



# NEWS



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**TOWN HALL MEETING:**  
*A legislative town hall meeting gathered members of the community with community leaders.*  
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## REALIGNMENT

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the area in and around Salt Lake City. This region is very beneficial to Highland because it allows for a very short travel time for each of the sporting events that Highland participates in. This means less time out of school.

“For cross country I already miss so much school for meets. If I had to miss more I would be spending all my time catching up on assignments I missed,” Highland cross country runner Ethan Blume said.

But four years ago, Highland was placed in the northern region, forcing the Rams to travel to Bonneville, and Ogden, for example. Highland coaches and teachers were relieved when this was changed for the fall of 2017, but it didn’t last long. Originally, the UHSAA had proposed that Highland would move from its current region to region five – the northern region - once again.

If this had happened, then there would be extreme consequences. The average distance Highland travels in the city region is eight miles for each sporting event; in region five, athletes would have to travel an average of 27 miles for each sporting event. This would mean that student athletes would miss much more school, and it would cost the school more money to travel.

“It would really hurt the student-half of ‘student athlete’ if we were to move into region six. It would not be a positive change,” track and field head coach Gary Rowles said.

The average student may not think they would be affected by these changes, but what many don’t realize is that Highland would also lose out on established rivalries, such as Olympus and Skyline. Also, it would be much harder to go to sporting events that are not at home. Teams would suffer from the lack of support that would be shown at their away games, while also not making as much money from visiting fans during Highland home games.

“We have a lot of people who have a hard time making it to those destinations so we are so lucky to be in a local city region,” Highland principal Jensen said.

Jensen wasn’t going to let this happen without a fight.

On Wednesday, Dec. 5, the USHAA held a hearing for schools officials to argue their particular placements in the new regions. Jensen was a key member of this hearing. Not only did he argue on behalf of Highland for staying in the current city region, but he was in a smaller session with only principals from three other schools.

Just one day after Jensen argued his appeal for Highland to remain in the city region, the UHSAA approved it. This means that they voted in favor of Highland staying where it is. Jensen’s main argument as to why Highland should stay in its current region was not just the issue of travel time, but also the massive increase in participation in girls sports that has been recorded since Highland moved to the city region. If Highland was forced into a region with drastically increased travel times, Jensen believed the school would lose the growth in girls sports.

Even after the victory, things could still be changed, but Jensen does not believe that is likely.

“They really listened to us down there, I think we will stay where we are at. It will be really big for athletes if we are given this region,” Jensen said.

Jensen was certainly relieved at the ruling...and now he has two years to train before he may have to fight again as the regions will be realigned once again for the fall of 2021.



**Social media has been linked to increased levels of stress among teens.**

**Maggie Lea / Highland Rambler**

## NEGATIVITY

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depression and increased stress, so teens are often encouraged not to use it. Yet, teens feel like they are missing out without social media.

Because of the correlation between social media and feelings of depression, many groups, including the LDS church, have encouraged teens to take part in a week-long social media fast. Many students took part in the break from social media, and nearly all of them reported feeling better and less stressed afterwards.

“It was a very positive experience because I feel as though taking an extended period of time to be with friends and family benefitted me a lot,” Highland senior Jorielle Dusenberry reflected. “Learning from that and growing from that has benefited me a lot in a positive way, and talking to people I go to church with and peers, they all had positive things to say about it.”

The social media fast encouraged by the church has produced almost all positive responses, showing that people are often happier without social media. It

has even lead to many people deleting social media for extended periods of time. Although many people are choosing to cut this type of negativity out of their lives, most people remain attached to their social media accounts, for it is viewed as a common way of connecting with the outside world.

Along with being associated with feeling depressed, increased social media use has been tied to problems with body image. As social media became more common in everyday life, people became surrounded by unrealistic images of beauty. Though unattainable beauty standards were promoted in the media long before social media, placing these images at our fingertips keeps these images in the minds of teenagers at all times.

The internet can be an incredible resource for finding help with all kinds of mental health issues, but it can also encourage unsafe behavior, and can be a danger to easily-influenced teens. If a teen were to search mental health buzz words, half of the results would be websites

providing help, while the other half would be encouraging or enabling dangerous behavior.

Social media has the ability to fuel a mental battle within each individual as well as among peers. The use of social media has played a key role in creating the broken politics that can be observed today. Experts agree that America is more divided politically than it ever has been, and it’s taking a toll on people on both sides.

Rather than discussing political issues, people tend to argue ineffectively. This can be seen through the thousands of political opinions promoted on social media daily, but also through the news.

What was once unbiased news may have an opinion that is conveyed through the way stories are covered, making it incredibly difficult for people to escape the anger and arguments looming around many political issues.

With technology on the rise, there has been an increase in job opportunities after receiving higher education, causing teachers to encourage college more and more to the students

they teach. While pushing for students to receive higher education is beneficial, college graduates earn about 66 percent more than high school graduates on average, it is causing more stress among high school students than ever.

Because kids are now told from a young age that college is the best route to success, that it is the only way to gain an edge in the competitive job market, more people are going to college, and therefore more people are going into debt from student loans. Last year, the average student loan debt was about \$39,400, and this amount doesn’t appear to be decreasing. The cost of college has been going up every year, and just last the cost of tuition went up 2.9-3.6 percent.

Although people have previously encouraged teens to enjoy their youth, for they are the “best days of your life,” it appears that a cloud of negativity has recently been looming around teens, making adolescence seem overwhelming, and adulthood sound impossible.

## Seasonal Depression Poses A Threat To Teens

**By Eli Adams**  
*Feature Editor*

A student sitting alone in their room feels nothing but the impossible to lift the weight of their blankets and pillows on their body and mind. The weather gets colder and the days get shorter. With the darker afternoons, it feels as though the day is not the only thing that is getting darker. This is how one student describes her experience with seasonal depression.

It is not uncommon for teenagers and young adults to feel an increase, or completely new depression in the fall and winter months. Although many things like school and family could be a factor, the dramatic increase in depression is primarily due to the change in the weather and the amount of sunlight hours during the day.

The decrease in sunlight has a high chance to disrupt an individual’s biological clock or circadian rhythm that tells a person when they are supposed to be tired or at full energy. It is true that episodes of seasonal depression can occur in the summer but it is much more likely for an individual to experience long lasting periods of sadness during winter.

Highland junior Sofi Kenrick describes depression as the total lack of motivation to even do something as mundane as getting out of bed. Things people love all turn into chores that just need to get done before they can go back to bed. It is common to act reckless or erratic and have seemingly no regard for personal well being.

“If all you had to eat for the rest of your life was mashed potatoes. Mashed potatoes are great..For like one serving, but then if you keep eating it for the rest of your life it becomes tasteless and boring,” Kenrick says, “That is all depression is. It makes life seem like there is nothing fun or happy any more.”

It can be especially hard at school; a common feeling of depression is not wanting to interact with people at all. Being forced by law to attend a school of thousands of students of the same age can be a challenge. Kenrick says the hardest part about being depressed is having to interact with people, even close friends.

“You will get these episodes where you just don’t want to go out, and people will think that you just hate them,” Kenrick says.

Although depression is a sensitive topic that many are not comfortable discussing, raising awareness of just how common depression is has been a priority in recent years in middle and high schools. The idea is that teens won’t feel that something is uniquely wrong with them if they experience depression, while also providing tools to recognize and treat the condition.

For many students, it seems as though there is no one there to help with these seasonal issues, but this is not the case. Despite the fact that talking to someone in a constructive way can be the hardest part of the process, Highland tries to battle this issue by making it easier than ever to talk to a professional. Highland even has a mental health specialist assigned to the school (she can be found in the counseling center).

Depression is almost four times more common in females than males. In fact, 80 percent of all people who have reported symptoms of seasonal depression are female. This is not to say that it is not still common for adolescent males to experience depression, periodically. Estrogen and progesterone, which only appear in females, have been shown to react more strongly with mood disorders such as depression and anxiety. Additionally, males are less likely to report feelings of sadness.

One of the most difficult aspects of depression is realizing that an individual may suffer from it. It is scary for many to acknowledge that they may have a problem. It can be even scarier to try and get help. Despite all this fear, Kenrick is happy she finally reached out and received help.

“I didn’t want to be diagnosed at first. I kind of makes you feel broken almost. People look at you differently. But what I actually got diagnosed it was actually really life changing. I have been able to be better in general. Now I do sometimes want to get out of bed and I do want to go out with my friends,” Kenrick said.

It may appear difficult at first to seek help but it can be extremely beneficial. Although it may be important it is not always neces-

### SEASONAL DEPRESSION

SEASONAL DEPRESSION IS **VERY COMMON**

**OCCURS MOST OFTEN IN THE WINTER SEASON**

**20%**

**80%**

OUT OF THE MANY WHO SUFFER FROM SEASONAL DEPRESSION, A REPORTED 80% ARE GIRLS. THE OTHER 20% ARE BOYS.

### SYMPTOMS

- LACK OF MOTIVATION
- AVOIDING INTERACTION
- NOTHING SEEMS FUN
- FEELINGS OF SADNESS

### WAYS TO HELP

- GO OUTSIDE AND HAVE FUN
- SEEK HELP, REMEMBER THIS IS NORMAL AND SEEING A DOCTOR CAN BE BENEFICIAL!
- SPEND MORE TIME WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY, THEY'RE ALWAYS THERE TO HELP

**Noah Herridge / Highland Rambler**

sary to seek the help of a mental health specialist. Julie Winn, a therapist at Valley Behavioral Health, says that it is critical to seek professional help for anyone who starts to experience symptoms so severe that their life is in danger. But there are at-home remedies that can help during difficult times as well.

“Just get out and do something. With depression, one tends to isolate themselves quite a bit, so getting active and spending time with family members is the best way to combat seasonal depression,” Winn said.