The Hysterical Truths: Behind the Curtain

by Reese Feldman

This year’s fall play, Hysterical Truths, is unlike anything East Brunswick Drama Club has ever put on before. The eight plays in this collection will be “Arabian Nights”, “Babell’s in Arms”, “Dr. Fritz / Forces of Light”, “English Made Simple”, “Fourplay / Art of the Figure”, “Sure Thing”, “The Universal Language”, and “Words, Words, Words”. These shows have a wide range of plots and characters, but are joined through the theme of communication in today’s society. Even though these short plays all made their debut in the late 80s and early 90s, they are still relevant and hilarious. This is the first time that EBHS Drama Club will be putting on a collection of short plays, making it a unique experience for everyone involved. The change stems from the desire to improve and try new things. Senior and head stage manager, Emma Ruffner says “we consistently push ourselves to make each play better than the last,” which is exactly what Drama Club is doing with this show.

Because the play itself is so different, being part of the cast is a new experience, no matter how many shows the actors have been in before. For some actors involved, this will be their 9th show since starting Drama Club in Hazenwood Middle School. One major difference from past shows is the rehearsal schedule. Only two to three of the eight shows are called for rehearsal at any time, resulting in difficulties in forming a cohesive cast. In an attempt to avoid this problem, the cast has been participating in movement days to promote movement days this year than in all of last year’s fall play, and Kaitlyn Devlin, a member of the cast feels that they “helped bring the whole cast together.” She also enjoys the new rehearsal schedule, saying it has made being part of the play “a lot less time-consuming.”

The cast for Hysterical Truths is also extremely small compared to past EBHS Drama Club productions. With only twenty-seven cast members, it is smaller than the cast for both of last year’s shows. Last year, The Music Man had a cast of forty-three actors, and The Tempest had twenty-nine. Having so few actors can affect the dynamic of the whole cast. Fewer actors can mean more productive rehearsal days than in all of last year’s fall play, and it also means each actor can get a little more of the spotlight, so if you know someone in Drama Club, this play is a great opportunity to see them shine.

This year’s show, Hysterical Truths has also presented new challenges to the crew. With its own share of struggles; this show to be a lot smoother, working on a set like this will be a very lighting-heavy play” but he is “excited to see how [the show] comes together as we get closer to opening night.”

Besides the unique set design, the crew for this show faces an even bigger problem. The person that typically oversees Saturday Set Build is no longer available on Saturdays. Instead, Mr. Davis, the director, gets instructions for what the crew should completely on a given Saturday, and the contractor in charge comes on Monday nights to see the progress. But after going to a Saturday Set Build, it was clear that the play’s set crew is doing well and set production is still going smoothly, even though there are added complications. Without a doubt, putting together a play this complicated will surely be accompanied with its own share of struggles; however, the excitement students have expressed in seeing this year’s upcoming fall show will make the effort worth it. Whether it be acting and writing to deepen the experiences or building the sets to create another world, this year’s school play is the epitome of EBHS’ mission towards “excellence in the arts.”

Crew members backstage working on constructing the sets used in the performances.

A professional performance of the play “Words, Words, Words.”

The theatre group production photos
A Letter To Pumpkin Spice

PRO - Amasha

Fall? More like pumpkin spice season. Everywhere you go, the intoxicatingly delicious scents of cinnamon, nutmeg, and pumpkin fill the air, inducing a sense of autumn. Pumpkin spice is unlike any other, and its immense popularity has led to it being featured in seasonal items, such as pumpkin pie, pumpkin roll, pumpkin ice cream, pumpkin cream cheese, and even pumpkin hummus. What unites all of these pumpkin specialties you ask? Their excellence. They surpass less refined levels of taste, triumphing over basic vanilla and chocolate flavors, creating a seasonal blend that is unparalleled. Be sure to expand your pumpkin spice horizons before the season ends—stop by Trader Joe’s or pick up a Starbucks PSL immediately!

CON - Eva

There are many things to love about fall. Pumpkin spice is not one of them. Randomly select five spices from your pantry—there you have it...pumpkin spice. This "limited edition" flavoring is nothing more than a limited edition capitalist SCAM. Starbucks is willing to do whatever it takes to make money; that includes fabricating a media cult around a latte, pumping you full of addictive artificial flavoring in the process. This fall, stay WOKE. Say no to the seasonal brainwashing of giant food corporations. Say no to pumpkin spice.

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Across

3. Corn, but make it colorful
5. Don’t cross its path!
9. A holiday dedicated to remembering the dead, celebrated in Mexico
11. Charlie Brown’s Halloween quest to find the

Down

1. When your life is a mess, blame it on this astronomical phenomenon
2. Famous fall anthem by The Neighbourhood
4. Post-Thanksgiving mall mayhem
6. Have a break. Have a _______
7. The horn of plenty
8. The iconic image of twins at the end of a hallway comes from this movie

Quack Quack! I’m a duck!

Turducken

Oh no. It’s almost Thanksgiving again. Where should we go this year?

Why can’t we just stay home this year? Remember what happened last year with Jimmy?

Kip Johnny

What do you think about pumpkin spice this fall?
I started working for the district in 2011, and I’ve been [at East Brunswick High School] for about two years...At the time, I was trying to work around my daughter’s schedule, because she was in school at the time. [Outside of working,] I like to relax; I try not to do too much housework and take trips. I like to go anywhere...I’ve been to about thirty-six states in my lifetime, and I’ve been out of the country about three times.”

Something I’m most passionate about is sports. Sports are something that motivate me to keep my grades up, and also help me stay active. Something like cheer teaches me responsibility, [and] gives me a chance to be part of a great team. Track makes me feel very accomplished after working on cardio and strength for hours. I’ve met some of my absolute best friends through these sports and I’m so thankful. I’ve also had some coaches that have really helped me through so much and helped me improve so much.”

I think the most challenging part of senior year is definitely trying to balance college applications, along with your school work. Trying to figure out what you want to do and where you want to go for the next major part of your life can be a really tough and scary decision to make. But, I like to think [it] will all work out in the end.”

Leaf Beef

The AEIC Edition

Hot chocolate, freezing cold, North Face jackets and so much more are synonymous with the November-December weather as it transitions from Autumn to Winter. While the sun might not shine onto flowers, to say that this time of year is without color is wrong. Leaves begin to change color as they prepare to fall to the ground, marking their end as part of the tree. As we quickly drive from place to place, we often take advantage and ignore the beauty of the colorful trees this time of year. However, there lies a bigger debate within the beauty of it all--which leaf color is the ‘fairest of them all’? To settle this debate, we sent our AEICs into the wild. Let’s take a look at their findings...

The Red Leaf

Crimson. Burgundy. Scarlet. Red. Red leaves are the epitome of fall colors, as they stand out amongst the crowd of leaves. Whether in a freshly raked pile, on the tree, or in the process of falling, red leaves are as essential to autumn as air for survival. They say save the best for last, and the changing colors of the leaves make no exception. Red leaves, the result of sugars reacting with proteins in the leaf cells, are the last product of the color changing process. They remind us all to make the most of fall while it lasts, to take a photo in the fall colors or to simply take in the vibrant red hues. I guess you could say I have scarlet fever. But that’s the thing about fevers. They’re contagious. -- Serena

The Yellow/Orange Leaf

As the days grow shorter and the temperature drops, the classic gold leaf signifies the beginning of Autumn. Being the first hue to develop from the once bright green leaves of Summer, the gorgeous tints of yellow and orange still remain vibrant but offer a more muted aesthetic to match the coziness of the season. The leaves age beautifully into their literal golden days while bridging the transition between the summer sun and winter frost - signifying its time once again to bring out your sweaters, flannels, and combat boots. While some may think this shade to be an unflattering or overbearing color, once the color fills every tree-top by mid-October it becomes the warm and welcoming staple color of Autumn. In your future fall travels, take advantage of the beauty in these newly golden leaves; and maybe snap a picture or two - they’ll match your fall outfit perfectly. -- Caroline
by Aaron Zhu

Since around February this year, the candidates for the 2020 Democratic nomination have begun probing the democratic conscience of Americans. This election’s Democratic candidates comprise perhaps the largest, most diverse pool of candidates the nation has ever seen. Numerous female frontrunners like Senators Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris, and Amy Klobuchar, who, distinct though their platforms may be, are unified in one respect: they’re all women making the statement that female voices are to be heard in the presidential context. Some students appreciate these candidates, recognizing their involvement to be a step in the right direction. Junior Klaire Tosi says that “as a woman, I’m glad that females are being better respected politically and their opinions are being considered.”

The 2020 candidates are also bold. Entrepreneur Andrew Yang promises his platform by suggesting a basic income in which every citizen receives $1,000 dollars a month. “Yang’s plan is pragmatic and future-oriented. Technology can and will alter lives significantly,” adds Tosi, who is an aspiring computer science student. For the Democrats, the need for gun regulation is a unanimous sentiment. Following the August El Paso shooting, Beto O’Rourke, who recently dropped out of the race, called for a mandatory buyback program for assault weapons and gun licensing. However, some students believe a moderate approach may be better: “The government should focus on background checks, not ban guns entirely.”

The 2020 candidates are also more relevant for youth votes than ever before. With the incumbent Donald Trump consistently polling well over 80% in the Republican realm, the trailing Republican candidates possess a marginal chance of successfully denting Trump. In second place is former South Carolina governor Mark Sanford, who is currently polling at 2.8%. For now, this implies that the biggest danger to Trump’s 2020 contention is likely the prospect of impeachment, and his status among swing voters could become marred. As of right now, it’s unclear whether or not a successful impeachment would widen partisan rifts in the election. But one thing is for certain: in the coming months, the breadth of new candidates will unveil a rather nuanced political conversation.

by Julie Ham and Grace Wang

Leaves falling, pumpkins patching, ghosts speaking - students and faculty at East Brunswick High School can’t help but feel a lingering sense of thrill from the Halloween season. But what is All Hallow’s Eve without the movies that come along with it? Each year, many students look forward to diving-deep into the realm of monsters, witches, and hungry homes. The imaginative worlds in Halloween films and the effect they have on viewers add an exciting element to the Halloween season. As top that you are able to play around in worlds that you never get to see in real life.”

The 2009 film Coraline is a Halloween favorite of many. Revolving around a young girl named Coraline, the movie focuses on her discovery of an alternate universe and her journey to get back home. EBHS junior Adia Win believes that the “whimsical plot, character design, and setting, along with the spooky element that scares you without it being too serious” make the film the Halloween favorite it is.

For a more “horror-esque” movie, James Wales’ The Bride of Frankenstein is a great go-to film. This sequel to the classic Frankenstein is, as many argue, the greatest sequel in cinematic history and possibly even better than the original movie itself. Mr. Troshane raves that it’s “one of the best movies ever made and it’s a classic story.” Although the lack of color may appear unconventional to many, it only enhances the haunting plot. Even as a continuation of the familiar story of Frankenstein, The Bride of Frankenstein devises a new narrative. It interweaves the classic characteristics of sci-fi with an iconic plot, simultaneously exploring the topic of societal structure and standard gender roles. In short, it has everything.

Whether it be a horror movie like Scream, a classic like Hocus Pocus, or a family film like It’s the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown, movies play an important role in the holiday spirit. No matter which one was their favorite, viewers always look forward to the horrible delight of watching a spooky movie through the crooks of their fingers.
On Sunday, September 15th, 2019, Purdue Pharmacy filed Chapter 11 Bankruptcy as part of a deal to settle the thousands of lawsuits with plaintiffs who claim the company fueled and ignited the opioid epidemic. OxyContin is an opioid medication used for the treatment of moderate to severe pain. The version that was introduced in 1996 by Purdue Pharma is reformulated in an extended-release form, meaning that the opioid is designed to release its ingredients more slowly. Purdue Pharma, as well as other pharmaceutical companies, play a large role in the ongoing opioid epidemic in America. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the reusability of numerous pharmaceutical companies that patients would not be addicted to the pain reliever had subsequently led to widespread, “ misuse of the medications before it became clear that these medications could indeed be highly addictive.” Opioid overdose rates began to increase with, “an estimated 1.7 million people in the United States [suffering] from substance use disorders related to prescription opioid pain relievers,” in 2017. As stated by sophomore Kamila Karrupiah, “the opioid crisis has become an uncontrollable problem affecting public health,” and “developing safe and non-addictive methods to treating chronic pain might significantly lower the degree of the epidemic.”

As of the past few months, Purdue Pharma has been the center of attention regarding the opioid epidemic and its causes. Particularly, the power behind the company and its questionable actions lie within the Sackler Family, an American and British family known for founding and owning Purdue Pharma. The Sacklers have made an astounding $13 billion off the controversial opioid drug, which many, including several thousand governments ranging from state to Native American, say has fueled the US opioid crisis. Sophomore Kerol Faltas says that although, “personally, [he does not] know much about the opioid epidemic [he does not] feel the media has publicized this epidemic enough.”

Under Chapter 11 Bankruptcy, the Sacklers have agreed to surrender control of the company. However, the filing for bankruptcy was only a part of the larger deal that the Sacklers and Purdue Pharma took to shield themselves from the over 2,000 federal and state lawsuits that they face. According to the New York Times, the Sacklers would agree to pay $3 billion to the plaintiffs over seven years as well as sell their Britain-based drug company, Mundipharma. Although the attorney general’s office in 21 states and territories have agreed to favor the deal, 20 other states, including New York and Massachusetts have opposed the deal, contending that the Sackler family siphoned off company profits that should’ve been used to repair the damage caused by opioids. Specifically, on Friday, September 13th, the New York attorney general’s office said that it had tracked about $1 billion in wire transfers through Swiss bank accounts.

However, one important question still remains: will the collapse of Purdue Pharma have any significant effect on such a widespread epidemic? Only time will tell.

**The Plague of the Modern Era**

by Mara Zaki

Most people in East Brunswick High School can say they have some connection to Amazon, Google, Facebook, etc. These companies, known as Big Tech, have recently been bombarded with a greater push for government regulation. While this might not be a major concern for the average teenager, more and more students at EBHS are starting to realize how deeply this affects them, and many agree with the need for regulation. Senior Alicia Suriyan-Rua believes that Big Tech should “be held accountable” seeing how much power they hold over us all. Others also noticed retailers such as Toys “R” Us and certain Forever 21 locations closing up shop since they can no longer sell their products as quickly as Amazon and Google. “Smaller chains” dominated by the Big Tech giants are no surprise to EBHS; most of us remember learning about Standard Oil and monopolies in our history classes. And students like junior Erica Madurawala recognize that while “Jeff Bezos is doing great with a 110.9 billion dollar net worth, though his employees are still being treated horribly.” This would explain the push for regulation because it would not only benefit us, the consumers, but also the employees and their work environment at these companies.

There is a possible explanation for why teens at EBHS are suddenly in favor of Big Tech regulation. Over the last few years, society’s relationship with these companies has worsened. According to Vox, Facebook has seen its “favorability plunge” and its counterparts—Google, Amazon, and Apple—also saw their ratings drop. This is a clear result of issues surrounding privacy scandals. As students become more sensitive to the fact that they have a digital fingerprint, they in turn realize the greater need to protect personal information online. This increased sense of awareness not only in this high school but in the whole country already forms a basis for more regulation of these companies.

However, it is not as easy to escape the influence of Big Tech as some say. Junior Annette Faraq points out that he personally “likes Google because most of their products are free or cheaper while Microsoft’s are not.” Price point always influences a consumer’s purchases, so cheap prices from the Big Tech companies would explain the majority of their power. Therefore, consumers become stuck, wanting to support smaller chains but being unable to because their prices are higher. Companies like Microsoft—which do not qualify as Big Tech for trading reasons—may be proven to have better products that are unfortunately not as accessible to the average person. This makes Big Tech seem like a better and more efficient option.

To the average person, this may not seem like such a big deal. Yet after interviewing people across grade levels, it is clear the EBHS student body is quite aware and in support of attempts to restrict the companies that control our lives. We as consumers are ultimately affected by who is controlling the economy. Recent attempts at regulation are the immediate response when companies become too powerful. And to improve our future, being aware is only the beginning.
EBHS Goes Digital

by Mary Elgayar and Siri Dasari
On August 15th, 2019, Dr. Valeski excitedly announced the launch of the “1:1” initiative. This initiative involved the distribution of Lenovo Thinkpads to all students and teachers in the East Brunswick High School community. Perhaps less welcomed, the new measure also abandoned the official use of Google Classroom, the custom platform used to this point, for the “new and improved” Canvas software.

Brunswick schools, Doctor Victor Valeski, announced the launch of the “1:1 initiative.” This initiative involved the distribution of Lenovo Thinkpads to all students and teachers in the East Brunswick High School community. Perhaps less welcomed, the new measure also abandoned the official use of Google Classroom, the custom platform used to this point, for the “new and improved” Canvas software.

The rollout of the new technology initiative was initially met with mixed responses. Among the many students and teachers who have expressed their worries regarding the addition of school laptops, the underclassmen specifically spoke out regarding the difficulties of adjusting to the Lenovo while simultaneously adjusting to a high school environment. Sophomore Lillian Zhu described the “technical difficulties” that came with the schoolwide switch as a major challenge, but did note that “the issues should become fewer and farther between” as the school year progresses.

EBHS’s 1:1 Initiative is part of a greater push for tech readiness of 10 players since last year. Devlin aims to score for the Varsity team and Varsity squad to prove his team this winter. “We have a chance to be special again and we are all confident [we] can make another long run in this year’s GMC’s.” That being said, the team lost a total of 10 players since last year.

However, Devlin aims to score for the Varsity level and taking on a bigger role. “Adversity is a part of all sports. Losing those guys was out of our control, and it is now our job to continue to get better each and every day.” Although many players have departed from last year’s team, it is an opportunity for players from last year’s JV and Varsity squad to prove their worth to the Lenovo Thinkpad has been a dream come true” for him. He expressed gratitude for how he can now “project wirelessly in the classroom” and noted that “the students don’t need pencils and papers to do their math.” Other math and science teachers also expressed the advantages of using the Lenovo thinkpads in school.

“I used to take notes on paper and proceeded to lose all my papers. My laptop allows me to hand write my notes and have it all in one place, which is super useful,” Junior Zoe Ausonio said. She was also happy with the advantages of using a lightweight laptop instead of heavy books. She explained how a lightweight backpack has allowed her to store everything in one place, preventing her from losing important notes and homework assignments.

Canvas software replaced Google Classroom as part of the initiative.

EBHS Goes Digital

by Benjamin Kim
East Brunswick Varsity basketball player, Brendan Devlin, is looking forward to a big season. After winning the Junior Varsity GMC’s last year, Devlin hopes to continue the same kind of success with the same kind of success with the same kind of success with the same kind of success with the same kind of success.

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College Board Crisis

by Siri Dasari and Mary Elgayar

College Board, the infamous company that administers the SAT to over two million high school students a year, recently abandoned its plan to assign SAT-takers a single “Adversity Score” in favor of facing mass backlash. The Adversity Score, which captures a student’s socio-economic burdens, was announced in May, and was intended to “assess the kind of neighborhood the student came from, including factors such as the portion of students receiving free or reduced lunch, level of crime, [and] average educational attainment.” Nevertheless, the program received almost immediate criticism. Zenia Henderson of the National College Access Network argued that a single number could not possibly capture a student’s “whole story.” College Board CEO David Coleman agreed that accumulating the entire background of a student into a single number was indeed problematic. Critics also expressed concern for how the adversity score would affect SAT results. However, Coleman sternly replies that “College Board scores achievement, not adversity.” In place of the Adversity Score, College Board is launching a tool called Landscape, which will provide college admissions counselors with basic information regarding a student’s background. Landscape will assess six factors: college attendance, household structure, median family income, household stability, education level, and crime. This method avoids the controversy associated with the Adversity Score while still providing adequate student information to colleges. Nonetheless, critics claimed that this initiative is just a “scaled down version” of the Adversity Score. Sophomore Lillian Zhu expresses her discontent regarding College Board’s decision to abandon the plan. “I respect the idea that less fortunate people should be allowed a more fair playing ground.” Zhu says. “Colleges today care more and more about extracurriculars and it’s no longer sufficient to just get good grades. Unfortunately, not everyone has equal opportunity for clubs and sports in their high school, or even their town.”

Zhu goes on to speak about College Board’s initiative towards “already discriminated against” minorities. In particular, Zhu speaks about how colleges seek diversity in their student body, yet accept less Asian students when given the opportunity. Indeed, this issue contributed to College Board’s decision to drop their plan. A lawsuit filed against Harvard University challenged the school’s consideration of race in admissions. Earlier this year, the college admissions scandal drew attention to the power wealthy families have to manipulate the system. On the contrary, Senior Diaye Diallo expressed her satisfaction that the College Board will be providing schools with information about a student’s hardships through Landscape. Diallo was raised by a single mom in Denver, CO, and was distressed by the idea that admissions officers would judge her solely based on her SAT score. “There are a lot of other things that limit people’s potential, such as money [and] having access to tutor[ing] for the SAT,” Diallo said, a struggle that is accurately represented to prospective colleges through the Adversity Score.
by Shreya Rajeswaran

Mr. Pellicane is one of East Brunswick High School’s most loved teachers; his jovial personality, the myriad of stories he shares, and his creativity all make his classes enjoyable and engaging. This year, he teaches Rutgers College Writing, Creative Writing, Philosophy, and Shakespeare. Last year, he also taught English 10 for sophomores.

When asked what his favorite class to teach is, Mr. Pellicane responded that he loves the Shakespeare course. In the class, he teaches everything but tragedies (“nothing as sad as Romeo and Juliet,” he says), and adds that even though not many kids are taking it this year, he would definitely encourage them to try it for next year. He also loves teaching the College Writing class for seniors, especially because he gets to read nonfiction, teach students how to examine logic, and help them figure out when they’re not making sense in their papers.

Many students enjoy his Creative Writing course, which is only offered for a quarter of the year. Junior Nicole Xu, who took the course last year, shares that “Mr. Pellicane is a good teacher because Creative Writing was a class that forced me to think outside the box, which is something that helped make my writing more interesting.” One lesson involves Mr. Pellicane asking students for a summary of their life in only six words; Mr. Pellicane’s six words were “I like to take naps daily.”

Looking back, Mr. Pellicane would not have thought that he was going to be a teacher when he was growing up; he wanted to be a paleontologist or a writer (as well as a rock star). Once he got to high school, he began to love learning about English, biology, and occasionally history. When he went to college, Mr. Pellicane majored in English, a unique minor that involves a lot of art history studies.

After student-teaching at South Plainfield for some time, Mr. Pellicane became a teacher here at EBHS and also began to work as a soccer coach in Spotswood. After a few years of teaching, however, he received a unique opportunity to move to Syria in 2000 and teach in Damascus for three years.

This interesting experience got its start at a job fair in Boston that he attended along with his wife. The fair was set up with quick interviews and resume checks, and they were able to find a school that had job openings for Mr. Pellicane and his wife, a special education teacher. They got offers in Venezuela and Malaysia before finally deciding to move to Syria, in an international school located in Damascus. Over the years he lived in Syria, he learned to speak and read Arabic. Mr. Pellicane describes his time there as “an interesting experience” opening for him. Mr. Pellicane also comments about the effect of the current situation in Syria, and how the historical sites he visited 19 years ago like the Syrian Crusader castles and the best that they possibly can.

American politics influence things all over the world,” he says, “You don’t really realize how much that is true until you see it in action.” After coming back from Syria, Mr. Pellicane returned to EBHS’s English department, where he has been teaching ever since.

In his free time, Mr. Pellicane loves to play a lot of sports. He plays soccer and tennis, likes snowboarding and skiing, and even has a ping pong table in his driveway. Mr. Pellicane also enjoys music; in high school he learned how to play the guitar and was even in a few bands, but he still plays now and sometimes brings his guitar to school to help him teach lessons. His music preferences range from jazz guitar to 90s era grunge to post punk to hip hop groups like the Wu-Tang Clan. He has two boys in 9th and 10th grade, a wife who he looks up to as a role-model, and a lovable and goofy dog named Lola.

Students love Mr. Pellicane because of his funny stories, intriguing facts, and likeable personality that always make his classes interesting. Junior Kaitlyn Wong shares that “Mr. Pellicane was an amazing teacher and he’s super chill and fun. He made the class super enjoyable every day even though it was first period.”

But Mr. Pellicane is not a conventional teacher - when asked for a fun fact about himself that people don’t normally know, Mr. Pellicane immediately responded that he’s never drank milk in any form, and proceeded to describe how despite this, his bones are still healthy. It is this humor that endears him to many of his students.

One piece of advice Mr. Pellicane has to offer is “always keep moving.” His spirit and personality are characteristics that continually inspire EBHS students to do the best that they possibly can.