



THE GREAT DEBATE!

AS REMEMBERED BY BFHS SENIORS

Trevor Hersom attended the debate and stated, "I wish I could have been down there to argue against the teachers. If we ever have to do this again, I will ask to be in the debate. Other than that, it was very interesting; the students' minds were heard, kind of, and so was the administration. This really did help out to smooth things over with Mr. Pine and the student body as well. If he hadn't done this debate, I think he would have had some big problems on his hands. It also gave the students, or at least me, a sense that we can be heard if we go through the proper channels."

Cody Kelley, Ms. Torres, Suzy Ford, John Huey, Joyce Hailicka and Twila Barber served as the judges who came up with a compromise plan following the debate, which has been dubbed the A.S.P.I.R.E. program. Cody stated, "I took part in the lively debate as a judge. I watched the debate and then the other judges and myself went to the library and discussed what we thought the new eligibility rule should be. It took us a very long time to decide on each individual part of the new rule because we had to make something that was fair to both sides of the conflict. In the end, Mr. Pine and Josh Wetzel decided on a compromise similar to our suggestions, but a little different."

After reflecting on all of his governmental experiences, Cody said, "This was the most important one of my governmental experiences. I was in a room with faculty members and community members and I was treated as an equal. My ideas were considered. I was able to get more involved with the actual process and make a difference, no matter how small that difference may be. I now know that I would rather get involved in the local levels of government as opposed to higher state or federal levels, because at the local level you do not become just another face in the crowd. Your voice can be heard."

Amanda Newby attended a school board meeting regarding this issue in addition to serving on the student panel. Amanda had many things to say about her experience, "I have never really had much respect for our government, but then again, I have never really understood it either. Having to do political involvement as a requirement for our government class gave me the opportunity to become involved with the government. So instead of degrading the system, I got involved with it. Taking part in the debate for our eligibility policy gave me the opportunity to change the school system. The schools play a big part in the government. I had the opportunity say that I was a part of something that will change the educational life of our underclassman." Amanda added, "Through my variety of experiences with political involvement, I realize that our government does play a big role in even the simplest of lives."

Krystle Rowley confirmed, "The debate really stirred up issues that hit the kids hard. I did not personally have anything to do at this debate, but as a student at BFHS, I felt that my voice was heard with my peers fighting for our rights. I agree that playing sports is a privilege, but on the other hand, would the students that are failing be willing to come to school more often if you take away their opportunity to play sports?" Krystle also noted that "our governmental system at the school is based on our United States government. The experience that I gained from watching this debate played a key role in how I look at our government today. I now understand and respect it, where as I used to not know anything about it, or for that matter, care. If this opportunity arose again, I would jump at the chance to be one of the students sitting in the hot seat representing our school. Things may or may not change for the good, but change will happen wherever we go in life, and will always be changing in government."

Jamie Nelson felt that it might not have been possible for some individuals to meet the new standard, and she expressed concern that some students would not be able to participate in the activities that provide additional opportunities. Jamie reflected, "Now that the new standard has been in play for about four months, I am satisfied with the results. I have found out that every individual at BFHS tried to the best of their ability to meet the new standard."

Connie Haberler added, "I was listening to the debate from the beginning to the end, and I think that holding a debate was the best thing that Mr. Pine could have done in that situation. The students told him how they felt and asked him and the teachers what they might not have felt comfortable asking in class. They might have been too shy or afraid of the answer. Now the public, parents, grandparents, and friends have an idea of what happens in school."

Tony Beals summed up the experience eloquently, "There were many mixed feelings. Students and teachers debated formally to come to a resolution. Opposing sides brought legitimate accusations. The point I'm getting at is that we all have disagreements, whether they be politically or socially, which can be handled in many different situations. Debates reflect the maturity of our society. It taught me that issues can be handled in a serious matter, with the ultimate goal being to come to a resolution. Many people may have felt that Mr. Pine's proposals were harsh and crude, but opposing sides realized that there is one purpose, EDUCATION, and what we all do with it. If every student gave the effort, they all would succeed. This relates to real life issues. A person will decide how far he or she will go in life. Every being has a certain potential. It's how you use it. In summary, this debate has shown me the significance of 'orderly arguing' - a system our government uses that can be applied to every day life."

This has been a year of change for the Butte Falls School District. One of the biggest changes involves the new A.S.P.I.R.E. program, which has successfully elevated the academic bar for students who wish to participate in all co-curricular activities, which includes all sports, clubs and any other activities that extend outside the classroom curriculum. This program was decided upon after a lengthy process that included input from the staff, coaches, students and community, which included a formal debate held at the high school last fall. BFHS Student Government students, along with their advisor, Mr. Bone, played a role in preparing for this process.

BFHS seniors have a required governmental participation component for their Government class which provides the students with unlimited possibilities to become aware and involved in the government process. Many of the seniors included the 'Great Debate' as one of these experiences. Mrs. LeFever, their government teacher, felt that their reflections are worth sharing with the community. So sit back and enjoy a fun read!

Michael Hanson stated, "The Butte Falls High School Debate on October 2, 2002 was a great learning experience for me in many ways. I improved my speaking skills and also learned how to argue points tactfully. The debate was centered around academic and co-curricular activities regarding eligibility. Different points consisted of maintaining grade standards, consequences of not meeting these standard requirements, as well as reasons why we should change the new rules which were trying to be implemented into the system at the first of the year. The debate was a prime time to witness the schools government system and its representatives at work."

Chris Copeland also participated on the panel and offered the following overview of his experience. "Well, the first thing I had to do was dig up some nice spiffy clothes from my closet. Then, I looked at the outline for the debate that Josh Wetzel and Michael Hanson gave me. When we made it to the gym, we sat down at our designated table, along with Amanda Newby and Mr. Harrington. We were ready to debate student participation in extra curricular activities in relation to their grades, especially D's and F's. The five of us were trying to keep some of the old participation and eligibility requirements the same as the past. We were up against Mrs. Gorman, Mrs. Warren, and Mardell Smith. BFHS students as well as citizens of Butte Falls attended the debate."