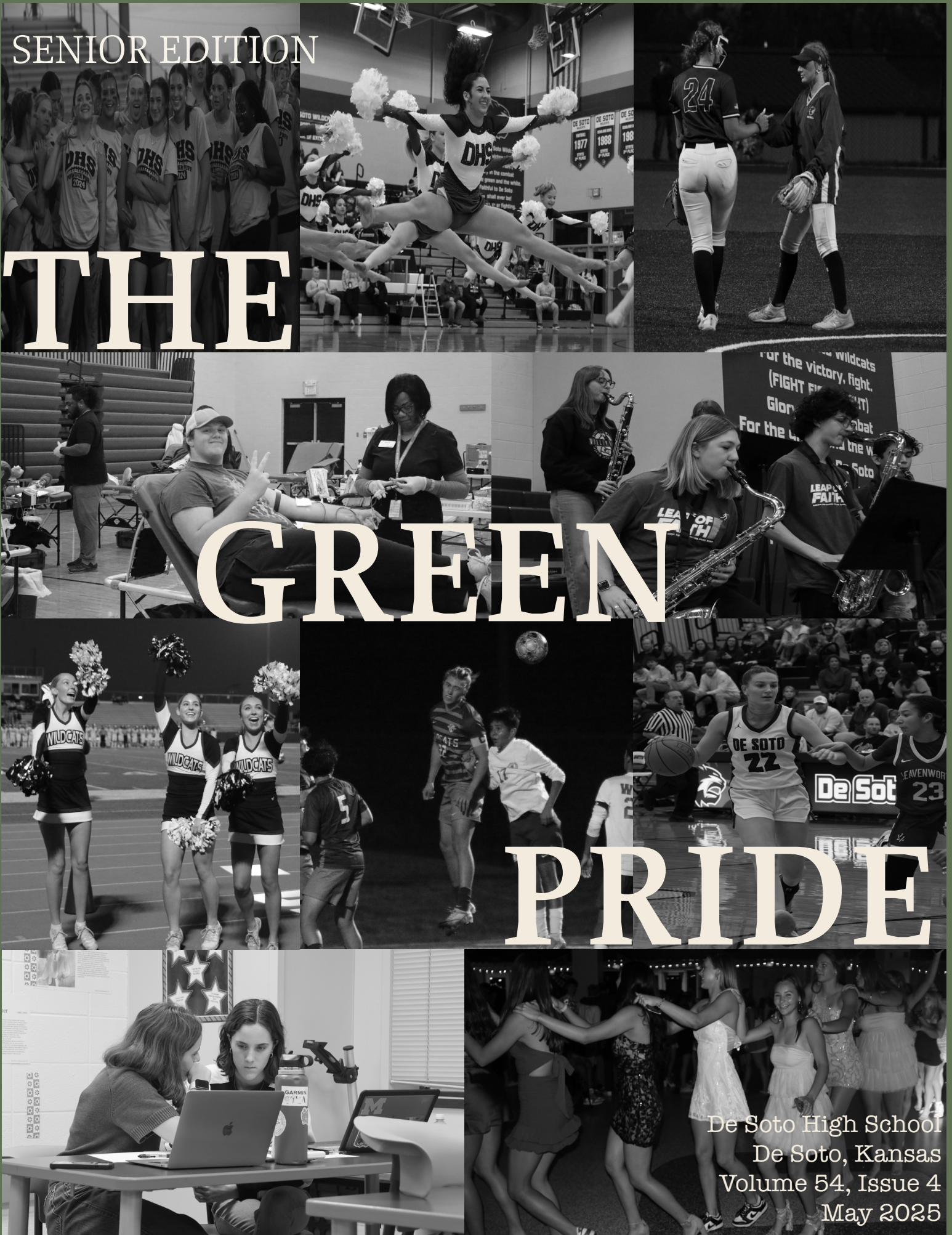


SENIOR EDITION

THE

GREEN

PRIDE



De Soto High School  
De Soto, Kansas  
Volume 54, Issue 4  
May 2025

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## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Junior Bo Wiegmann makes the catch at first in an attempted pickoff by the pitcher, senior Max Johnson. The player was tagged out at first by Wiegmann in order to make the third out of the inning, sending the Wildcats up to bat in the top of the third inning.. *Photo by Brooke Wagner*

## MEET THE STAFF

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO THE STUDENT BODY? IF SO, YOU CAN TYPE UP 300-500 WORDS OF THOUGHTS AND WE'D LOVE TO PUBLISH IT. JUST DROP IT OFF IN THE TIPS BOX IN MR. RILEY'S ROOM OR EMAIL AN EDITOR. ANONYMOUS CONTENT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. PLEASE UNDERSTAND THE GREEN PRIDE HAS THE RIGHT TO EDIT ALL COPY THAT RUNS IN THIS PUBLICATION.

# Letter from the Editor

A final message from 2024-25 Editor-in-Chief, Jason Neubauer

JASON NEUBAUER

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Before beginning, I would like to thank my wonderful circle of friends and the teachers who have supported me from the very beginning. A huge thank you to these teachers especially: Mr. Kaul, Mr. Bradford, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Tenner, Mr. Riley, Mrs. Riley, Ms. Bryant, Mrs. Fry, Mrs. Thaemert, Mr. Hamilton, Mrs. Sweet and Mrs. Monroe. I would not be where I am today without you. Thank you so much.

Walking onto the hot black turf my freshman year for band camp, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I was scared, but most of all, uncertain. I did not know what I wanted to do with my life, nor did I know what to even expect.

My eldest sister, Anna, said she loved it at De Soto before she eventually switched to Olathe East High School. My second sister, Harley, was a senior at De Soto at the time and said she also loved it. I, however, was expecting the opposite. I had just barely made it through 8th grade, which just had to be COVID year, when my mental health was at an all-time low and I would have much rather been at home talking to my friends on Roblox than actually having to do work.

So, when I realized my friends were off in the distance on the other side of the field, waiting for me to join them, I immediately rushed towards the other freshmen who also joined marching band.

Throughout the season, I had the most exhilarating yet exhausting time of my life. Then, long after the season was over in December, something hit me.

I looked back at everything that

had happened in just one semester, realizing the amount of fun I had at each football game and marching competition, the new friends I made in every grade level and the amount of late nights I spent slouching over homework while texting my friends, asking for the answer key.

*Is this what high school is about?* I silently thought to myself, staring at the Honors Integrated Math 1 packet in front of me, studying for



Jason Neubauer plans on attending Northwest Missouri State University to major in Social Studies Education and minoring in Political Science or Journalism.

my first final.

Let me clarify: No, high school is not about the math packet due in the morning.

Instead, high school, I realized, is about finding out your community. Sure, what you want to do as a career is important. But, at the end of the day, if you lose everything, who do you have to turn to? Your community.

Throughout that first semester freshman year, I had found my

community, and I have continued to find one at De Soto everywhere I went. Whether it is in band, theatre, newspaper, or the different AP classes where I see the same people in every other AP class, there has always been a community I have been able to turn to, no matter the situation.

So, I encourage everyone to find their community. Sometimes, they are all you have and maybe all you need.

Next, if you know me, you know how I feel about the current situation the world is in.

It is becoming scarier, simply put. I do not want to dwell on these topics for long and be a “doomer,” but with things like climate change, the increasing use of artificial intelligence and the continuous attacks against individuals in minority communities by the current administration, I do not believe that the world we are inheriting from our parents is the ideal one.

In an ideal world, all of those problems would be solved. But this is, unfortunately, reality, and we must face our problems eventually, even if we try to run away from them every chance we get.

So, I strongly encourage everyone to use their voice for every cause they believe in, even if you are alone in fighting for it.

In the words of Taylor Swift, “Shake it off!” (You didn’t think I wouldn’t mention her, did you?) Speak up (or Speak Now) for what you think is right, even if you get weird looks from the people around you.

In conclusion, find your community and use your voice! It may seem hard in theory, but it is so incredibly easy in practice.

Thank you, De Soto.

# The Department of Education

Concerns have been raised over the potential shutdown of the Department of Education, nationally and here at De Soto.

JASON NEUBAUER  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Since President Donald Trump took office back in January, he has had his sights set on multiple agencies in his efforts with Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, who runs the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). Both have made it their goal to downsize the government in the name of reducing the national deficit, with the end goal of reducing the national debt.

One of the targets of President Trump and Musk's efforts to minimize the government is the Department of Education (ED). While this is not the first time Republicans and Trump alike have gone after the department, more and more students and citizens are becoming worried that the department may be shut down during his second term.

While the more recognized version of the Department of Education is the one created by in 1979 under President Jimmy Carter, the department has roots back to the 19th century.

In 1867, Andrew Johnson signed the Department of Education into law but quickly met fierce opposition. Southern states were especially worried that it would give too much power to the federal government, an argument still used to this day.

A year later in 1868, the department was heavily downsized

and renamed the Office of Education, moving around under different agencies before being recreated under the Carter Administration in 1979. Then, it received its official name, more funding and the position it still holds today. According to the official Department of Education website, it has about 4,300 employees and a budget of about \$60B USD at the moment.

Although the ED has established itself as a strong government agency, attacks against the department remain.

The 1980s brought another call for the department to shut down as soon as possible, with Ronald Reagan using it in his campaign. Even now, Republicans specifically want the department to shut down due to its role in promoting what they call "woke" ideology to children in schools across the country. Opponents to the department's operation cite the teaching of gender and race ideology in some schools as justification to shut it down.

In 2023, Florida rejected a

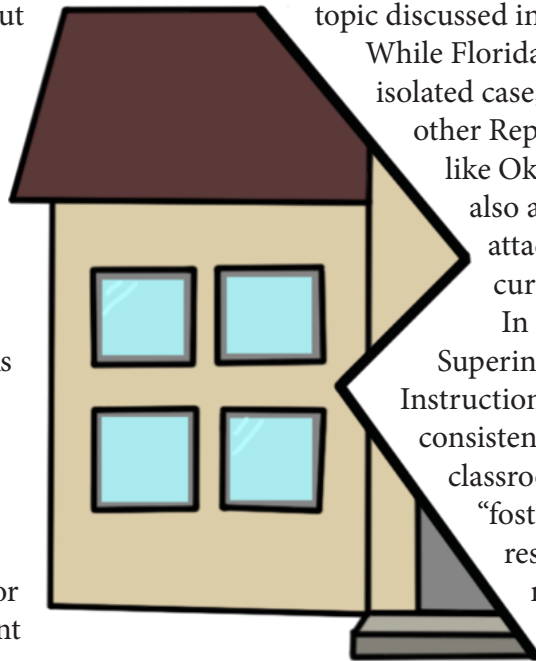
proposal to introduce AP African American Studies to schools curriculum, arguing that it pushed "a political agenda" for including the idea of critical race theory and went even further by, according to the College Board, "effectively banned [banning] AP Psychology" in the state due to its law prohibiting the teaching of sexual orientation and gender identity, a topic discussed in the course.

While Florida may seem like an isolated case, this comes after other Republican-led states like Oklahoma and Texas also amped up their attacks on "woke" curriculum.

In Oklahoma, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Ryan Walters has consistently advocated for classrooms that would "foster patriotism, respect for our nation and the Judeo-Christian values that built America,"

according to a statement released to the public by the Oklahoma State Department of Education on March 17, 2025.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed into law SB-17 in 2023, banning diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices on state university campuses and has recently vowed to go after DEI in K-12 institutions next. "Schools must focus on fundamentals of



education, not indoctrination,” Abbott shared in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Since his inauguration, President Trump has enacted numerous executive orders to take the necessary steps to minimize the government, including shutting down the ED.

As explained in an executive order issued on March 20, 2025, “The Secretary of Education shall, to the maximum extent appropriate and permitted by law, take all necessary steps to facilitate the closure of the Department of Education.”

This has raised the question of whether or not it is in the executive’s authority to shut down government departments.

Junior Norah Kelly believes it to be an overreach by President Trump.

“America was founded on the basis of a democracy and it is critical that decisions like these are not made by a sole individual,” Kelly said. “The reason we have hundreds of elected representatives is to make these kinds of decisions and while the president is certainly one of those, it’s imperative that we don’t put a decision as massive as this in the hands of one person.”

Senior Brian Tadlock agrees that the decision should not be vested in one person but should be decided by Congress instead.

“That kind of decision affects millions of people and should involve Congress and public input,” Tadlock said. “It’s important for

checks and balances to be respected so one person doesn’t hold too much authority.”

As mentioned, because the ED was created by Congress and signed into law by the president, the executive does not have the authority to actually shut the department down. However, he can tell them to begin to minimize what they are doing, as he did in the executive order.

One of the things that the ED overlooks is also FAFSA, or the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Each year, millions

of students fill out the FAFSA to determine if they are eligible for federal student aid that could help pay for their education.

One of the grants that FAFSA

offers is the Pell Grant, which is primarily given out to students “who display exceptional financial need and have not earned a bachelor’s, graduate, or professional degree,” according to the ED’s official website.

But now that Trump has moved to shut down the department, questions have also been raised over whether or not FAFSA will still exist when students go to fill it out next year, or whether or not

college will be obtainable for low-income students.

According to the Education Data Initiative, “51% of Pell Grant funds go to students whose families earn less than \$20,000 annually.”

This has caused some anxiety among students at De Soto about the affordability of higher education.

“I am fortunate enough to be in a position where I could pay for college using savings, and potentially loans,” Kelly said. “However, the ED oversees a lot of aid that is critical for students my age. They also oversee federal student loans, which means if eliminated, I would have to seek out a privatized option.”

These thoughts are reflected by fellow junior Keegan Flynn.

“I really don’t think it will affect me that much. I will be graduating here after next year and then I will head to an in-state college,” Flynn said. “I have college funds saved up for most of my life and the rising prices might be a struggle but I will be able to work at professional entertainment events to earn the money for it.”

While the uncertainty of the Department of Education is felt among students here at De Soto, it is important to note the history and controversy of the department, along with the limits that the President has.



Curious and want to read more? Scan this QR code or visit [dhsgreenpride.org](https://dhsgreenpride.org).



Austin Lindsay loses a shoe to knock out Brieya Henderson



Blake Englehart tracks down Lydia VanBooven



Addisyn Burns blocks Swea Bonnstetter from escaping



Max Johnson betrays Evan Fleet



Jocely Marquez eliminates Quinn Carpenter



Lucy Brandmeyer teams up with friends to get Annie Young



Josey Henning chases Keegan Moerike

# Grad Yay or Nay

The Changing Feelings Surrounding High School Graduation

SAM ESTES & RIA HUDSON  
STAFF WRITER & A/E EDITOR

In recent years, the atmosphere of high school, particularly for seniors, has shifted drastically. Although academics remain similar, the emotions surrounding it have changed.

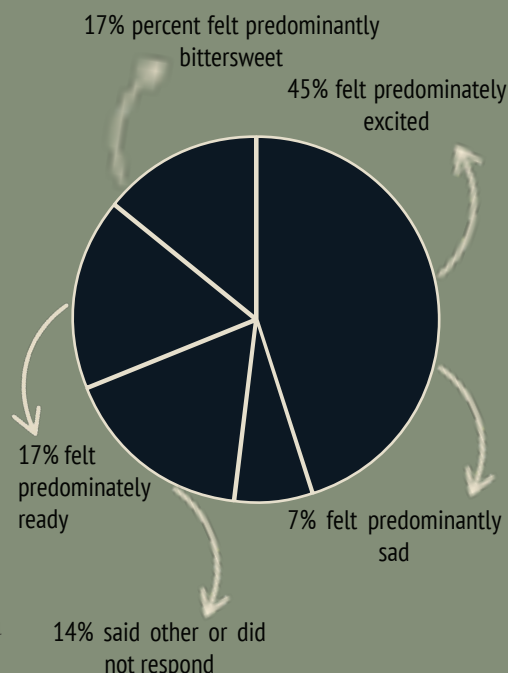
For students coming of age in the 1970s, 1980s, or even early 2000s, high school was a complicated place—a time often remembered as sad, scary, and even bittersweet. Walking down the halls meant navigating more than just cliques and classes; it meant figuring out your place in a world that seemed to expect you to grow up overnight. The future was filled with more questions than answers. College was a mystery. Work was intimidating. And for many, the high school years were marked by a melting pot of emotions.

Formerly, the social world was smaller. There was no Instagram. No group chats. If anything were to happen at school—good or bad—you either told your friends in person, or you dealt with it alone. There was a certain heaviness to the high school years. A weight that emerged from a mixture of strict expectations, lack of mental health awareness, and the simple reality that many teenagers were hugely isolated.

Fast forward to 2025, and the atmosphere of a typical high school has been completely altered. The pressure is still there—college applications are more competitive than ever, and social media can be both a blessing and a curse—but the vibe has shifted. Today's students feel a different kind of energy in the air. High school now comes with an exciting, if still bittersweet, sense of possibility.

From themed spirit weeks to mental health check-ins, modern schools

The current graduating class of De Soto High School was asked to describe their feeling's towards graduation



Survey of 41 seniors

are making a bigger effort to be more inclusive, more engaging, and more emotionally tuned in. Students today are encouraged to pursue passions beyond academics, whether that's starting a YouTube channel, joining esports, or taking part in social justice movements.

But with all the fun and freedom comes a different kind of bittersweet: the realization that these years, full of energy and exploration, don't last forever.

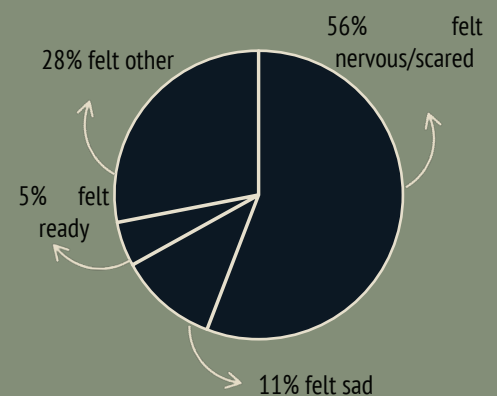
So while the lockers may still

clang and the cafeteria still smells the same, the emotional world of high school has transformed. Yesterday's students walked through the halls with quiet fears and unanswered questions. Today's walk with curiosity, creativity, and a lot more color.

The bittersweet feeling remains, it always will, but in the halls of today's schools, it's no longer weighed down by fear. It hums with excitement for what comes next.



The group that felt predominantly excited was then polled on their secondary emotions around graduating



Survey of 18 seniors



# Time to Take the Next Steps

Seniors share their plans for the future, from going abroad to staying here in the Sunflower State.

## Illinois

*Southern Illinois University  
Edwardsville*  
Noah Thompson

*Quincy University*  
Laiken Vorthmann

*Columbia College of Chicago*  
Brieya Henderson

*The University of Chicago*  
Renee Mitchell

## South Dakota

*University of South Dakota*  
Leah Blom

## Tennessee

*Belmont University*  
Alex Mabe

## Arkansas

*University of Arkansas*  
Cade Kutscher

## Louisiana

*Louisiana State University*  
Emma McCracken

## Kansas

*Johnson County Community College*

Mili Alba  
Carson Allen  
Bonnie Bartlette  
Ayla Blakney  
Ava Brull  
Ella Capling  
Marcus Coleman  
Tyler D'Angelo  
Porter Davis (trade school)  
Mya Davis  
Lauralyn De Leon  
Valerie Esparza  
Nate Fasil  
Quinn Hadley  
Isabel Hixson  
Kyla Jacobs  
Xavier Kenfe  
Madalyn Klover  
Mady Klover  
Layton Lawson  
Leo Marquez  
Sydney Moore  
Emerald Morton  
Maria Ortega  
Clarissa Paisley

Anna Plum  
Ian Province  
Neleigh Rassmussen  
Natalie Rodriguez-Randolph  
Colin Smith  
Sebastian Smith  
Wyatt Stutz  
Katie Thompson  
Ava Wiebe  
*University of Kansas*  
Swea Bonnstetter  
Sophia Boresow  
Lucy Brandmeyer  
Mason Branstetter  
Andrea Cabral  
Alex Calderon  
Brynlee Carson  
Jade Chames  
John Chapman  
Addison Cisneros  
Braden Conley  
Reese Doyle  
Sydney Duncan  
Cameron Ferrell  
Jayton Gibson  
Rory Groner  
Isabella Guess  
Lucienna Guess  
Mishayla Guile

Sophie Hull  
Cassidy Innis  
Pierce Krehbiel  
Jackson Langford  
Jackson Lucas  
Claire McGinn  
Joey Meehan  
Carli Miller  
Keegan Moerike  
Julia Neal  
Jadah Nudson  
Sophia O'Kane  
Jack Padden  
Owen Pryor  
Ace Red Corn  
Juleney Sanchez  
Abigail Tadele  
Ava Taylor  
Ellie Upp  
Sydney Zebley  
*Kansas State University*  
Hannah Angell  
Will Bailey  
Avery Baker  
Gracyn Brock  
Sophia Chapman  
Sydney Coffman  
Koen Davis  
Diego Diaz Flores

## Other

### *The Bridge*

Josey Childers  
Mikayla Childers  
Lane Vaillancourt

### *Trade School*

Keylee Noel  
Emmett Duncan  
Casey Bowlin

### *Mission Trip*

Kimbal Sweeny

### *Military*

Jose De Leon Escobedo  
James Dykes  
Paul Phillips  
Jackson Adair  
Emilee Meyer  
Sawyer Niedzwiecki

### *Undecided*

Gwynn Capling  
Greta Daniels  
Atlas Duffy  
Carson Handy  
Max Johnson

Maycie Montgomery  
Dulce Rico-Iglesias  
Lucas Sterling

### *Gap Year/Workforce*

Jackson Bolen  
Noah Daniels  
Aria DelBorrell  
Gray Dondzila  
Stella Fischer  
Giselle Flores  
Sawyer McNolty  
Olivia Meador  
Dylan Roy  
Lily Slocum

Levi Sterling  
Tyler Williams  
Jayden Zumwalt

### *College Abroad*

*University of St. Andrews - Scotland*  
Ellery Wilson

## Iowa

*University of Iowa*  
Hayden Farrier

*Iowa State University*  
Emma Brady

Laney Huggins  
Charlie Woleben  
Macey Zebley

*Waldorf University*  
Gabby Chaney

## Missouri

*Park University*

Brett McQueeny

*Missouri Southern State University*  
Chase Riedesel

*Avila University*

Kira Lynch

*Northwest Missouri State University*

Jason Neubauer

*Missouri State University*

Jerry Gutierrez  
Payton Speciale

*University of Missouri*

Ella Deane  
Bianca Willeford

*University of Central Missouri*

Makenzie Farmer  
Jayden Lang

*Lindenwood University*

Cade Martinez

*Central Methodist University*

Kennedy Zans

Blake Englehart  
Brooke Gipson  
Grayson Hurley  
Aubrey Julian  
Austin Koup  
Vance Krudwig  
Austin Lindsay  
Brady Lum  
Jocey Marquez  
Alyssa McHugh  
Grady Memphis  
Kelsey O'Donnell  
Addison Ourada  
Carrington Palmeri  
Drew Parks  
Paige Reinertsen  
Warren Riss  
Dylan Roberts  
Rose Rulifson  
Reaghan Sabo  
Ty Sharkey  
Stella Showalter  
Ava Starforth  
Kjell Stenstrom  
Cora Stephens  
Cami Stephens  
Carter Stephens  
Emily Taylor  
Lydia VanBooven  
Brooke Wagner

*Emporia State University*

Elaina Gilliland  
Alayna Marovec  
Alyssa White  
Manhattan Technical College  
Miller Benak

*University of St. Mary*

Quinn Carpenter  
Pittsburg State University

Izzy Avila  
Addisyn Burns  
Grace Dumolien  
Mika Franks  
Lindsey Miller  
Makylie Sexton  
Ben Stelzer

*Cowley County Community College*

Evan Fleet

*Baker University*

Emily Morris

*Cloud County Community College*

Brad Janes  
Phoenix Thompson

*Fort Hays State University*

Josey Henning  
Brian Tadlock  
Annie Young

*Hutchison Community College*

Seth Goins  
Washburn University

Caleb Riddle

*Wichita State University*

Jasen Grammer

## Alabama

*University of Alabama*

Austin Chase

*University of Alabama in Huntsville*

Evan Johnsson

## Minnesota

*St. Olaf College*  
Fin Smajda

## Utah

*Utah Tech University*  
Allie Atkinson

## Colorado

*Colorado School of Mines*

Brooke Bundt

*Western Colorado University*

Andrew Kresin

# Senior Confessions

KAYLA TOLLY  
OPINION EDITOR

Seniors confess things they have done over the past four years.

The only time I skipped school was to do homework.

I stole a MacBook charger at the beginning of the year.

I had a Friday school and left an hour in and no one caught me.

My favorite outfit is the one I stole from the lost and found.

I skipped an assembly to get Starbucks.

Didn't know my boyfriend was a junior until after we started dating (he goes to a different school).

I used Chat GPT on so much work..

Dating a guy my best friend likes in secret after I said I wouldn't.

I have been in honors/AP English classes all four years and have never read any assigned book.





# SUMMER

## Calendar Of Events

<b>May 19-22</b>	<b>Final Exams</b>
<b>May 23</b>	<b>1st Day of Summer!</b>
<b>June 2</b>	<b>Summer Weights and Conditioning Starts</b>
<b>July 24/25</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
<b>Aug. 13</b>	<b>Half Day for 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Students</b>
<b>Aug. 14</b>	<b>First Full Day for All Students</b>

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If you are interested in video production, broadcast, or podcasting, consider joining the staff! See Mrs. Riley in 200B for more information.

Catch what you missed!

BROOKE MERMIS

ASSISTANT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

# Inked: DHS Athletes Make



## Football

For football, Jayden Lang plans to continue his athletics at the University of Central Missouri, while Seth Goins will go to Hutchinson Community College. With head coach Brian King guiding them through their football careers, the Wildcats have won five conference titles and six regional championships. Regarding Lang and Goins' strengths as football players, King touches on their similarities to past college commits.

"They're all just good culture guys," King said. "Colleges like good culture guys, kids that aren't having big distractions and will work hard, that aren't 'me me' guys; they're selfless guys who will work and show up every day."

## Soccer



Girls' soccer has also had success with signing athletes. In December 2024, Sydney Coffman signed to play for Kansas State University. This year, Emily Morris signed to play for Baker University in April. Regarding her achievements on the field, head coach Jesse Smith speaks on how Morris has developed in her sport and character over the years.

"Emily's biggest area of growth has been her determination and resilience," Smith said. "Emily has had to work exceptionally hard to be where she is right now."



## Bowling

Regarding bowling, Kira Lynch has made an enormous impact on the team as a whole. By inspiring interest in the sport of bowling amongst newcomers and having the 4th highest series of all time at DHS, Lynch is on her way to greatness at Avila University, where she plans to continue her bowling career. When noting Lynch's strengths, head coach Susan Smith elaborates on the difficulty of finding the silver lining amidst injury scares.

"Working with being patient with herself and taking one day at a time, and just using that time to overcome the challenge, to find a way despite the injury and the pain, and come out on top has been a challenge that's helped her grow to be able to maintain that positive outlook," Smith said.

## Basketball

Mackenzie Farmer plans to play basketball at the University of Central Missouri, and Quinn Carpenter will continue her career at the University of Saint Mary. With their overall record being 18-3 and Mackenzie Farmer setting multiple school records, this past season has been one to remember. Head coach Ryan Robie speaks on what he wishes for the two of them in college.

"I hope they find their people. It's going to be a challenge for them, but I know they're going to a great place where they're going to grow and prosper," Robie said.

## Wrestling

Gabriella Chaney has also made a large impact on De Soto wrestling, as she was the first female to wrestle for the school. Along with qualifying for state four years in a row and inspiring commitment to the sport, Chaney is planning to sign on to Waldorf University. Head coach Javier Vieyra elaborates on Chaney's commitment to being a team player.

"The group of freshmen we have this year, and even some of the sophomores who will return next year, are a large part of her work ethic," Vieyra said. "She was their biggest cheerleader."



# Their College Dreams Official

## Swimming

For the DHS swim team, Laiken Vorthmann plans to attend Quincy University. In 2024, Laiken set eight records in just two seasons, including the 200 freestyle, 200 individual medley, and 100 breaststroke. Head swim coach Melissa Knapp expresses her appreciation for Laiken's resilience despite his newness to the team.

"Starting as a new student during junior year can be a significant challenge, but Laiken approached it with openness and determination," Knapp said. "Laiken joined practices ready to connect with teammates and quickly became an integral part of the team."

## Softball

For De Soto softball, Kennedy Zans plans to continue her career at Central Methodist University. While the Wildcats only had an 11-16 record for the 2023-2024 season, Zans showed her talent and tenacity by scoring several runs per game. In acknowledgment of her work ethic, head coach Junelle Woolery explains what she hopes Zans finds in the college setting.

"I hope that she goes and has a good experience, makes relationships, makes friendships with the girls she's playing, [and] enjoys her college experience," Woolery said.

## Baseball

In recent years, the DHS boys' baseball team has been prolific. At the end of the 2023-2024 season, the Wildcats were 20-6 and were the number one seed in the 5A East conference going into the postseason. Players who are committing to various colleges to play baseball include Evan Fleet (Cowley County Community College), Bradley Janes (Cloud County Community College), Cade Martinez (Lindenwood University), Brett McQueeny (Park University), Noah Thompson (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville), and Phoenix Thompson (Cloud County Community College). When referring to the success of his players, head coach Joel Thaemert shares what they have learned throughout their time playing baseball at DHS.

"Over the years, they've continued to grow their games and their skill levels," Thaemert said. "They've become men, they've worked really hard in the weight room, and they've went about their business in a positive way."

## XC and Track

Brooke Bundt and Vance Krudwig have been all-stars since they first set foot on the track. Bundt's cross country and track career has certainly been one to remember, as her numerous records in events like the 800m relay and the 4 x 400m relay cement her as one of DHS's best female runners. Krudwig has placed first numerous times in meets like the De Soto Invitational in recent years, and his record in the 4 x 800m relay is equally impressive.

For their collegiate careers, Bundt will continue at the Colorado School of Mines, while Krudwig plans on attending Kansas State University. Their hard work and dedication to their sport have certainly been noticed by head coach Jack Sachse.

"They were both very talented early in their careers, and I think they've both developed over time," Sachse said. "As seniors now, they're not only some of the best in Kansas, but arguably, some of the best in the whole country."

# One Door Closes Another One Opens

BROOKE MERMIS

ASSISTANT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Within the last seven years, De Soto High School has emerged as one of the best schools in Kansas. DHS itself is ranked #7 in the state, while USD 232 is ranked as the second-best district. The students, staff, academics, and commitment to excellence all contribute to this success. However, none of this can be said without mentioning the incredible leadership the school has experienced under DHS principal Samuel Ruff. With creations like the Wildcat Awards and Skip-A-Final, attention to academic achievement, and sociality with students, Ruff has allowed the school to prosper in more ways than one. As he transitions into his new role and leaves DHS behind, students and staff can appreciate the work he has put in to make the school a better place.

Ruff's time in the district is not over, however. Following the school year, he transitions to work as USD 232's Director of Post-Secondary Success. Although he will no longer be directly correlated with DHS, Ruff himself elaborates on how his new job will still involve school-specific matters.

"No matter what it is, no matter what comes next for our students, they are going to thrive in whatever environment they choose to go to," Ruff said. "My new role will really be to expand to help students think through what their plan after high school is going to look like."

A position as important as the Director of Post-Secondary Success requires attention to detail, resilience, and critical thinking. Since the job's essentials include building criteria and graduation requirements for various schools, the process can be quite difficult. Despite this, Building Coordinator Cathryn Monroe believes he is up for the challenge and that his strengths as a principal will carry over into his new position.

"Mr. Ruff is an ideas man, and he doesn't get enough credit for it. He has had

## Mr. Ruff steps down as DHS principal to take new district position

his hands in a lot of things and delegates for others to do them, but doesn't ever take credit for the things that he's done," Monroe said.

Throughout his time as principal, Ruff has started the Wildcat Awards Ceremony for academically prosperous students each quarter. He has also created the Academic Banquet, which recognizes senior scholarly achievements, and the class assembly at the end of the year, when students move into the next



Samuel Ruff, Cathryn Monroe, Abby Huggins, and Michelle Mages (left to right) at the 2025 Academic Banquet on April 6. *Photo by Sadie Clarke*

section of the bleachers that correlate with their new grade level. Although his appreciation for student success shows, Associate Principal Abby Huggins shares the precedents Ruff sets at DHS on all levels.

"The one thing that stands out is that Mr. Ruff has a high level of expectation for students and staff," Huggins said. "I think that helps us with always seeking to improve, and he has always helped us focus on the need for continuous growth and improvement and to meet the standards we have set for us."

With such a long time spent

at DHS, looking back on fun memories is always important. Every year, the De Soto administration collaborates on a Halloween costume. In recent years, they have variations of Where's Waldo and representatives of insurance companies. One of the most memorable years for Athletic Director Michelle Mages was when Ruff, Monroe, Huggins, and she dressed up as Barbie characters, and of course, Ruff was Ken.

"The Ken wig from the year we were all Barbie will always have an imprint on my brain," Mages said.

As he wraps up his career as a principal and moves on to another stage of life, the administration and office staff will always remember the impact he has made. Secretary Anne Cahoon shares her well wishes for Ruff.

"I hope he is fulfilled and enjoys his new position."

To conclude his seven-year journey at DHS, Ruff gives a lasting message to the students and staff.

"Again, 'Forever Green.' I will always be a Wildcat," Ruff said.

As DHS transitions into a new era of direction, students and staff alike are excited to welcome Kevin Thomas as the incoming principal of De Soto. With his wife accepting a position at the University of Kansas Medical Center, Thomas and his family are moving to the Kansas City area to accept his new position. Currently, Thomas is the principal of Verrado High School in Buckeye, Arizona. For more information, check out our story on our online platform!

# Spring Games

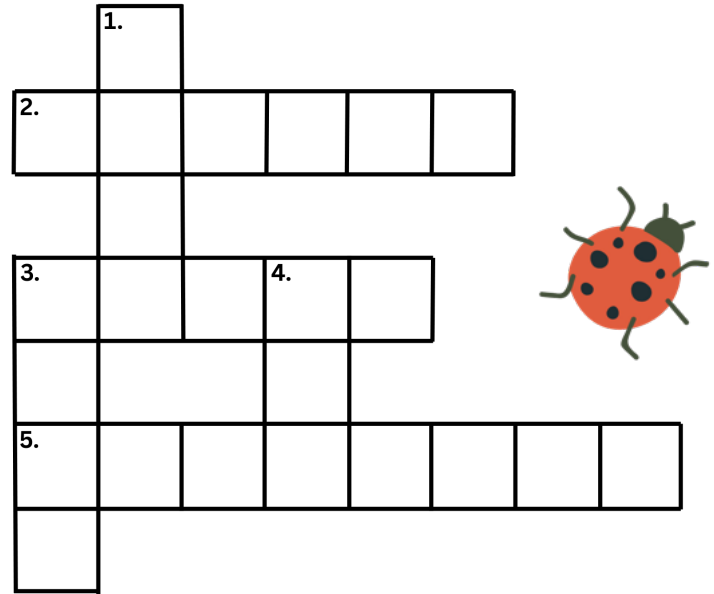
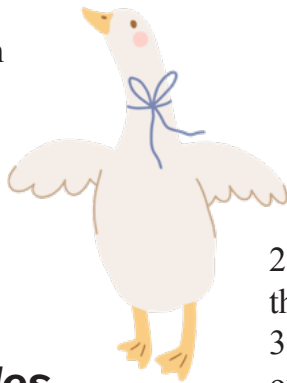
Think on your feet with these brain teasers

## Riddles

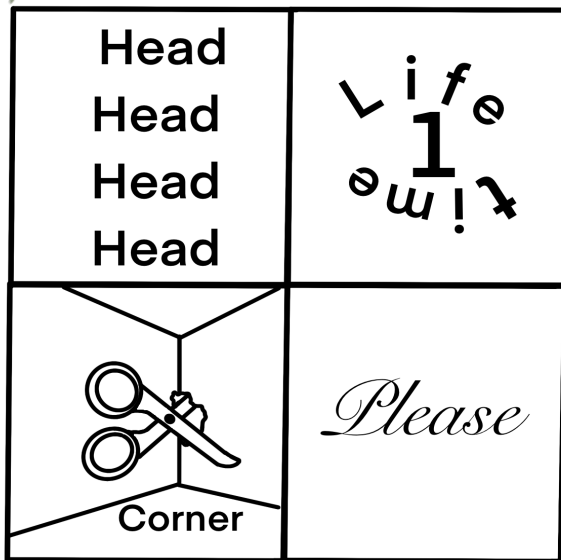
Q: Jeff's father had three sons, Snap, Crackle and \_\_\_\_?

Q: Which word is spelled incorrectly in the dictionary?

Q: Sean's height is 5'9, he is an assistance at a butcher's shop, and wears a size 9 shoes. What does he weigh?



## Rebus Puzzles



### Across

2. Lost the Super Bowl this year.  
3. Rumored to take over the world soon, mechanical.  
5. Kansas Univeristy that has Victor E. Tiger as their mascot.

### Down

1. Meme state, never go here.  
3. Principal who is leaving at the end of the school year.  
4. Leaving, going \_\_\_\_ of a door.

Throughout this issue of the Green Pride, the Wildcat logo has been hidden five times, not including the cover or the one below! Can you find them all?



- Riddle**  
A: Jeff  
A: Incorrectly  
A: Meat
- Crossword**  
1. Ohio  
2. Chiefs  
3. Robot  
4. Out  
5. Fortnays
- Rebus**  
Forehead  
Once in a lifetime  
Cutting corners  
Pretty please
- Find the Wildcat**  
pg. 20 - In the "o" in the title  
pg. 22 - Next to "designed by"  
pg. 10 - Behind the paper bottom right  
pg. 14 - In the door in the title  
pg. 6 - Top left photo in trees

# Senior Wills

LIBBY MEYER  
STAFF WRITERS

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“I will what little luck I have to my friend Ryland. I wish you success for the rest of high school.” - Brian Tadlock

“I will my ability to like any anime OTHER than One Piece to Sam Porras” - Quin Hadley

“I will my ability to sass Kaul & Bradford (willed to me by Emma Klingler in 2021) to Alaina Mchugh. Don't be too mean!” - Sydney Moore

“I will Sydney Cinotto my name” - Sydney Coffman

“Abby O'Donnell willed me her oboe skills my Sophomore year, and now I will them to whoever wants them - please learn oboe!” - Fin Smajda

“I will Briana Wood unconditional love and support and knowing she will always have me around for a shoulder to cry on” - Neleigh Rasmussen

“I will my napping abilities to Jayden Gomez” - Wyatt Jones

“I will my high soprano voice to Carson Hanley” - Lucy Brandmeyer

“I will my love and affection towards my glorious king, LeBron James, to Ben Parks” - Austin Lindsay

“To Micah I will my missing assignments.” - Warren Riss

“I will my ability to reword Chat GPT and make it seem like I wrote it to my little sister Tess.” - Kennedy Zans

"I will my perfectness to Will Morton because he needs it" - Gradyn Memphis

"I will my favoritism to Kat Meyer." - Emilee Meyer

"I will my photography skills to Kasha Kemnitz and Emma Stapp!"  
- Brooke Wagner

"I will my basketball skills to Katie Bush."  
- Makenzie Farmer

"I will my fast food addiction to Addison Gulley!"  
- Quinn Carpenter

"I will my ambition and motivation to Maxton Branstetter. You are already on your way to become a great leader and I know you have a bright future. I hope you continue to set high standards for yourself and maintain your drive to achieve them." - Stella Showalter

"I will the ability to be a good friend to Drew Rebar." - Katie Thompson

"I will my ability to clear my notifications to Isaac Schroeder"  
- Payton Speciale

"I will my motivation and hardworking skills to Matthew Barber."  
- Dulce Rico-Iglesias

"I will Elle Brady the right to embarrass Logen Brady in school"  
- Emma Brady

"I will my school spirit to everyone"  
- Josey Henning

"I will my love for Taco Bell to Hudson Boyer"  
- Joe Meehan

"I will Sydney Mater the act of unconditional kindness towards others and to always keep smiling."  
- Mishayla Guile

# A Play for the Past and Present

The drama program prepares for tough topics

CLAIRE THOMPSON  
STAFF REPORTER

The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank is one of the most influential true pieces of media from World War II. As the novel approaches its 80th anniversary since publication, De Soto High School continues to keep the story alive in the form of the spring play, The Diary of Anne Frank.

Anne Frank's story is an important one to tell because of its message, characters and value, even after so many years.

However, The Diary of Anne Frank is an incredibly somber play as it is a true, tragic story that follows a girl and her family through WWII. The last show DHS performed was The Drowsy Chaperone, and it has been difficult for actors to adjust from a lighthearted comedy to such a heavy play. Senior Renee Mitchell, who

stars as Anne, has seen this shift firsthand.

"Those [past shows] are really good for building that kind of comedy repertoire, but you also, as an actor, you need to be exposed to other forms of the art, so working on something dramatic was needed," Mitchell said.

Another aspect that the theater department is changing with the spring play is the addition of understudies. Although past productions at DHS have utilized this tactic, The Diary of Anne Frank is the first in recent years to have two casts instead of one. Sophomore Via Keefer is one of these understudies.

"Anne Frank has a smaller cast than other plays, and a lot of people auditioned," Keefer said. "I think they made that understudy decision last minute, just to give people that had the passion for it a chance."

It is a challenge training two



Margot Frank, Mr. Dussel and Peter Van Daan during Act One. Photo by Claire Thompson

casts instead of one, but several cast members believe that this will have primarily positive outcomes because of the community that having double the actors creates. The two casts have been building their relationships and working through the difficult topics together. Sophomore and stage manager Sophia Feyerabend describes these struggles.

"The story behind Anne Frank has so much meaning that it's an important message to share," Feyerabend said. "And I know that we have some classes that are going to be partnering with us, like history classes and middle schools, to learn about the Holocaust."

In the hope of bringing an emotionally heavy and important story to the stage, the cast and crew of The Diary of Anne Frank continue to grow closer in their relationships and understanding of the source material.

"It's very topical with everything going on in the world right now," Mitchell said. "And I think it's a good message, I'm glad we're doing it."



The Frank, family Van Daan family, and Mr. Dussel singing around a menorah. Photo by Claire Thompson

# Day in My Life: Senior Athlete Edition

A look into the life of what the senior varisty athletes are up to.

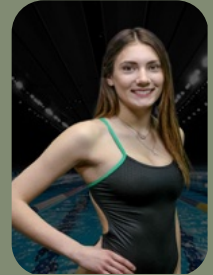
## Pierce Krehbiel Varisty Golf

"Everyday I wake up at around 7:45 because I don't have to go into school till later because of my senior shortened schedule. I go downstairs and eat breakfast which is usually a couple eggs and some waffles. I get ready for school and then I'll go hit golf balls in my basement for a couple hours. I take my dog out and then go to school. I have practice after school and play 9 holes with the team. I usually stay after and putt or hit some more balls. After I go home I eat and wind down with my family. I grab a snack and then I get ready to go to bed"



## Avery Baker Varisty Swim

"I wake up and get ready and do my hygienic morning routine. I have a balanced breakfast and try to stay hydrated throughout the day so at practice I'm not wheezy. Every other day my schedule is different but I go to school at the time I need to. Then I go home and either do homework or clean and try to be productive. I go to practice from 4-6 at Oregon Trails Middle School, it's like a 20 minute drive. And then I carpool 4 girls to practice. Afterwards, I go home and shower and then go to bed."



## Annie Young Varisty Softball

"I wake up, depending on if it's a green or white day, I have a shortened schedule so I wake up later in the day. Immediately when I wake up I look at my phone. Then I will eat breakfast, usually eggs and bacon and a banana. Then I get ready for school like brush my teeth and get dressed. I do my skincare and my makeup. Next I'll pack my lunch, I usually have a caesar salad wrap. And then drive to school and go in. Then I go to softball practice. Practice usually gets over at like 5:15-5:30 and I will drive home. Then I eat dinner with my family and we usually watch TV at the same time. Then I take a shower and watch tiktok. I'll do my homework and any last minute stuff. I'll set my alarm for the next day and then go to sleep."



## Keegan Moerike Varsity Track

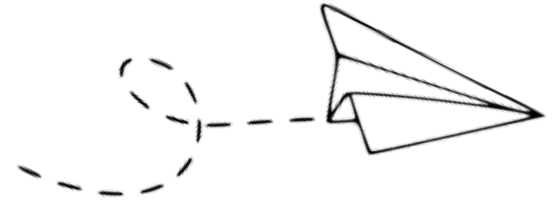
"I get up at 8 and eat some yogurt for breakfast. I go to school for a couple of hours and then go to track practice. After track practice I go home and eat dinner. After dinner around 6:30, I change into my club soccer uniform and go to soccer until 8:30. I then change and head to the gym around 9"



# Tips for the Future

SAMANTHA ESTES

STAFF WRITER



As the end of the 2025 school year approaches, the nerves of De Soto High School seniors grow. Aside from the clear stress-inducers such as moving away from a childhood home, leaving behind loved ones, and letting go of past hobbies, there are additional daunting tasks ahead in the eyes of these new adults.

Some of these tasks can include taxes, food and money budgeting, time management, and new activities to fill free time are all ventures that can leave a young adult feeling overwhelmed as they enter this new stage of life.

For one, taxes must be filed, and can be an intimidating chore to complete, especially if you have no prior experience. To begin, once you turn 19, you must file taxes as an independent, unless you are a full-time student. After this, you can stay on until you are 24 years of age. When you are counting as a dependent, you have to have an income of less than \$13,000 a year to avoid filing taxes. If that salary is reached, you have no option but to file your own taxes. To file taxes, you will need significant documents like your Social Security number, W-2s from employers, 1099 forms for additional income, and records of deductions or credits. If needed, you have the ability to file online using IRS-approved software, hire a tax professional, or mail in a paper return. Be sure to fill out the appropriate IRS tax forms (like the 1040), calculate your owed taxes or refund, and submit by the deadline (typically April 15). Keep copies of all forms and receipts for your records in case of an audit. You can find more detailed instructions of how this process is completed on the IRS website.

Although this time of life can be new and exciting, it can also be

nerve-racking for students. Because of this, it can be easy to spend cash in a moment of stress and then find it difficult to find a balance of saving and spending. In situations like these, it can be helpful to have a budget. The student needs to think about their wants and needs for the increments of time in-between paydays. This does not mean that the new Taylor Swift album or a new pair of dunks is needed because the color is slightly different from another pair that they have; this means that materials aiding in survival and hygiene are put first and then move down a list of priorities. Make sure to set aside a little bit of money for yourself to spend and indulge with, buy what you need, and then put the rest into savings for a rainy day. If needed, you can hide some money from yourself in different parts of your room or car for a nice little surprise every now and then.

Not only is it important to set aside money for yourself, but it is also important to set aside time to decompress and reset. Long weeks full of school, work, and any other activities can be difficult to adapt to with a new style and harder classes, but allotting yourself time each week to do homework as well as relax is necessary. An easy way to do this is to make a habit of studying or doing homework at a specific time. Whether this be right after class or a couple of hours later, find a time where you can be productive. Putting off homework in exchange for a fun time, just to come back to 10 assignments due in the next 4 hours is never a fun time. Particularly when you are paying thousands of dollars for each of these courses. Also make sure to have talks with roommates about personal space and times, and set aside times to be social to ensure you aren't missing

out on a good college experience. Along with ensuring a good college experience, make sure to find activities and hobbies to enjoy your area. It can become uninteresting when you go to the same place over and over with no sort of variation. Look for a bowling alley, laser tag location, paint ball place, cute coffee shops, mom and pop diners, skating rinks, etc., to ensure you can have a fun night out when needed. Take yourself on single dates when necessary and treat yourself. You don't have to be with friends to have fun. You can find a location for archery, axe throwing, crafts, and more. Also, pick up new hobbies, and look out for new clubs to join. College is full of clubs that are meant to be fun and get you involved; there is no downside to being active and finding activities in the area around you. However, when using this advice, be sure to take into consideration that every person is different. Nobody is going to have a college experience identical to you, and that is alright. Maybe this article sparks ideas for activities you would like to try. But just remember that there are always people to support you in and out of college. And be sure to have a productive and fun experience.



# What do Students Need to Know for the Next School Year?

You don't need to have it all figured out straight out of high school. It's okay to still be uncertain about your future. You'll figure things out one step at a time and it will eventually come together.

I think it is important for underclassmen to understand the importance of listening to what teachers tell you and to work hard.

Don't have a stupid haircut

It sounds cliché but you **NEED** to savor your senior year. It flies by.

Plan what classes you are taking to get your credits out of the way, that way you can have more classes of for senior scheduling.

Don't let that senioritis hit, it'll ruin you!!  
sincerely,  
someone who doesn't get to have senior scheduling because she gave up too early.

Being kind to everyone no matter who they are, don't say other's secrets, don't gossip, it's better to be alone and happy then be with r that don't love you.

Don't stay at home, go to all the dances, all the games, every event hosted at DHS!

Do as many activities as you can now. It will be fun and will teach you time management.



SADIE CLARKE

FEATURE/SPORTS EDITOR

Want more information? Scan the QR Code to watch a video produced by Wildcat Wire members Carson Hanley, Maddie Hellrich, and Sadie Clarke



# Senior Scholars

De Soto High School seniors are recognized for their academic excellence

On April 6, 2025, De Soto High School held the second annual Academic Banquet at Kill Creek Barn. Ten students who held the top ten spots in their class ranking, with a grade point average of 4.3 or above, were recognized for their scholastic excellence alongside their respective most influential teachers.



(From L to R) Front row: Mr. Murphy, Mr. Mercer, Mrs. Sixta, Mrs. Agre, Mrs. Friday, Mrs. Adams, Mr. Hagstrom, Mr. Hamilton, and Ms. Ayers Back Row: Sydney Coffman, Austin Chase, Evan Johnsson, Isabella Guess, Luciena Guess, Emma McCracken, Lainey Huggins, Drew Parks, Stella Showalter and Pierce Kreihbel. *Photo by Sadie Clarke*



Recognized seniors pose for a picture. *Photo by Sadie Clarke*

## Austin Chase

Teacher of Influence: Mr. Mercer

Austin plans on attending the University of Alabama on the National Merit Finalist full-ride scholarship to pursue a degree in Political Science.

## Sydney Coffman

Teacher of Influence: Mr. Murphy  
Sydney plans on attending Kansas State University to play soccer and to major in either Chemical or

Electrical Engineering.

## Isabella Guess

Teacher of Influence: Mr. Mispagel  
Isabella plans on attending Columbia University in New York City to major in Bioengineering and Machine Learning.

## Lucienna Guess

Teacher of Influence: Mrs. Agre  
Lucienna plans on attending the Honors College at the University of Kansas to double major in Neuroscience and Philosophy.

## Lainey Huggins

Teacher of Influence: Mrs. Adams  
Lainey plans on attending Iowa State University to double major in Pre-Law and Environmental Science.

## Evan Johnsson

Teacher of Influence: Mrs. Sixta  
Evan is undecided but plans on majoring in Aerospace Engineering and continuing band at the collegiate level.

## Pierce Kreihbel

Teacher of Influence: Ms. Ayers  
Pierce plans on attending the University of Kansas to pursue a degree in Engineering.

## Emma McCracken

Teacher of Influence: Mrs. Friday  
Emma is undecided but plans on majoring in either Broadcast Journalism or Environmental Law.

## Drew Parks

Teacher of Influence: Mr. Hagstrom  
Drew plans on attending Kansas State University to pursue a degree in either Civil or Mechanical Engineering.

## Stella Showalter

Teacher of Influence: Mr. Hamilton  
Stella plans on attending the Honors College at Kansas State University to major in Biology.



## ARE YOU PLANNING TO TAKE AN HONORS OR AP LEVEL COURSE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR?



SCAN THE QR CODE ABOVE TO SEE IF YOUR COURSE HAS A REQUIRED SUMMER ASSIGNMENT. SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS IN THE FALL. CONTACT THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR LISTED ON THE DHS WEBSITE WITH ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE REGARDING SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS.

## Commemorate Your Senior

BUY A SENIOR AD IN THE 2025 WILDCAT YEARBOOK. FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL MRS. RILEY AT

ARILEY@USD232.ORG



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## Hudl Fan is the new location for DHS Sports!

<https://fan.hudl.com/dhswildcatnation>

Subscription proceeds  
go to the DHS Activities  
fund. This is a benefit to  
**ALL** student activities at  
**DHS!**



SADIE CLARKE

FEATURE AND SPORTS EDITOR

# GARDEN GALA: PROM 2025



Seniors Brooke Bundt, Jocelyn Marquez, and Anna Plum pose. *Photo by Emma Stapp*



Junior Ethan Dobson and Senior Tyler Mcall show off their dance moves. *Photo by Emma Stapp*



Seniors smile for a picture. *Photo by Emma Stapp*



The 2025 Prom Court. *Photo by Emma Stapp*



Juniors Kasha Kemnitz, Caroline Maisch, and Norah Kelly gather with their dates for a photo. *Photo by Emma Stapp*



Students have fun on the dance floor. *Photo by Emma Stapp*



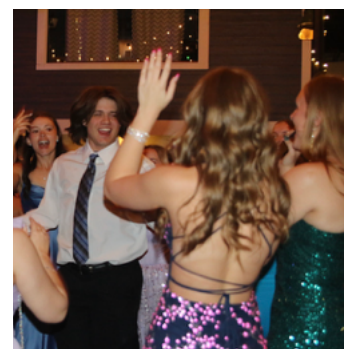
Seniors take part in a line dance. *Photo by Emma Stapp*



Seniors Alayna Marovec and Kimbal Sweeney dance together. *Photo by Emma Stapp*



Seniors dance around at Abe & Jake's Landing. *Photo by Emma Stapp*



Juniors jump around. *Photo by Emma Stapp*

Senior Leah Blom congratulates Prom Queen Swea Bonnstetter  
*Photo by Emma Stapp*

