The Hellgate Lance

Students Take to the Streets Protesting ICE

Quinn Stromberg
Editor

On Jan. 20, 2026, hundreds of Hellgate High School students walked out of their 6th period classrooms to participate in a nationwide walkout protesting increased violent ICE activity across the country. The walkout was organized by the Instagram account "Students Demand In Missoula," an account run by Hellgate junior Cora Barnes, unaffiliated with but inspired by the nonprofit "Students Demand Action."

The caption of the Instagram post promoting the walkout stated "This is a protest and a promise. In the face of fascism, we will be ungovernable." It was reposted by many Hellgate students, spreading the word to other students to be prepared to walk out of their classes at 2 PM.

The protesters met outside the front of the school and marched downtown to Beartracks Bridge with handmade signs and cow bells, led by Hellgate juniors Cora Barnes and Cecelia Spencer, who distributed signs and led chants for the rest of the students.

"I wasn't expecting so many people, but I was so proud of our school that even [during] finals week we had so many people that felt inspired to lend their voices and time," said Spencer. She said she had seen the walkouts happening nationally and wanted Hellgate to be involved. She reached out to Barnes who had been planning for the walkout, and they finalized the plan together, putting together signs, chants, and music.

Over 200 Hellgate students, still wearing their backpacks, concluded their march by lining the sidewalk stretching across Beartracks Bridge and holding up their signs to the passing cars, uniting to create a powerful message as they stood up to this nationwide threat. The group then split, some continuing on to City Hall to keep protesting, and the rest back to school in time for 7th period.

"Our engagement is so important because we are the future," said senior Ryall Pham. "While the short term consequences of our government's policies affect everyone, the long term consequences will affect us entirely."

On Jan. 23, large scale anti-ICE protests took place throughout Minnesota, driven by public outrage after the killing of Renée Nicole Good. Organizers estimated there to have been somewhere between 50,000 and 100,000 people marching in downtown Minneapolis despite the subzero temperatures.

The successful protests throughout Minnesota inspired University of Minnesota students to call for a nationwide strike, which was further propelled after the killing of Alex Pretti on Jan. 24. They announced that Friday, Jan. 30 would be called the 'National Shutdown'. As the movement gained traction, it was commonly referred to as an 'ICE Out'. The strike called for "no school, no work, and no shopping."

In response to the walkout at Hellgate and the call for a national strike, Principal Judson Miller said "I have an email that I send out to our community, and that's the language I use."

The email Miller sent out before this Nationwide Strike stated he was fully aware of the deep concern over what is happening in our country and acknowledged that many people had different ways of expecting Hellgate as a school to respond to the shutdown.

"It's very important to me that students have choices of expression. I can't, as a school, say that I'm not going to mark you abset—that's not legal. But I want students to have the ability [to do so]," Miller said.

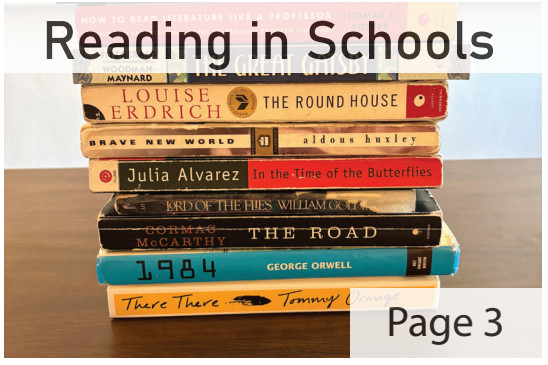
Young people, Gen Z specifically, are often subject to negative stereotypes insinuating 'laziness' and 'impatience'. And yet, Gen Z, which makes up most of today's high school and college students, is the second generation to follow the upward trend of civic engagement and historic voter turnout.

"High schoolers don't get enough credit from older generations for being involved. The issues affecting the world today are going to hit us the hardest and I think our generation is aware that we aren't going to have it easy. There are simple ways to take back our power, and engaging in activities like walkouts is part of it," said Spencer.

High schoolers and college students are majorly the ones organizing walkouts within their school, city, or national communities; they make up a large percentage of those speaking out against ICE and calling for political accountability.

"There are simple ways to take back our power, and engaging in activities like walkouts is part of it. America has such an important legacy of social advocacy and as students of history, it's our job to continue that legacy when other's rights are being taken. It's our responsibility to stand up for each other and for ourselves in moments of crisis and I'm so proud of the student body for showing that we will not stand for ICE abducting people in the streets," Spencer said.

Hellgate students walkout in protest violent ICE activity across the country. Photo by Will Hansen.



The Hellgate Lance

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Hellgate's Earth Science Course Changes to Semester Options

Mai McKelvey-Pham
Reporter

February is the month of course requests, and this year, under the science section, students may find new options available, specifically for rising 9th graders. Starting next fall, Earth and Space Science will be offered as semester-long course choices. For first semester, students can choose either Astronomy or Meteorology. Second semester adds two more: Geology and Environmental Systems.

These changes aren't unusual for Hellgate's courses. "Every year, we as a building revisit our course sequencing to try and remain relevant and try to keep student choice at the forefront," said Hellgate's principal, Judson Miller.

According to Miller, almost every one of Hellgate's departments primarily offers semester options for students that "hit the same standards" as yearlong courses. Standards, in this instance, refer to the requirements of a class.

This practice is longstanding in the Health and Physical Education department, for which every course is one semester long. However, Miller also explained that some departments, like social studies, whose courses are traditionally yearlong, have recently switched some courses to a semester approach. US Government was split into two classes last year: US Government and Theory of Knowledge. Other classes have been added to departments in recent years as well, such as Social Media for the CTE department and Outdoor Pursuits for P.E..

The significance of the alteration of Earth Science is in its complexity. "Earth Science is a large topic, … [it] could be broken down into interest areas that may be of more relevance and more excitement to students," said Miller. The idea is that students may be more interested in Earth Science if given semester options in topic areas.

At the end of last school year, the science department sent out surveys asking about student preference in order to better accommodate student choice. Miller takes part in this data-driven process: "We look at grade data, we look at attendance data, we look at survey data…" From there, the science department began to have conversations about a switch in curriculum, which, in this case, came to fruition in time for course requests.

These classes are designed for freshmen, especially the options for first semester, which cover many of the lab and method requirements that upperclassmen have already learned. Nevertheless, this doesn't mean that these classes aren't available to other grade levels. If taken by a sophomore, junior, or senior, they will count as science elective credit. On the other hand, freshmen must take two semesters in order to gain the Earth Science credit required to graduate. However, students may not take two semesters of the same course, their second semester class must be different.

While curriculum and teachers are yet to be completely decided, all of the new options are sure to be fun and full of learning. The point of the changes is, of course, to engage students in topics they're hopefully more interested in, but the reform is also beneficial to teachers. "We're making sure we're hitting the standards that exist, and then there's going to be some teacher art on top of that," said Miller. In the development of the new classes' curriculum, teacher creativity will be able to show through, making these classes more interesting for teachers as well.

Course changes increase student and teacher enthusiasm. "Learning changes over time," Miller explained. It's necessary to have these types of adjustments within the school because academics aren't static, they're fluid. Now that the administration has taken the risk and altered Earth Science, a core class, the Hellgate community is sure to be able to look forward to more course changes in the future.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	GRADE	TERM	CREDIT TYPE	PREREQ
REQUIRED COURSES					
SC1500	**EARTH & SPACE SCIENCE SEMESTER OPTIONS:** **Semester 1:** Astronomy or Meteorology **Semester 2:** Astronomy; Meteorology; Geology; Environmental Systems	9	Choose 1 per semester 2 semesters required	SC	None

Earth and Space Science semester-long courses make an appearance on Hellgate's Course Offering webpage. Graphic by Mai McKelvey-Pham.

Reading in Schools: A National Decline Hellgate Refuses to Follow

Ellie Lopuch
Reporter

According to Rose Horowitch, a staff writer at The Atlantic, many students no longer arrive at college prepared to read books. Even students of prestigious colleges seem overwhelmed by the amount of reading required. This likely stems from how they were taught throughout the majority of their life. Or more, what they weren't taught.

Many middle and high schools nationwide assign dozens of excerpts and articles, but require little to no entire book reads. Many of these students never actually read a book cover-to-cover for school throughout their entire middle and high school careers. This dramatically brings down students' ability to pick out small literary details, follow the overall plot, and majorly lowers reading comprehension levels.

According to Dana Goldstein, a reporter for The New York Times, teachers often have no time left to guide the class through a whole book after they complete their required curriculums and prepare students for exams.

However, Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS) have not been following this national decline. Many English teachers, specifically at Hellgate, find that there is great value in reading full books and continue to express this in their classes.

MCPS English K-12 is currently undergoing a Curriculum Review. Two Hellgate English teachers, Rhian Clark and Caroline Lurgio, are involved in this review with the goal of collaborating with reading and writing teachers across the district.

According to Lurgio, around every five years each subject goes under curriculum review to evaluate what needs to be changed. The main focus this year is addressing the recent changes in Montana's ELA state standards.

These changes provide new standards that must be implemented in schools across the state by July of 2027. According to the Office of Public Instruction for Montana, the new literacy practices emphasize transferable reading, writing, and communication skills essential for post-secondary success.

A small sample of the books read cover-to-cover in Hellgate's English classes. Photo by Ellie Lopuch.

The review has also seen a push to move away from the set of national standards for English and math called Common Core, which many schools across the nation have also decided to part from. Extra time is being spent on this review to see what this may look like for MCPS.

According to Goldstein with The New York Times, Common Core initially was seen to better prepare students for college with more thesis-driven writing and nonfiction reading in schools. Many states adopted this in the 2010s leading to schools closely adhering to the curriculum which focused on shorter readings.

Around seven years ago, according to Lurgio, MCPS schools implemented the EngageNY curriculum which aligned with Common Core.

"That curriculum focused heavy on skills which means it was a lot of excerpts and extracts from books and novels because it was all about students learning skills that really had little to do with reading stamina or really the enjoyment of stories... those that developeed the curriculum aren't even using it anymore," said Clark.

Because this curriculum is heavily skill-based, "we lost learning through reading," Lurgio said. Today, only some Missoula schools still use it, and the Hellgate English department is only using bits and pieces of it.

Hellgate has made their own insightful decisions to make sure that their English students are continuing to get the reading they need. One example is Hellgate's choice to read the entire Romeo and Juliet book in Freshman year English, instead of the suggested excerpts.

Clark and Lurgio have very similar views when it comes to the importance of reading full books, beginning to end.

As Clark said, we are "reading stories so we can develop empathy and understanding for different experiences around the world, as well as developing skills." Without seeing a character's entire arch and the resolution of conflict, it is harder to develop empathy.

"The biggest thing books offer is learning how to be compassionate and empathetic for groups that we don't live with," said Lurgio. When thinking of all the students that aren't reading, it is troubling to think of the "generation of people who aren't learning about other cultures and aren't developing compassionate empathy for groups beyond their own environment."

Both Lurgio and Clark believe that Hellgate, specifically the IB English program, currently does a good job incorporating full books into their curriculum and preparing students for college. But they both recognize that as teachers they also need to adhere to the needs of students with multiple future pathways. According to Clark, it is very important to prepare college bound students "without it being too overwhelming for those that college isn't their path."

The biggest challenge now for schools who do assign full books is getting students to actually do the reading. "The majority of the responsibility falls into the students hands and whether or not they are going to open up that book," said Clark. "If someone is going to be educated, that is their responsibility."

"Kids are very resourceful and find other ways to get the information they need out of books," said Lurgio. "Even if the teacher requires full reading, kids for whatever reason don't see value or they don't have time... or they don't have the reading endurance."

But it is important to remember that "being educated is a personal journey and a personal responsibility," said Clark. "Whether or not a student is prepared for college is somewhat up to that student." It's their job to "ensure that they are doing the work" to prepare for whatever their future may be.

Tips For Dealing With Seasonal Depression

Kingston Kimpell
Reporter

Though sometimes beautiful and sometimes festive, winter comes with the burden of seasonal depression for some. An empty mood, having low energy and oversleeping are reasons why some dread the colder and darker months so much. Seasonal depression is a very taxing disorder with motivation to do school work and see loved ones seeming like "too much work" or just feeling like you physically can't.

Though it feels like nothing can help you out of seasonal depression even a little bit and you may not have any motivation to try anything to help, there are a few "remedies" that I and others have found to be helpful.

To start off this list, I'd like to start with romanticizing a routine of selfcare. There is something so liberating about pampering yourself when it's cold and dark outside and I have found that it motivates me to take better care of myself when I'm struggling with seasonal depression. If you need something to look forward to after school that isn't just laying in bed, I suggest finding a hot beverage that you could drink everyday. For me I've been drinking nettle tea. I'd recommend you find a drink without caffeine so you don't become reliant on it. Using body products that feel luxurious even if they are actually just from the drug store is another thing that I would recommend.

Showering is a struggle for some when pressed with such a burden of sadness, but I've found that having a candle lit shower or bath where you focus on pampering yourself and relaxing is a great way to motivate yourself. If you are looking for a cheap good candle, I recommend going to Butterfly Herbs or Target, and smelling the selection they have so you can find one you can look forward to smelling everyday. Finding body and hair products that smell good are a luxury, so I recommend finding special products for your candle lit showers. Creating a shower/bath routine that you find comfort in is very beneficial.

This one isn't necessary, but I find that having a signature perfume or scent that you can associate winter with is very soothing. Everyone loves when someone they are around smells good, Smelling good helps with confidence which is very important to keep up with when depressed. It can also give you something to look forwarded to in the morning. I always look forward to putting on a perfume that gives me comfort. Butterfly Herbs has great inexpensive perfumes that you can smell and sample to find what is best for you and your natural musk.

Volunteering sounds like a lot of work when struggling with depression but it is truly rewarding. I find that volunteering helps with self esteem because it makes you feel good about what you are doing. It is also a good way to spend your time and reduce the time you are laying in bed on your phone during the day.

It is also well known that vitamin D is a beneficial supplement to take since we aren't getting nearly as much sunlight as we do in the spring and summer. I'd definitely recommend keeping up with taking your vitamins and water intake. Though it may all seem like a placebo, you have to put trust into it working.

As we look forward to spring and summer we have to still romanticize the present and do what we can to make it through. Start taking better care of yourself and pampering yourself, keep yourself busy and start preparing for the holidays. It is always important to remember that the warmth and sunlight will come.

Pampering yourself with a breakfast tray.
Photo by Kingston Kimpell.

Indulging in the luxury of a candlelit shower.
Photo by Kingston Kimpell.

Going Big: Dismantling Authoritarianism with a Half-Pipe

Gus Darty
Reporter

In the ski movie, "Magma 3," published to Youtube on Nov. 20, 2023, anyone can see what type of man Hunter Hess is. Magma, a group centered around Hess and fellow professional skier Alex Hall, populates its films with careful demonstrations of inhuman excellence on the stage of park skiing. In the most inhospitable environments, such as the dry concrete floors under gazebos abandoned in the harshness of winter, or the brutalist walls of drab, colorless buildings, every utilitarian element of an urban scape, such as countless thoughtlessly crafted handrails, transcends into an obstacle.

Hunter Hess is a skier in love with the rail. In what seems like an endless myriad of clips in "Magma 3," Hess balances on the edge of slippery handrails never once designed to be grinded upon. Nonetheless, again and again, he launches onto rails like a cowboy onto an angered bull. Momentarily, the Wild West returns, as Hess turns a sight so commonplace to our eyes to something gravitating and unimaginable.

In an eighteen minute long rough cut of "Magma 3" featuring only Hess, every slight miscalculation and their effects are put on display. For every landed trick, there seem to be five falls. The rough cut makes obvious the pain that comes with every clip. Hess's achievements are never handed to him. The wind is knocked out of his lungs time and time again. He groans, and bleeds, and hoists himself up awkwardly over and over.

Such perseverance and determination is required to become an Olympic athlete in freestyle skiing, a title Hess now possesses. In this year's Winter Olympics, Hunter Hess travelled to Milan to represent his country in freestyle skiing alongside athletes like Alex Ferreira, Aaron Blunck, and his Magma collaborator, Alex Hall. For someone like Hess, this honor is the epitome of a lifetime dedication to their craft, a heaping milestone in an odyssey of pain and ecstasy. In some ways, it can also be a burden.

For example, as American athletes like Hess compete in Milan, the reputation of American Olympians worsens with every offense committed by the Trump administration. I grow exhausted of a thousand foregone conclusions playing slowly, an inescapable cataclysm approaching each and every person's door. Mass deportation campaigns by the Trump administration show no signs of halting, not from ICE's long list of needless brutalities, or nationwide protests, or broadcasted dead bodies. I grow tired of honoring a debate about the topic, especially as, internationally, our nation is rightfully ridiculed and criticized. If other countries can recognize the barbarism that slowly has become the rule of law in the United States, the egregious habit of dancing around our disapprovals cannot continue.

At a press conference, Hunter Hess was asked his opinion on representing the United States during a time when the country is not nearly as favorable as it has been during previous Olympic Games. Hess said, "It brings up mixed emotions to represent the US right now, I think, (...) there's obviously a lot going on that I'm not the biggest fan of, and I think a lot of people aren't." Hess continues to elaborate, stating that by representing the United States, he is representing the people he cares for, and the parts of the country that align with his moral values. Without overly criticizing Hess, who is a professional halfpipe skier and certainly not a politician, his statement is not very controversial. In terms of a political message, it is predictable and rather safe, criticizing vague elements of the nation's government without taking a definitive stand against any specific policies. Hess makes clear in this moment that the way he intends to be an ambassador is not with his words, but with his athletic prowess. Our president, however, proved to be less understanding.

Donald Trump, in a characteristically emotional outburst on Truth Social, opened his response to Hess's comments in an utterly naive way. Without an understanding of Hess in any aspect, Trump made his conclusion about the athlete monolithic and absolute, as if he alone is the final judge of human worth: "U.S. Olympic skier, Hunter Hess, a real loser, says he doesn't represent his country in the Winter Olympics." Trump kept ranting, saying that he finds it difficult to root for Hess, and that it is a shame he is on the team. It is a harsh reality I face to admit that none of this is shocking to me. Any American now has an obligation to expect these character traits from our president. He is graceless, careless and daft. He has no care for truth or mutual understanding. He speaks in brutish ways in accordance with his brutish political mechanisms. To President Donald Trump, the farther something is from his direct sphere of influence, the more of a "loser" it becomes.

I began to snowboard this year, and with my newfound hobby came a pantheon of newfound heroes. Hunter Hess is undeniably one of them. While I only became truly aware of Hess's accomplishments while writing this article, I felt President Trump's message as I believe it was intended: a punch thrown at a community. The world of extreme sports has always been one of societal upheaval. Undeniably, some of the greatest models for counterculture movements have come from surf, skate and ski/snowboard culture. Found in the chemical imbalance it takes to truly be able to attempt the dizzying feats of professional athletes like Hess, a similar fearlessness to censor oneself is revealed. To surmount the obstacles of nature placed before the human body, one must first revolt against their fears. They must find the ability to reject, totally and entirely, that which holds them back.

Graphic created by Gus Darty

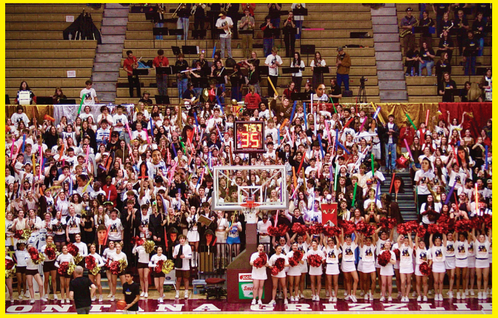
Any athlete must be a revolutionary, whether they are aware of this or not.

If there is one thing that President Trump and Hunter Hess have in common, it is an objection to fear. Trump finds no fault in his upheaval of political norms. In the same way that one might cringe at the thought of Hess tumbling down a staircase as a result of a slight mistake in motor functions, too many American citizens cower at the fearlessness of Trump's destructive governance. In this act, these people stand to the side and let Trump's cabinet flood our nation's legal systems in a sputtering hope that there will be some form of Deus Ex Machina to halt the funeral procession of a long decaying system of democracy. Their idea of salvation will never come.

Instead, the only way that budding authoritarianism can be quelled is through an equally belligerent and fearless opposition. In the same way that, as I write this article, hundreds of Americans put their safety on the line to make their country proud, everyday people have an obligation to do everything in their power to create a country worth holding pride in. At every corner of debaucherous victory, a mound of screaming, scratching citizens must stand in clear rejection. When one man is murdered or abducted by our government, the country must wail back in endless anger until justice prevails. In every instance where our nation once again conflates the names of its caretakers for the uncaring cry of selfish yokels, our huddled masses must prove to the world that every worker disrespected and forgotten is a brother or a sister we will uplift.

Before any staggering trick, the world becomes incredibly still. In the highest moment of fear, there lies the strongest opportunity to spring forward into greatness. As a great wind ceases, and a crowd suspends its breath, you know to take the jump. We have entered a world of no return. The chaos machine of American politics is finally crumbling, and with it all of the preconceived notions of a dilapidated justice system. There is no better time to take a leap than now.

Hellgate Students, Teachers Criticize ‘Pay to Win’ Nature of Goat



Will Hansen
Editor

On Jan. 30, under the lights of Dahlberg Arena, the Big Sky Eagles defeated the Hellgate Knights in the annual Golden Goat Game, keeping Gertie the Golden Goat in their trophy case another year. Goat is an annual staple of Missoula high school athletics, originally established to bring positivity to the city’s rivalries. However, after Hellgate’s narrow loss 469 to 470 points (originally announced as 469 to 472) to Big Sky this year, many students are questioning whether the principles Goat was founded to promote are still the deciding factors in crowning a champion.

Hellgate English teacher Caroline Lurgio said she remembers the exact moment Big Sky was announced as the winner. “I was gutted,” Lurgio said. “I wanted to have a tantrum and stomp my feet and jump up and down.”

Lurgio’s shock and sadness were mirrored by the rest of the Hellgate community. The loss was made even harsher when the student body realized the clear advantage that Big Sky had from the start: their student section decorations. While Hellgate had a number of smaller Star Wars themed posters handmade by the schools art club as well as a few ‘big-head’ cut-outs of players from both basketball teams with lightsabers and cloaks, Big Sky boasted walls covered in military camouflage ruffles, a floor-to-ceiling American flag, balloon arches, balloon letters, inflatable planes, and numerous small model clouds.

Will Ries, Hellgate senior class vice president, described Big Sky’s decorations as “big, flashy and industrial.” It was clear from before the first games tipoff where the advantage lay. That advantage could be explained by a financial discrepancy, as decorating a student section is one of the main financial requirements that Goat presents.

“Their ability to spend exorbitant amounts of money on decorations overshadowed our ability to utilize our student populace,” Ries said. Every year, Goat is scored on a rubric of five categories by a panel of five judges. Each category of the rubric can earn a school up to 20 points, and each judge scores each category independently. All of the judge’s scores are then added up for a final score per school out of 500.

Big Sky’s average score between the judges for the “Posters, Props, and Decorations” category was 19.8, while Hellgate’s was 16.6, the highest and lowest respective scores for any category between either school apart from “Sportsmanship,” in which both schools received even 20’s. In all three of the remaining categories, “Theme and Shirts,” “Cheering,” and “Halftime,” Hellgate received higher average scores.

“The whole concept of Goat was to create a peaceful spirit war that brought the community together,” Ries said. “To a certain extent it does, but the fact that it’s become a spending war in which the rich get richer is pretty upsetting because we don’t have the financial apparatus that they have.”

Big Sky’s “financial apparatus” is their renowned booster club, which played a large role in funding the school’s 2026 Goat campaign. This year, the booster club was also joined by five corporate sponsors including Pepsi.

“We don’t have a booster club,” Ries said. “We don’t have corporate sponsorships. That makes it really difficult for us to produce a really good looking student section to the same extent that they are.”

Several Hellgate students expressed outrage in the fact that the determinant in this year’s spirit competition was exuberance of decorations. “Money should not be a deciding factor in spirit,” said Sadie Seaman, Hellgate senior and member of Zoo Crew, Hellgate’s school spirit leaders.

Seaman’s sentiment was reflected by Hellgate’s staff members.

“[Big Sky] spending more money is what defeated us, and that should not be in the cards,” Lurgio said. “If you don’t get the outcome you want then there’s a lesson to be learned. It seems like maybe one of the lessons was actually that there needs to be some more clear expectations set in the rubric so that each high school is entering with the same guidelines and the same understanding.”

“We tweak the scoring sheet most years and that comes with pros and cons,” said Velita Rholl, Hellgate’s student government advisor. Rholl said that this can lead to misunderstandings of the expectations and guidelines set out in the rubric.

“This is something I will definitely be clarifying with all of the advisors,” Rholl said.

Despite this alleged unfairness, Hellgate put up a performance that they can be proud of.

“I thought our student section was phenomenal,” Ries said. “I thought it was the best job of leading it that we’ve ever done when it comes to cohesive cheering, at least for the first couple rows.”

Rholl highlighted Hellgate’s halftime performance, praising the show’s “inclusiveness and variety of talents.”

“By the end I was jumping up and down screaming with joy,” Rholl said.

Lurgio said she could not think of anything Hellgate could have done better during Goat. “I thought the whole night was fantastic,” she said. “The games were really close, there was a lot of connection between the student body and the parent groups and adults, and the art was amazing. I was super proud of our side.”

Now, with a year off for Big Sky to play Sentinel, the Knights look forward to 2028 when they will have their chance at winning the Golden Goat once again. It will be in the hands of the current underclassmen to get Gertie back into Hellgate’s trophy case.

Average Scores per Category	HHS	BSHS
Sportsmanship	20	20
Theme and Shirts	19.2	18.2
Posters, Props and Decorations	16.6	19.8
Cheering	19	18.4
Halftime	19.2	18.2
FINAL SCORES	**469**	**470**

Photos by Sabine Glaser.

The 68th Annual Grammy Awards: A Recap

Alexa Anastasia &
Weslley Banziger
Reporters

The biggest award show for all musicians happened on Feb 1, with so many talented artists getting recognition for their incredible work. The big winner of the night for Album Of The Year was Bad Bunny with his hit album Debi Tirar Más Fotos.

After winning album of the year for the very first time Bad Bunny, not only gave a shout out to his family and home in Puerto Rico he also said, "I dedicate this award to all the people who had to leave their home countries to follow their dreams." This album broke the records of Biggest Streaming Week for a latin song in history with 88.7+ million streams and it exceeded 200 million streams in 19 days, which is faster than any other latin song has ever taken to hit that mark, proving the award was truly deserved

One of the most talked about awards this year was Song of the Year. So many incredible songs were up for this category, including: Abracadabra by Lady Gaga, Golden by HUNTR/X, ATP by Bruno Mars and Rosé, and many more. However, Billie Elish took home the grammy with her single "Wildflower." Elish has won this award before, in fact, 2026 became her third time winning the award.

Elish's acceptance speech was also one of the most talked about speeches of the night as she used her acceptance speech time as a platform to speak out about ICE. She said, "no one is illegal on stolen land", while she and her brother were also wearing "ICE out" pins on their shirts.

With Olivia Dean's new album "The Art of Loving", she gained popularity and won Best New Artist at the Grammy's, being her first Grammys ward. In her acceptance speech she brings up how she is the granddaughter of an immigrant, and says that, "I'm a product of bravery and I think those people deserve to be celebrated."

There were many talented artists this year at the Grammys who won very deserved awards, and spoke out against what they believe, having a greater effect on society.

The 68th annual grammy awards offial poster

Hellgate Students' Most Anticipated Albums and Concerts in 2026

Hadley Sharp
Reporter

2026 has been a big year for many music fans. Despite us only being two months in, as several big artists like Noah Kahan, Mitski and Harry Styles have already announced new albums or tours. With concert and festival season rapidly approaching, Hellgate students are looking forward to these shows and albums the most. Or manifesting releases from those who have not announced anything yet.

"I'm hoping to go to Zootown Festival. I'd love to see the Lumineers, and Rainbow Kitten Surprise." Caroline Chitty

"I'm going to see The Crane Wives this summer." Zora Neff-Allen

"I would love another Adrianne Lenker album." Anna Bacon

"THE ART OF BEING A MESS (deluxe) by Lauren Spencer Smith." Branden Roach (album)

"Some Things Never Leave by Annabelle Dinda." Lenora Sackey (album)

Warm Winter Causes Pineview Park Ice Rink To Shut Down

Anais Currie Inglizian
Reporter

"I wouldn't say [the warm weather] disrupted the rink, it completely shut it down," Doug Swain, a current ice maker at the Bill Bevis Ice Rink said. The Pineview park Bill Bevis Ice ink is the perfect place to play pond hockey or skate around on a cold winter day. Unfortunately, the lack of cold weather and snow has caused the ice to close for the year. A beloved winter activity and community has come to an early end because of record high temperatures.

Bill Bevis created the outdoor rink about 50 years ago in Pineview park next to Rattlesnake elementary school. For a long time, Bevis maintained the ice all by himself, until he recruited other ice makers to assist him. Bevis and Paul Sharkey were two of the original creators but currently Dave Harmon is the most involved.

"There are 18 other ice makers and a spread sheet where two people sign up to team up morning and night shifts, they are always in pairs," Swain said. The ice makers take care of the ice by running the Zamboni. "Me, Paul, and Dave run the Zamboni," Swain said

The city funds and owns some parts of the rink, such as the zamboni shack. Inside the shack there is a well, John Deere tractor, and of course, the zamboni.

Bevis chose the location because of the ideal climate in the Rattlesnake, especially next to the creek which cools the air a couple degrees. 48 years ago, Bevis planted pine trees to block out the sunlight to reduce the melting ice.

Sadly, on Feb 1, the Pineview park Bill Bevis Ice Rink Facebook page posted "Icemakers are done for the season. We will no longer monitor and maintain the ice." The account followed up with a second post which was a short poem they made:

"What do you post
When your rink is toast
When you know it's done
When mother nature has won
One thing is clear
We struggled this year
We did what we could
About that we feel good
But all we can say now
About our rink so dear
We hope to see you all
Out on the ice next year"

Pineview Park ice rink closed for the season due to lack of ice and cold weather. Photo by Quinn Stromberg.

This was devastating news to the local Pine view community. "I always loved Pineview because we would play pick-up games with the ice makers in the morning. I love playing outside in the elements. It's pond hockey style so there are no crazy slap shots. You have to be focused on good passes and excellent skating," Scott Currie, an avid Pineview hockey player, said.

The majority of the days at the rink were half days only allowing children to skate. "I didn't even get to play once this year. I love it because it is not competitive and you don't keep score. It's sad because it's a classic winter experience in Montana and it doesn't feel like winter without ice skating outside," said Currie.

"If you don't get 30 days of ice, it isn't worth it. 100 days is a good year, but lately we have been averaging between 40 and 50. This year there were about a dozen," Swain said. The record year was 114 days open, and now with it dropping to only a couple, people are beginning to worry for the future of the rink. "All the main ice makers are nervous, if we have another year like this it isn't worth it all," Swain said.

Some of the ice makers are looking into refrigeration mats to place under the ice to keep it running despite the warm weather. Unfortunately, these will cost around $300,000 and they will need to find funding from either grants, donations, or the city. Swain worries that some of the older ice makers would be opposed to refrigeration mats because they don't want the Bill Bevis Ice Rink to be like the Glacier Ice Rink. "For their legacy to move on…there is going to have to be refrigeration, otherwise we won't be able to keep up," Swain said.

Despite many claims for a cold, snow-filled winter, this one has been disappointing. Classic winter activities, such as skiing, pond hockey, and snow shoeing have been taken away from the community because of the warm weather. Hopefully next year the rink will get cooler weather and snow for the Missoula community to continue playing pond hockey.

MCPS Late Spring Break Causes Trouble for Spring Sports

Elliotte Banziger
Editor

Many Missoula County Public School students are aware of the fact that we have a very late spring break this year. Much to the chagrin of many Hellgate families, spring break is about a month behind when it usually is, the week of April 6, instead of the usual mid March timeline.

Due to this late spring break the question arose, "How will spring sports seasons be affected?" The answer is that they will be heavily impacted and there's not much students can do to mitigate these annoying season altering effects. Like missed games or missing teammates.

I know I personally will be majorly affected as a longstanding member of the tennis team. I haven't missed a game day in all of my last three years being on the team and unfortunately I am going to be missing the first two games of the season this year due to my spring break plans, which were made before the spring sports schedule came out and now are unable to be changed.

"They didn't even tell us our schedule until well after spring break plans were already cemented," said tennis player Ella Stone. "Most likely I'm going to miss both of the games and I'm going to go tour schools. I didn't know [matches] were going to be happening."

This is an issue that many seniors are also facing, due to many college decisions not coming out until March. The only good time to visit schools they were accepted into, without missing too much school, is during spring break.

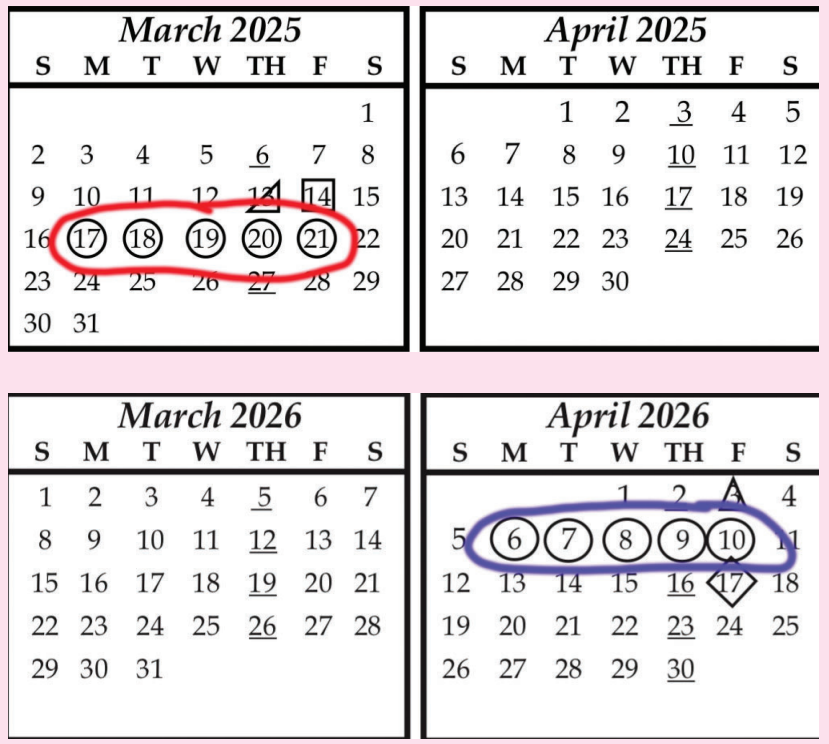
The late spring break is also going to be affecting students participating in non-school sponsored spring sports that haven't been affected in the past, such as lacrosse. "Our first tournament is that week, and I'm going to be gone. And I'm the only goalie, so I'm going to have to train a freshman." said longtime lacrosse player Boden Veale.

The question of who made this decision was at the forefront of many people's minds, ultimately it actually seemed to have come from the people.

"Our district has a district calendar committee and they are the ones that set start times and end times," said Judson Miller, the principal of Hellgate High School. "In this case, the spring break, there were a lot of people at the community/district level that were weighing in on it…a community survey went out, there was all sorts of stuff, the board looked at it and made this decision."

Miller also discussed how the sports seasons were talked about among the committee members as was the University of Montana's spring break time which is March 16-20. Ultimately it was decided that having a later spring break would be better for more people, but there is still a lot of discourse and many people are not very happy with the decision.

"I think that it's a huge hindrance to have spring break during the tennis season and it disrupts a lot of things, it should be where it used to be," Addie Terwilliger, a junior on the Hellgate tennis team said.



The spring break from the 2024-2025 school year (top) was before any spring sports seaons had begun. The new spring break for the 2025-2026 school year (bottom) occures about a month into the seasons. Graphics by Elliotte Banziger.

Hellgate Student-Athletes Commit to College Programs

Zach Baldwin
Reporter

Hellgate held a signing day for student-athletes planning to continue their sports in college in early February. This was the second signing day of the year, and six more athletes joined the initial nine from the December signing day.

Signing day is a big milestone for many athletes, as they plan to take their sports to the next level. Many have been playing these sports since elementary or middle school, and committing to a program is a reward for all the years of hard work and dedication.

On Feb. 4, Piper Wells and Kaylie Moe signed for softball at Hamline University and Emerson College, respectively. 3 time Montana AA state champion Elliotte Banziger signed for tennis at Vassar College, Seamus Campbell committed to Case Western Reserve University for football, and Slade Jones and Zane Gillhouse opted to stay in state, for soccer at Carroll College and basketball at Montana Tech, respectively.

Hellgate Athletes signed to continue sports in college on Dec. 4 and Feb. 4. Photos by Jill Derryberry.

They join the Hellgate students who signed on Dec. 4, which includes Parker Link and Evan Pyron for football at University of Montana, Vince Paffhausen for football at Montana Tech, Brody Schneider for volleyball at Roberts Wesleyan University, Sadie Seaman for lacrosse at University of Puget Sound, Odin Berryman for nordic skiing at Michigan Tech, AK Puryear for soccer at Michigan Tech, Emily Hensiek for swimming at Colorado Mesa University, and Elly Reed for track & field at University of Notre Dame.

These decisions come after a long period of talking to coaches, visiting schools, and eventually making the decision to continue a sport past high school. According to the NCAA, only 6.6% of high school athletes continue playing in college. Schneider, a volleyball player, said "I didn't realize that it was an option for me until last year when I figured out that I was being recruited for it and it became a key factor in the school that I chose." Schneider said that fidning a school that fit him both academically and athletically was a priority. He said that because men's volleyball is so small, finding a program became crucial to his college decision.

Some students have had it in their college plans all along, making it a vital part of their college decision process. "I've always wanted to do a sport in college, so that was a pretty big deciding factor along with the academics," said high jumper Reed. A multi-sport athlete at Hellgate, Reed narrowed her focus to track and field last summer. "I did a lot of college recruitment stuff for basketball, so it was kind of a fun transition over when I decided that I wanted to do high jump," she said.

All the athletes continuing into college have many exciting opportunities in the future. Schneider is looking forward to practice and play at a high level, an opportunity he doesn't get in Montana for Men's Volleyball. "I'm also very excited for the team culture and the new experience, especially being so far from home," he said. Reed felt the same sentiment, saying that she was looking forward to the built in team and immediate friendships that come along with that.

While many athletes have their own team culture and connections in Montana, many are looking forward to how sports can build relationships in college. They get to start a new chapter of their lives with a group of people who have a shared interest. Hellgate athletics will certainly change without these athletes, but they will surely go on to have great success at the collegiate level.

What are your thoughts about Valentine's Day?

Mai Mckelvey-Pham & Elliotte Banziger
Reporter Editor

Say What?!

Valentine's Day can be a very controversial topic, especially among teenagers. Some people love it (haha get it?), some people hate it, and some people are neutral about it.
What does the Hellgate student body have to say about this widely talked about February holiday?

Shae Kimball
(sophomore)

"I think Valentine's Day is a great way to spend time with your friends or loved ones."

Abigail Nordstrom
(English teacher)

"I like chocolate and I love love!"

Branden Roach
(junior)

"I think it's overrated."

Harlen Bidwell
(senior)

"I think it's great! You gotta spread the love."

Addie Sheldon, Reigan Ristau, Lainey Rask, and Ava Albritton
(freshmen)

"We all hate Valentine's Day. It shouldn't be a thing."

Morgan Troutt
(counselor)

"I can take it or leave it."