Don’t forget to take your social security card with you when you move out.
3. Nurture important friendships.
4. Write back to us at HHS and tell us how you are. :)”

- Velita Rholl

“Don’t be afraid to live at home with your parents for as long as you can; the rental market is crazy right now!” - Joe Slemberger

“Show up and put your best foot forward while keeping an open mind and respecting others.” - Beth Huguet

“Let your passions guide you. Work is much more fun when you are passionate about what you are doing.” - Joanna LaPorte

“Trust the process.”  
- Lew Procacci