

Let's Hear it for Mr. Hinze

Math Teacher Overcomes Hearing Loss in the Classroom, on the Field

Sydney Malone, Reporter

Jackson Hinze spends his days at Gretna High School educating students on all things to do with math. While he may seem like your typical math teacher, Hinze is almost entirely unable to hear out of his left ear. Since he was in elementary school, his hearing has slowly deteriorated until today, where it is comparable to that of an 80-year-old man.

At the age of nine, Hinze, his friends and his family were lighting off fireworks in celebration of the Fourth of July. While lighting off six artillery shells, one tipped over and shot back at Hinze as he stood near the house. The rocket exploded to Hinze's left, instantly making it difficult to hear from that ear.

"At school, I had to do a hearing test," Hinze said. "The lady thought I was joking because I said I couldn't hear anything out of the ear. She called my mom and told her I had to redo it and that I couldn't mess around anymore. Once I did it again and got the same result, that's when I knew I had some hearing issues."

Persevering through the challenge, Hinze continued to live a normal life, participating in sports as a child and attending college in order to become a teacher. Even though Hinze has been able to overcome his hearing challenges with his students, it still influences his teaching and communication abilities.

"I usually have to get closer in order to hear people," Hinze said. "I read lips a lot more, and so I have to make sure that I make eye contact so that I can see people when they talk. I don't always know who's talking, especially if it's on my left side, and I have a tough time with kids who are a little bit quieter."

Occasionally, students do notice.

"I kind of had a hunch that he was hard of hearing because sometimes when I would speak, he wouldn't listen," junior Emmy Wieczorek said. "I don't think it affects his teaching, though."

She added that she believes Hinze is a great teacher because he focuses and pays attention to his students.

Hinze has overcome his hearing difficulties both in the classroom and on the football field, coaching the GHS players alongside head coach Joe Dalton. Hinze doesn't let his poor hearing stop him, adapting in ways such as turning to listen to students on his good side and relying on his context clues to understand others around him. Hinze has adapted so well, most people cannot tell that he has hearing difficulties until he informs them.



Avery Hansen

Jackson Hinze lost hearing in his left ear in elementary school. He teaches in the math department and coaches football.

Will We Stay or Will We Go?

GHS Community Hopes for a Cold Day Off

Sydney Malone, Reporter

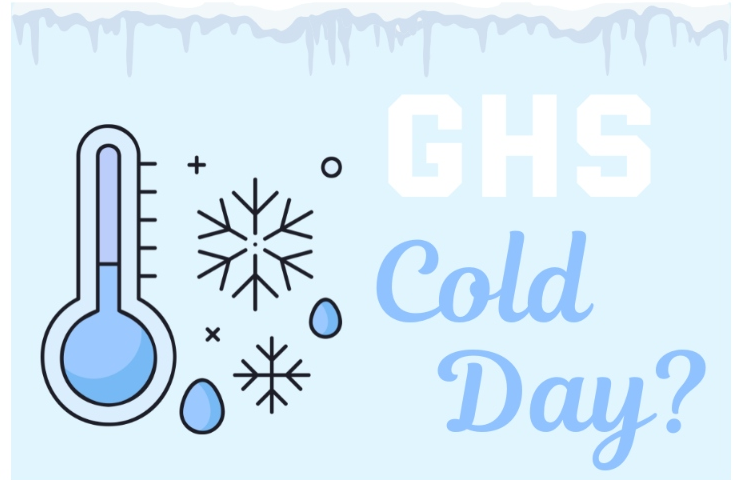
The talk of the school for the past week has been one topic only: are we going to have a cold day on Friday? Despite having Monday off at the start of the week already, the student body has not had enough free time. The chilly temperatures on Friday are looking promising, but the doubt still lingers.

“Only the superintendent can really call the day off,” Principal Theresa Huttman said. “He gets the National Weather Service report at specific times of the day, and all of the local superintendents watch it.”

The current weather report says that the current low for Friday is sitting at negative 4 degrees, with a windchill of negative 20 degrees. While no snow or precipitation is expected, the bitter cold and gusty wind could lead to a day off from school.

“For cold days, it has to reach a certain temperature or have a certain label, like ‘warning,’” Huttman said. “They have really specific data, though, and they don’t just go off the newspaper report or anything else.”

The verdict for now is uncertain. Opinions are skewed, and nobody truly knows what is going to happen. Students will keep hoping, and teachers will keep wishing.



Graphic by Alyson Dytrych

A, B, C, no longer 1, 2, 3

Gretna Introduces a 10-Point Grading Scale for Next Year

Sydney Malone, Reporter

As of the meeting on March 10, the Gretna Public Schools Board of Education has officially decided that the grading scale for the district will officially be changed to a 10-point grading scale starting with the 2025-2026 school year. This decision comes after years and years of having the six-point grading scale for most secondary school classes in GPS.

"We looked around at all the other high schools in the area, the colleges and the universities and we compared their grading systems to our grading systems," President of the school board, Rick Hollendieck said. "The majority of them, if not almost all of them, were on the 90, 80, 70 percent scale."

Alongside this change to the percentages of grades, GPS will also separate from the numerical form of grading. Instead, students will receive their grades in the commonly used letter format, A through F. While this may seem like another large and sudden change to the environment of Gretna Public Schools, just like the new furniture rules implemented for next year, the idea of this change has been circulating throughout the school board for quite some time now.

"It's just tough to change," Hollendieck said. "Our standards are high and we want to keep them high for a reason, but we also want to be fair to all of our students when it comes to potential scholarships and opportunities. We felt that changing it down to this new grading scale would help our kids."

Keep an eye on Gretna Media for more stories and information on the change in grading scale.

Caitlyn Cheleen contributed to this story.



Graphic by Skylar Miller.