



Voice of the Mean Moose

# Alamosan

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Alamosa High School 805 Craft Drive Alamosa, CO 81101

## Questioning Cultural Relevance in Classrooms



Dominique Lopez  
— Co-Head Editor —

For decades many students have learned similar lessons and stories regarding the history of the United States. Recently four Colorado young women have chosen to change the narrative. Their names are Alana Mitchell, Jenelle Nangah, Dahni Austin and Kaliah Yizar. Through the creation of the “Know Justice Know Peace Resolution” they have devised the ultimate plan of creating a more inclusive curriculum in the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College. This curriculum would include Black, Latino, Indigenous, and more cultures to be a part of those represented throughout the teaching within their school.

This new movement isn't the first of its kind. Many schools in the country have been pushing for Native American history and perspectives to be included in the schools curriculum. What these communities are trying to accomplish is

called decolonizing the curriculum. That means that schools would create a curriculum that features different voices and perspectives.

In “Decolonizing the Classroom: Teaching With Indigenous Comics” by Amanda Morris she explains that “[c]entering Indigenous stories means doing more than just teaching about Native people of the past... Centering means incorporating Native stories throughout the quarter, semester, or academic year, alongside settler colonial texts and voices... It means bringing these stories out of the margins of the curriculum.”

Alamosa community members have perspectives on decolonizing curriculums as well. History teacher at Alamosa High School Sarah Ramirez states, “...as an educator I definitely think it is important to include this ‘hard history’ in our school district.” Highlighting that as a student she noticed the history of minorities, women, and even those of the LGBTQ+ community are often “glossed over” during lessons.

Mike Sisneros, a parent, Valley Native, and a TSJC Recruiting member feels encouraged by the idea that cultural diversity within the history curriculum and even in the books we study should be implemented into the curriculum at schools; however, it must be balanced in with current history that is taught within schools. Sisneros explains that with such a rich culture in the Valley this idea really should be taught more throughout schools so they know that part of their identity.

Ramirez also highlights this saying, “Our diverse student body deserves to learn about the history of minority groups in equal measure to their contribution in the history of our nation. Additionally, as a rural community that is predominately Latinx or White, our experiences and local history was often untouched by the struggles of black Americans, and others in their fight for equality. Our students deserve to be well informed about black and other minority groups - and how they shaped the develop-

ment of our nation as well.”

Aaron Zak, an English teacher at Alamosa High School and ENG 102 teacher has begun to integrate the history and voices of many cultures within his syllabus. He comments, “I honestly had not heard of this movement before reading your email and talking with you... [But by] promoting a more inclusive curriculum, we have the chance to learn about what has truly happened in our past and, most importantly, how that affects our modern-day relationships. Additionally, to teach a more inclusive curriculum is to include more voices and experiences in the retelling of our history.”

Sisneros claims that the students he meets are very culturally aware. But this awareness comes from what they are taught in their home. Zak states that in a “Privilege Walk” with his students the question, “...‘did you learn about your culture, ethnicity, or the history of your people in your historical curriculum?’ Students were surprised that this would be a question

or prompt that related to one’s ability to succeed in the social/academic environment.”

Emilee Montiel, an Alamosa High School senior who takes both Zak and Ramirez’s classes realizes this not so diverse curriculum saying, “I would benefit from this being taught in our schooling because then I would know more about these other cultures that I do not know as much about. In our history classes, there is only a small sliver of other ethnicities, and they are extremely broad.”

Not only does Montiel agree with this movement but realizes that it would allow her the opportunity to, “... know more about [her] fellow students’ backgrounds.”

No matter the varying perspectives on decolonizing the curriculum, the “Know Justice Know Peace Resolution” sparks the discussion of cultural relevance in not only the history classroom but in all classrooms. As Montiel put it, many believe that we can benefit from learning, “... where we all root up from...”

### Upcoming Events

Boys Wrestling

Sat. Feb. 27th @ Delta

Friday Mar. 5th Regional Wrestling Tournament Boys and Girls Wrestling

Boys and Girls Basketball

Friday Feb. 26th @ Centauri

Saturday Feb. 27th @ Bayfield

Saturday March 6th VS Montezuma-Cortez

Girls Wrestling

Sat. Feb 27th @ Eaglecrest

## AHS Students Hope for Prom and Graduation



Ryker Alonso  
— Co-Head Editor —

The AHS students this year are definitely hoping for any sense of normality and community. COVID-19 threw the 2020-2021 school year apart and students are left dreaming of a potential prom, or a potential graduation ceremony.

Seniors this year definitely are taking the worst of the consequences from COVID-19. Seniors have grown up imagining their graduation ceremony and their final prom, but this was all stripped away from them by COVID-19.

The seniors aren't the only ones suffering either, Juniors have waited two years of being underclassmen to have their first taste of a mature

setting from high school, like prom. Regardless of the class, students are going to be upset not attending prom like they should.

There are multiple teachers and class sponsors pushing for having any little gathering they can in order to give the students any sense of prom or graduation.

As COVID-19 backlashes around the world begin to wind down, we have a tiny hunch on what prom and graduation will actually look like. AHS is planning on scheduling these events as far down into the year as possible, hoping for COVID-19 guidelines to settle down by then. The more time until prom and graduation, the less guidelines we should have to follow, hopefully.

The last day for the seniors will be May 13th, and

graduation following a few weeks later on May 29th. Dates are definitely subject to change, again, in the shadow of COVID-19. Prom is still being put together, but the hopeful plan is to have prom a few weeks before the seniors last day in order to move the

date around if someone happens to get sick. Graduation is planned to take place in the stadium and on the field, and prom is hopefully taking place underneath the bleachers. Regardless, all students, teachers, and parents alike are hoping for a normal celebration.



GRADUATION CAP — Here is a pretty simple looking cap from a cap and gown outfit. The cap is repping maroon, as it should.