

**Editors-in-Chief**  
Evelyn Wang  
Veronica Zhao

**Managing Editor**  
Parth Dhaulakhandi

**News Editors**  
Danielle Feldsher  
Kevin Miao

**Opinion Editors**  
Annie Guo  
Jonathan Xue

**Lifestyles Editors**  
Amanda Boles  
Ella Chan

**Arts & Culture Editors**  
Maya Dutt  
Malar Raguraman

**Sports Editors**  
Alicia Liste  
Helen Tam

**Copy Editor**  
Jonathan Xue

**Creative Director**  
Mackie Vu

**Design Editors**  
Maya Dutt  
Aviv Matas

**Multimedia Editor**  
Catherine Yang

**Social Media Editor**  
Elena Shim

**Reporters**  
Annika Abraham  
Sachin Chandran  
Isabela Guilardi  
Henry Hu  
Vivian Kim  
Jason Lai  
Olivia Levesque Ouellette  
Brian Ling  
Aashka Nagarkar  
Adam Orrin  
Selina Wang  
Ethan Xue  
Madeleine Yee  
Kaylin Yi  
Alan Zhang

**Adviser**  
Natalie Owsley

**Mission Statement**  
The Epitaph is a non-profit publication at Homestead High School, 21370 Homestead Rd., Cupertino, CA 95014.

The Epitaph is a forum for student expression and not subject to prior review, in accordance to Education Code 48907. The staff is comprised of HHS Journalism students. Views expressed do not necessarily represent views of the school, its staff or the district. Editorials are opinions of the editorial board.

The Epitaph welcomes letters to the editor but reserves the right to edit submissions. Letters should be limited to 300 words. Include contact information. Unsigned letters cannot be published, but names will be withheld upon request. Send via homestead.epitaph@gmail.com, or drop letters in the newsroom or the office mailbox.

If The Epitaph has made an error, please send corrections to homestead.epitaph@gmail.com. The corrections will be published in the corrections box for the next issue.

To reach the Epitaph in C102, call (408) 522-2572 or fax (408) 738-8531.

**Advertising**  
One email and you can reach over 2,400 students, teachers, administrators and community members from Northern Sunnyvale to Southern Los Altos. If your target market is between ages 14 to 18, contact The Epitaph at epitaphads@gmail.com, and we can make it happen.

**Thank You to Our Donors & Supporters**  
Semele Heller  
FUHS Foundation  
Homestead PTSA

Staff Editorial

Policies must represent LGBTQ+ voices

Advocating for diverse identities has always been a key principle in Cupertino, but recently, many members of our community have called to draw the line for diversity at our schools.

In October, a nonbinary teacher at Dilworth Elementary School in the Cupertino Union School District was put on leave due to community concerns over “mature content.”

The teacher displayed pictures around the

classroom of people with alternative pronouns, according to the San Francisco Chronicle.

Teachers should never be penalized for creating an inclusive environment or teaching diverse perspectives to students.

The removal of a teacher because of their diverse perspective and expression directly contradicts the values we once held proudly in our community.

Excluding non-cisgender identities from gender education deprives students of the necessary terminology needed to understand and express themselves.

To maintain equity on campuses, staff and parents must support the right to learn about different identities through the education system.

The treatment of LGBTQ+ topics as controversial creates a double standard discussing gender in terms of girls and boys is

acceptable, yet teaching transgender or non-binary identities is labeled as too “mature.”

This double standard not only alienates LGBTQ+ community members but also sends the message that we view their identities as taboo.

CUSD’s actions show the hypocrisy within our community. In public, we call for equality and anti-discriminatory policies to protect the individuals we claim to support. But when these calls empower individuals with identities perceived as too controversial, we allow our schools to retract their promise of inclusivity and unfairly discriminate against others.

This treatment carries a damaging message to students about who is deemed worthy of respect. When students see teachers being treated unfairly, it legitimizes the fear of intolerance against already marginalized LGBTQ+ individuals.

Allowing these fears to spread in our community is unacceptable, especially when they are entirely preventable through an open-minded educational environment.

In response to the CUSD decision and community concerns, in February 2025 the FUHSD Board of Trustees plans to reaffirm policies protecting all students and staff from discrimination. The board intends to ensure that the ambiguities in the CUSD’s policies that led to the teacher’s leave will not be a concern within our district in the future, principal Denae Nurnberg said.

This reinforcement of policies protecting LGBTQ+ people is what we need from our feeder districts and must be the standard for all schools in the United States.

CUSD and Sunnyvale Unified must follow FUHSD’s lead by utilizing direct policies to protect staff and students’ rights to authentically express themselves. They must uphold our commitment to free education that is both free of charge and free of any discrimination.

We can uphold these freedoms by demanding districts remove vague language from policies that allow for the targeting of LGBTQ+ individuals. Additionally, we need to create policies that directly condemn the labeling of LGBTQ+ identities as mature or controversial.

We must protect and serve as allies for our LGBTQ+ community. The choice to support LGBTQ+ individuals is not a matter of district policy or political beliefs. It is a matter of free expression and respect, which must be the norm in our schools.



Stick to spaceships, not politics

Musk will selfishly interfere with our democracy

Jonathan Xue

COLUMN – Elon Musk is the eccentric billionaire. From creating brain chips to launching spaceships, Musk has an interesting approach to his many choices. But his latest endeavor into politics is the most puzzling of all.

Even for someone as erratic as Musk, strongly supporting president elect Donald Trump’s campaign was unexpected. In the weeks leading up to the election, Musk showed up at rallies and donated more than \$100 million to the Trump campaign, according to CNN.

And Musk’s decision paid off. Musk, the richest man in the world, is now best friends with Trump, who will soon return as the most powerful man in the world.

Unfortunately, Musk’s involve-

ment doesn’t stop there. In fact, Trump recently announced Musk would help lead the planned Department of Government Efficiency, DOGE for short, which aims to cut back on government spending and inefficiencies, according to Fox News.

Musk is not a politician, and leading a new government office is far from his area of expertise. Politics doesn’t relate to big business, despite how much Musk and Trump may compare them.

The Trump administration must reconsider the influence they are giving Musk due to his lack of concrete experience in representing Americans. Musk’s

new committee will be the first of its kind, and such an important position would be better suited for someone with prior leadership experience in government roles.

Additionally, Musk stands to benefit from his promised position. Many of his businesses are regulated by federal agencies – the same ones Musk will soon have influence over, according to NPR. These conflicts of interest are dangerous because government officials must serve the public, not private interests. Musk’s contradicting involvement poses questions regarding who he will truly serve in his new position: himself or the American people.

When Musk assumes this role, the Trump administration must monitor his actions and hold him to a high standard. Musk’s job in government should benefit all Americans, not help himself and his many businesses.

Even if Musk acts as the perfect leader for DOGE, his appointment sets a troubling precedent for the future of politics.

Presidentially appointed positions cannot continue to be bought through money and influence. These crucial roles must be earned by their appointees through decades of political experience and dedication to citizens.

The Trump and future administrations must cut back from giving the wealthiest, most powerful Americans even more undue influence in our democracy. Doing so will only further the interests of a select few instead of the values of our nation.

Musk will ineffectively represent Americans. A rich, weird tech guy does not reflect the values of millions of Americans. We can only wait and see the consequences.

