

Bullying 101



PHOTO BY TAYA QUARLES

Freshman health students Jillian Berg and Avery Risinger designed this poster to address bullying in school walls. Although it creates awareness, MHS can do more to stop bullying.

Bullies can be found anywhere, and they can be anyone. They are seen whispering rumors in the hall, tripping a guy in the lunchroom or icing out the new girl. Students feel powerful when they humiliate someone they consider weaker than them; they feel accepted through the amusement of others, even at the cost of their

personal integrity. Most bullying forms a grotesque cycle: a kid with low self-esteem attacks someone else to feel in control, and then his victim feels helpless, resorting to bullying for self-assurance. Victims become bullies who victimize bullies in the making.

We, the staff of the MHS Mirror, feel that this is a prevalent issue at Mattoon High School, even with the school's zero-tolerance policy. Sure, there are posters on the wall stating "Words hurt too" and variations on the theme, but the effect they have is not strong enough to dramatically change students' perceptions of bullying.

This "solution" presents a false sense of action. The teens who bully and need to understand the impact of their harsh actions won't give the posters a second glance, while their victims continue to struggle, suffering in ways a few words

on paper can't fix.

The idea itself is nice enough. Posters of encouragement certainly won't worsen the issue, but it feels like a way to stick a Band-Aid on the problem and call it good, rather than realizing its seriousness and working to find a lasting solution.

problem with their peers. With an open conversation can come a deeper understanding of why bullying may occur and may help students who are bullied to deal with the situation they are in. But, this issue shouldn't be one that only teachers are expected to resolve; instead, as high school students, we

should make it a priority to set examples of tolerance for one another. No, it won't solve everything.

The entire MHS student body won't suddenly realize that being cruel and vindictive can have major consequences.

Bullies will continue to roam the halls and terrorize helpless victims. But, by presenting it as a topic of discussion, these victims might begin to realize that people are willing to talk about it, not just accept it. Teenagers do care about the well-being of others, as long as they are given a chance to show their concern.

It's a step we could take, should take, which would allow students to realize that their words don't need to have a negative impact, and their voices matter and can even bring about major change for the better. So let's get talking.

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While they may begin to introduce the topic of bullying for students to consider, these posters have become a point of ridicule for many students. The humorous nature some of them were intended to have does not allow for a completely open conversation about bullying. Instead, students continue to treat bullying as a joke.

Preferably, the school could begin a dialogue at all levels in conjunction with these posters so that bullying can become a part of students' conversations with one another as well as a reminder in the hallways to extend a kind hand.

It could be as simple as teachers bringing up the topic in class, just so students feel that they can talk about this

Clash of Classes



Jenna Butler
Managing Editor

Who is the #best?

There is a newfound controversy in the halls of Mattoon High School and students in all four of the classes.

A controversy that brings out the competitive nature of students who lay out all they have to be the best. That's what it's all about—trying to out-do upper and/or lower-classmen. The competition is flooding social media and raising heat between students. What is there to worry about other than the Battle of the Classes?

It's hard to determine what it takes to be the best class. Each class is unique and is most likely than not more dominant in one quality than others.

Whether it's the best personalities, the closest bond, the better athletes, or simply the most fun, whatever is being judged isn't fair judgment. This is all biased because a student is automatically going to choose his own class. There is never going to be a solid winner. It is going to be an on-going, pointless war that will eventually die out into nothing.

Battle of the Classes is basically just shared words and countless arguments of who is better than whom. Each is trying to go above and be-

yond the other classes to be on top, to seem superior. It started with hash-tagging the year of their class (#2015, #2016, #2017 and #2018) onto tweets or Instagram posts.

This rallies the other classes because it's seen as competition. They want to prove that class wrong. Some, moreover, are annoyed by it, seeing it as pointless and irrelevant.

There is no reason for it to be a big deal; Battle of the Classes is of little importance. It's rather child-like. Moreover, fighting over hierarchy of class is similar to fighting over who has the better toys or the bigger piece of cake. It has no significance. There is no reward. However, there is always satisfaction and pleasure that comes with being victorious over someone else, or in this case, a whole group of people.

This competition is mostly between the seniors and sophomores, according to senior Jackson Berg, who claims his class is the best because of their bond and how long they've been together.

Over all the chaos, at least students can say one good thing came out of all the arguing: each individual was brought closer to their classmates.

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