

Greeley Central High School

The Highlight

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Schedule Controversy Continues

Block schedule under extreme scrutiny

Preston Roser

Greeley Central's new schedule, a tradition experienced by many high school students at least once throughout their time at the Castle, is being criticized by the very same students.

Greeley Central's change in schedule is nothing new, however, this second semester schedule focuses on block days which now occur 4 days a week. Though we have had block days in the past, the new schedule is picking up a lot of criticism from students due to the long, drawn out classes which comprise 80% of our school week. These days are productive, and do help to get a lot of work done, but teachers and students have to make it a mission to pay attention because of how elongated the periods are. The classes give little to no break and make it difficult to consistently and adequately pay attention as well as understand the information taught.



The schedule also becomes a concern when it comes to students being quarantined or just missing a single day. In the age of COVID, it is practically unavoidable for students to miss days considering the new variants and viral illnesses that circulate throughout the school. Due to the extended classes, students miss a lot more work for a singular class and may have troubles making up the work because of labs, presentations and/or other activities that require student involvement throughout the entirety of the hour and a half long periods. Besides these issues, students are mostly just irritated with the fact that Central has once again changed their schedule.

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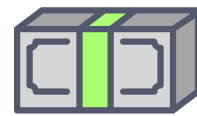
Boulder County Fires

Everything you need to know about the fires and how to help

By Sean Rotter

The Boulder Country fires are, without doubt, one of the most devastating natural disasters in Colorado history, destroying 1,084 homes and forcing 35,000 to evacuate in Superior and Louisville, within just a couple of days. This unprecedented inferno began December 30th, 2021, and within hours the flame engulfed hundreds of acres, being fueled by 100 mile per hour winds. This culminated in an unstoppable wall of destruction moving the length of a football field (100 yards) every 3 seconds. The terror which ensued saw thousands of families fleeing the disaster, attempting to save whatever valuables they could with only minutes to decide. In the aftermath, aid centers and shelters filled up along the front range as people desperately looked for a place to lay their heads amid the destruction. To help with the clean up, the state and the federal governments have enacted large aid packages and extended a helping hand to those suffering amid this unheard-of disaster.

President Joe Biden visited the burn area on January 8th, and after examining the destruction promised federal help to all those affected. Despite swift action by the governments, there is still a mountain of work to do to help out those impacted by this disaster. But the government is not the only party responsible for giving aid to victims, we as a community have a duty to help our fellow citizens in times of distress. If you have any interest in helping with recovery check out page 10 for a list of places you can donate to.



Jan. 31- Feb. 4 - Spirit Week!

Feb. 1 - Basketball vs. Greeley West

Feb. 5 - Saturday School 8:00 - 11:00

Feb. 7 - No school for students

Feb. 12 - Big Band Boogie Ball 6:00 - 11:00 PM

Feb. 16 - Parent teacher conferences (in person)

Feb. 19 - Saturday School 8:00 - 11:00

Feb. 21 - No school for students or staff

Feb. 28 - Spring sports begin

Laurie Ford's Celebration of life ceremony

Laurie Ford, at age 56, died on December 12th, 2021, approaching her fifth year of being diagnosed with cancer

By Chloe Forsyth

On January 8th, former staff at Greeley Central, Laurie Ford's celebration was held in the Greeley Central gym. Ford told her son, Kortne, that she didn't want a traditional funeral, but to have a celebration of life. Everyone who knew or was impacted by Ford was invited to the celebration. Ford was a former math teacher at Greeley Central and had taught for 11 years here. Kortne, a former GCHS student, describes that Ford's goal in her life was to positively impact the kids around her. She was always positive about her condition and never complained about it. .

Around five years ago, Ford was diagnosed with breast cancer. In 2017, her cancer had metastasized to her bones, and her doctors gave her around three to six months to live. She quickly started chemotherapy, radiation, and natural treatments. She had to travel to Denver every day for some of her treatments, but with her effort, Ford lived far past the six months. Her cancer levels declined significantly, and she came very close to beating it, but it came back and she had to start all the treatments on a full-time schedule all over again. Ford never complained though. Her son, Kortne, states that she never dwelled on the negative things in her life. She was always positive and grateful for everything. Kortne believes that's why she was able to live so long. Her celebration marked her impact on those in our community.

Laurie Ford Tribute



I student taught with Laurie when she got her second diagnosis in 2017. She never let it stop her. She still coached girls basketball, was actively involved with the school and her students, and helped me learn how to become an incredible teacher liked her. Everyone was welcome in her room and she loved everyone with her whole heart the minute they walked in.

- Rachel Longnecker



She believed everyone could succeed, and had a mantra on the wall that students said every day:

I have a right to an education.
I deserve an education.
Success comes from hard work.
I will work hard so that I can be successful.
Knowledge leads to opportunity.
What I do with that opportunity is my choice.
My grade is my choice.
My future is my choice.

She was incredibly motivating, always bumping jams in the room, always loud and laughing and believed everyone could learn and grow and just needed love.

Laurie was always concerned about students and making sure they had enough to eat. There was always a steady stream of students leaving her classroom with pop tarts to jump-start their days. She was a great presence in our lives here at the Castle and will be missed but never forgotten.

-Sarah French



Laurie was an incredible friend and loved everyone. All kids were "her kids". She took care of everyone, regardless of the sacrifice. She moved here to help her son, Kortne, pursue his dream of becoming a professional soccer player. I really believe once that came to fruition, she was ok...not to say she gave up because she didn't! She was my breakfast buddy, along with our friend Rhonda Campbell (also a former Wildcat and arranger of our get-togethers) who always made us laugh and reminded us to enjoy life. There's no one stronger or more passionate than Laurie and we are all better because we knew her.

- Kendra Villarreal

Chicago teachers strike over differences in dealing with COVID-19 in schools

The leaders of Chicago's school district want to return to in person learning, but teachers are afraid to for their sake as well as their students' safety.

By Noah Vasquez

Teachers all over Chicago in a few districts have been on strike and/or protesting the return to in-person learning that many of the school leaders are pushing for. Many teachers feel that it isn't safe for the students and themselves to return after seeing a huge spike in COVID-19 cases after returning from winter break. The strike took place in five out of the first seven days of the semester, due in part to not seeing a decrease in cases. Many leaders tried countering the strike with statements about students, and how going online suddenly would be “detrimental” to students. “Students need to be back in person as soon as possible. That's what the science supports. We will not relent.” This could mean they are worried for the students physical, and more importantly, mental health in all of this. Teachers are worried about that as well, but they are afraid for their own health, even if roughly 90% of the staff is vaccinated and following mask mandates. Due to the high vaccination rate and mask mandates, the decision of teachers to strike is controversial. Throughout all of this the strike did finally end on January 10th, with students returning to in person learning on the 12th.



16th Street Fire

Two buildings go up in smoke on Wednesday afternoon

By Noah Vasquez

Around 11:45 am the morning of January 26, a large cloud of dark smoke could be seen clearly in the sky from a few miles away. Many students on their lunch break were commenting on the visible cloud of smoke coming from the east. A garage and tire shop on the corner of 16th Street and 3rd Avenue was engulfed in flames. The cause of the fire was revealed to be an open gas valve that caught fire and set two buildings ablaze - the auto shop and the neighboring storage building.

Police had blocked off 16th and were redirecting traffic around it, which extended late into the night, causing major traffic disruptions. The Greeley Fire Department worked hard throughout the day to control the blaze, although flames and smoke were still visible late into the afternoon.

No one was harmed during the incident, thankfully, but the damage was significant, leaving the buildings in complete ruin and piles of ash.



New Spider-Man movie is the best Spider-Man movie ever.

Tom Holland's 3rd movie, *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, surpasses the 8 other Spider-Man movies as the best ever made.

Spoiler disclaimer: Do NOT read further if you haven't yet seen NWH

By JJ Espinoza

The new Spider-Man movie has people arguing around the world about if this is the best Spider-Man ever made. We have seen actors Tobey Maguire, Andrew Garfield, and Tom Holland cast their roles as Peter Parker, the character more commonly known as Spider-Man. Now, with this new movie out, many people are arguing which Spider-Man movie is the best one ever. “No Way Home” came out December 16th and by the weekend estimatedly made around \$52.7 million in the United States. Then by 3 weeks it had made over \$600 million which makes it rank 10 for all time in North America. It’s now surpassed \$1.5 billion worldwide. The movie also received a 94% on the Rotten Tomato scale (for those who don’t know what that is, it’s a scale to rate movies, and 94% is great).



No Way Home casts all three actors together in the same movie. With putting all three Spider-Man together this movie will be the best Spider-Man ever. Maguire and Garfield did an amazing job acting and their roles but still didn't take the spotlight away from Holland. Everything about this movie is great, the fighting scenes, the sad scenes, and just the simple dialogue. This movie is just great, it brings all Spidey fans together and is just a masterpiece.

Top Gun: Maverick needs to hit the runway into theaters

Fans of the Top Gun franchise grow impatient with the ongoing delays of *Top Gun Maverick*, as Paramount pushes it to June of 2022.

By Sage Sathe

More than three years after the sequel of 1986's hit blockbuster *Top Gun* was revealed, it still is being delayed amidst Covid outbreaks across the United States.

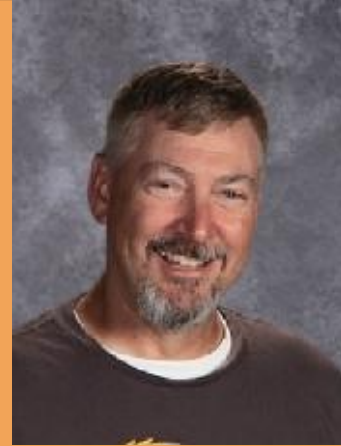


Many fans' excitement is waning as Paramount further delays *Top Gun: Maverick*. It was originally supposed to be released, July 12, 2019. Paramount continues to push back the release of *Top Gun: Maverick* because of the Covid-19 pandemic as to keep cases down and keep a traditional approach to releasing this must see blockbuster of the year. However with the rise in vaccination and booster opportunities like those at participating pharmacies, there should be no reason to keep delaying this hit movie. Previously scheduled for November 12th, 2021, Paramount sets *Top Gun's* approach for Memorial Day Weekend of this year. Covid cases have been surging due to the Delta and Omicron variants, causing another frustrating push back in the long awaited blockbuster. Paramount needs to hit the throttle as our patience and anticipation inverts to frustration.



Nayzeth Hernandez is a Senior who describes herself as a caring, independent, and respectful student who likes to “get things done the right way”. Her favorite class is Algebra with Mr. Stark. She is excited for her oncoming journey at UNCO to become an elementary teacher.

Student of the Week



Steven Burch is a History, Economics, Sociology, & Ap Psychology teacher at Central who teaches grades 10-12. He loves seeing his students improve & take pride in their accomplishments. Mr. Burch just finished building a log cabin in the mountains that he has been working on over the course of 15 years.

Teacher of the Week

Four Corners



Mikai Alirez is a sophomore Wildcat Wrestler who is very dedicated to his sport. This season Mikai dethroned the #1 kid in 4A wrestling. Mikai says that wrestling has helped him in school because it has taught him discipline, responsibility. Mikai has been wrestling for 12 years. He is described as a hard working independent student and athlete.

Athlete of the Week



Jace Shackley is a senior here at GCHS who is extremely passionate about the visual arts. He has been deeply invested in every facet of the Arts Magnet program since his freshman year. He has done extensive work commissioning art outside of school as well as created multiple outstanding pieces within the classroom. He describes art as his true passion in life and plans on making a career out of it.

Artist of the Week

Familiar Face Takes Over Head Coach Position For Baseball

Greeley Central's ex baseball head coach, Zach Brockman calls it quits and resigned in August. It only took a couple months for Central to find someone to fill the position with Brad Hudson.

By JJ Espinoza

After 10+ years coaching at Greeley Central for baseball, Zach Brockman resigned from the job in August 2021. Brockman had great years of coaching, the best being the 2017–2018 season, where he led the Wildcats to 11–9 and a trip to the playoffs. That trip ended up short because they lost in a close one to Windsor. It's surprising for Brockman to leave, he is a young, energetic coach who wanted to see his players be the best they can be. Brockman sent a heartfelt message to the remaining players: "My fellow Wildcats! I wanted you all to know that I have resigned as the Head Baseball Coach at Central. I wanted to tell you all in person, but with other adults knowing I didn't want you hearing this from somebody else. This is by far one of the hardest things I have ever had to do, and it is not anyone's fault. This is something that I needed to do for my family. My kids are reaching the age where sports are a big part of our everyday life, and I just can't miss the opportunity to watch and coach them. After 13 years of coaching baseball here at the Castle, I am broken hearted that I can't keep going, all my players have meant the world to me. I will always still be your biggest fan, as well your biggest critic, because I care and want you to be the best players you can be! Once a Wildcat always a Wildcat!"

It didn't take long for Central to find someone to fill in Brockman's shoes and they have a familiar face stepping in - enter Brad Hudson. Hudson has been Brockman's assistant coach for many years, and they have been a great duo. The past couple years they were able to give many players the opportunity to play at the next level in college ball. I spoke to Coach Hudson about what this opportunity means to him being the head coach.

"[I'm] excited about it and it's a different opportunity from being the assistant coach."

He loves it at Central, and wouldn't want to be somewhere else. His goal for the season is to make the playoffs. If you want to join this journey with Hudson and the Wildcats, there are winter workouts going on right now on Mondays at 7 AM, and Wednesdays and Fridays at 6 AM in the Aux Gym.

Huge Week for the GCHS Wrestlers

By Daniel Santillan

The Wrestlers took care of business two days in a row, one with their cross-town rivalries and the next at the Frederick Warrior Tournament.

The wrestlers faced their rivals Greeley West and Northridge High School on Friday Jan. 14th. The dual did not end well for the Grizzlies as the Wildcats walked right over them with a score of 75-3. The match-up between the Wildcats and the GWHS Spartans got heated very quickly when Central took an early lead. There was a lot of trash talk between the two schools during the matches, but the Cats came out on top with a score of 51-19. Zander Alirez was named Outstanding Wrestler for this rivalry match up.

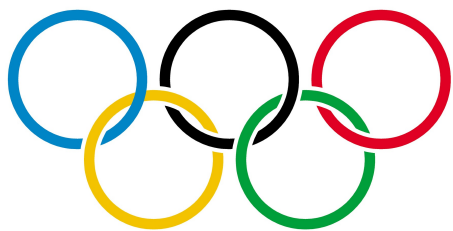
The GCHS wrestlers used this dominant win as fuel to move into their next event- the Frederick Warrior Tournament. They took a total of 13 wrestlers to the tournament, and by the end of the day 5 out of the 13 wrestlers were crowned champions in their weight classes. A total of 11 out of the 13 wrestlers placed top 6 in this tournament. The amazing team effort led to a 1st place win with a margin of 40+ points between the Wildcats and the 2nd place team. As for an amazing individual effort, wrestler Mikai Alirez was given the Outstanding Wrestler Award, as he defeated the #1 ranked wrestler in 4A. These two days of wrestling showed how dominant the Central Wrestling team is this season, helping solidify their 6th place overall ranking



Will there be a Winter Olympics in 2022?

By Lovely Paw

Even though we just had the Olympics in 2021 held in Tokyo, the world wants to know if there will be Olympics in 2022. The answer is yes, this time in Beijing. As of now people in the United States trying to fly to China seems unthinkable. Because of the pandemic, Beijing has tried to keep people safely away from Covid-19 infection. Because flights might be canceled or suspended due to China's aviation regulations, people who go to competitions need to take special flights. The Beijing Winter Games open on Friday, February 4 and will end on Sunday, February 20, if they don't cancel. Right now, Covid-19 and the Omicron variant is spreading, and if they want to hold the Olympics more rules are needed to avoid cancellation. China's Covid policy for outsiders is that they should not be sold a ticket outside their country, and if you are a part of Olympics groups you will only be invited on-site during the Games.



Are you wondering what to do after high school?

There are so many other options that you can take, other than heading from one hall to another.

By Amber Hudgins

Many seniors go straight from one hallway in high school to the next on a college campus, but there are so many other pathways that you can take. So let's hold off on buying those shower caddies and so many other things you don't even know you'll need.

There is nothing forcing you to pursue a college career. Considering something other than a traditional after high school experience could help you find a way to shape your future how you want to, not in a way that others expect for you. Consider these options:

- 1.) Travel Abroad- Graduation means you are free. Free from teachers, work, those extra-curriculars you decided to throw yourself into. Now it's time to go see all those places you saw in your textbooks and put those language classes to work.
- 2.) Charity Work- Did you really enjoy those school projects picking up trash, or writing letters to congress about causes you believe in? Now you're able to put your effort into something you believe for something more than just a grade. Spending time with other people who believe in what you do can help you decide on what you want from your future. Want to help the homeless? Hoping to help at-risk youth? Get involved and see where it takes you.
- 3.) Save money- Just do it! College is expensive, beyond people's day to day expenses people are paying off student loan debt for years. Instead of going to college right away, save up for your pricey academic venture.
- 4.) Learn a trade- College isn't the only place to further your education. Trade schools are a great place to learn something valuable for a fraction of the price and half the time. This can be a great way to find the job you want or a great way to pay for college. There are dozens of fields of study including: graphic design, bridal consulting, cosmetology, surgical technology, personal training, massage therapy, dental hygiene, video game design and much, much more.

Snow days during COVID

By Kaitlyn Romero

As the winter comes along, much snow is expected in Colorado. These harsh winter conditions sometimes result in snow days for students. But should snow days be a thing of the past during Covid's remote learning?

Snow days should stay with us as a tradition that reminds us of life before Covid. Although online learning has become very useful during quarantine, this solution should not come into play during a snow day. Students should be allowed to take a day off and enjoy the snow without having to worry about Zooming into class. Colorado is well known for large amounts of snowfall. These harsh conditions cause very dangerous driving hazards for students and parents. The roads get very icy and slippery, many cars do not drive well in the snow, and many people are not very experienced driving in these conditions. These are all key ingredients for a disaster. To help avoid these issues, students deserve to stay home and enjoy the day. Hopefully snow days stick around to help us look back at a cherished, pre-pandemic tradition.



Student Led Announcements in the New Year

The schedule is not the only fresh change in 2022 - You may have noticed some new voices reading the announcements each day

By Carlos Rascon Escalante

This move has been very important and helpful for GCHS, and Mr. Smith especially. Before the decision was made to have students do the announcements, Mr. Smith or a member of the office staff would take time out of their days to address the school. In the new semester, we have Luis Vargas and Alexis Tapia to start our day in the morning with announcements. They have included fun daily dad jokes and national days, for example National Hug Day or National Pizza Day. This change has been refreshing and lightens up the daily announcements.



Resources for Boulder County Fire Aid

Boulder County Wildfire Fund is a direct donation portal created by the Boulder County Community Foundation.

Boulder County Community Foundation, as well as volunteer agencies and opportunities around the state.

The Humane Society of Boulder Valley is donating pet food and supplies to families in need. You can directly donate money for supplies [here](#).

The American Red Cross Northern Colorado and the Mile High Area, are both accepting donations and providing volunteer opportunities.

Jewish Colorado is assisting organizations serving those in need via online donations. All contributions go directly to relief efforts in Boulder County.



VOLUNTEER
