



# Voltage

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Science Park High School

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## Breaking Down Russia and Ukraine

Victoria D Rengel  
2/16/22

On August 4th 1991, Ukraine declared its independence from the Soviet Union. Since then the country has been functioning as a fully independent state. Then in 2014, under Putin's Presidency, Russia annexed Crimea. Since then tensions have risen exponentially as the presence of Russian-Separatists increase in Ukraine.

### North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Ukraine has made various attempts to join NATO but there has been extreme pushback against this action.

A fundamental part of NATO is that if a member nation is attacked then others in the organization must defend it. The likelihood of a Russian attack on Ukraine was high, so allowing Ukraine to join functions as a war warrant. This implies nations such as the US, UK, and France would be in a "war" with Russia. Even if the conflict remains objectively mild it is too risky to be in war with Russia as the global economy and fate of humanity are at stake.

Ukraine has wanted to join NATO but Russia has been openly against this.

Ukraine joining NATO would provide the country with the tactical means to fight and eventually decrease Russian aggression. Not to mention, closer ties with the West would ensure significant economic benefits which would help the country decrease domestic Russian influence.

### Minsk Agreement

Back in 2014 as response to the invasion of Crimea, the Minsk Agreements were proposed. The first version ensured a cease fire, while the second was more extensive. This version included a ceasefire, Ukraine control of its borders, and aid.

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## What has happened? 2/25/22

On February 15, President Biden came out and said that there were an estimated 150,000 Russian troops stationed on the Ukrainian border.

Russia claimed it would begin to pull back its presence on the border and Crimea.

However, NATO leadership is unsure whether to believe this since no decrease has been seen. NATO ruled out sending troops to Ukraine.

Russia invaded Ukraine on Thursday morning, 2/24. Putin has described it as a “special military operation.”

Russian troops have fully invaded the eastern part of Ukraine including Donetsk and Luhansk.

As of now, it is reported that Russian troops have entered Ukraine's capital Kiev.

This conflict has already sparked global conversations.

The European Union, Australia, Britain and the United States have already placed sanctions on Russia. Additionally, Germany revoked permits for the recently built Russian Nord Pipeline. The intended purpose was to be able to transport oil through the pipeline instead of having to go through Ukraine, but since the permits were revoked economists argue that gas prices will hit a massive high. The International Criminal Court has said they will investigate any potential war crimes or human rights violations in Ukraine.



Many members of the international community have condemned Russia's actions, but Russia's invasion is still in full swing.

Ukrainians have been fleeing their homes to the western parts of the

nation or to nearby countries such as Poland. As people have taken their basic belongings and left without looking back, a popular catchphrase has been ***"I want to live so I have to leave."***

The United Nations has met on the issue but there has been no consensus on action. It is reported that Russia is targeting civilians but the nation's ambassador to the UN declines this. Putin has said if anyone interferes they will be met with serious consequences. NATO maintains its position while the international community has sanctioned Russia to the point the Ruble is worth less than a cent.

The Ukrainian people's spirit remains high as they combat Russia. An estimated 870,000 Ukrainians have already fled the country. Russia has made large advancements in Kherson and Kharkiv.

**SPORTS**  
**BOYS**  
**VOLLEYBALL**  
**TEAM**  
**PREPARES FOR**  
**A NEW SEASON**

Ashley Lourenco

After a great girls volleyball season, signups have opened for the boys. As the hype grows to see what our team will bring to the table this year, I sat down with some prominent members of the team.

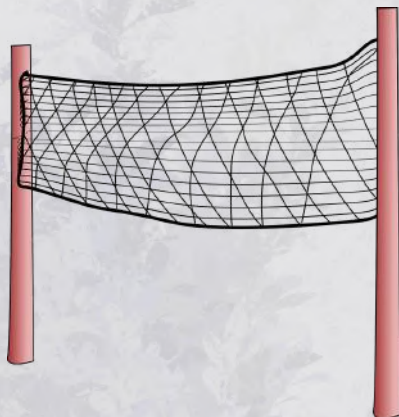
**Q: How are you feeling about following the girls volleyball season?**

Inacio Aires, '25: It's a tough act to follow but I feel that the excitement and hype for this season from the team is unmatched. The previous season was just a start for our school's volleyball teams this year, and

we're expecting good results, confidence, and some improvement this year.

**Q: What do y'all expect for the upcoming season, and what are some goals?**

Patricki De Souza, captain, '22: I expect good results and improvement



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from the boys. I want them to be confident in their abilities and be able to teach the classes that come after them so the club keeps getting better and better.

Anderson Lopez, co-captain, '23: We have lots of new players joining this year compared to last year, and I believe that with the correct

mentality, our dedication and love for the sport will take us a long way. Of course, our ultimate goal is to have fun as well, but to also win against other great teams and to enjoy the spirit of volleyball. I'm confident with our squad heading into the season, and I'm certain we can make

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a statement for other schools to see. We will especially be looking forward to playing in front of a crowd again. It excites all of us.

**Q: How did you manage the season last year (if at all)? How will your games and practice be affected by new guidelines/rules, and are you worried it will impact performance?**

Anderson: Last year was a season full of ups and downs. We won games and we lost some very close ones that frustrated me, but that's volleyball. It was hard playing without any fans or real atmosphere, as that's the best part of playing at a high school level. This season will be more exciting, but of course, with COVID along, we will take more precautions to maintain safety. I don't think the new guidelines will affect us as much as it did last year, as many

couldn't play [due] to covid scares and online school.

Performance-wise, I believe that the season ahead will just serve as more motivation to continue to get better, especially with the squad we will have come spring.

**Q: Are there any schools you're looking forward to competing against?**

Patricki: Out of all the schools we played, I'd love to play Payne Tech again. Last time we played them, it was a tough loss, but we've improved. We want to prove to everyone that the Science Park Volleyball club has grown.

**Q: That's a really sophisticated answer. Do you feel like teams at science, specifically volleyball, promote a positive culture, and if so, how?**

Patricki: I do believe that all sports teams at Science promote a positive culture. Our coaches at

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Science all focus on chemistry and teamwork so it feels more like a family than a team, and that's what sets us apart from other schools. We have people of all levels joining teams and we like to make them all feel welcome.

**Q: What do you think attracts the student body to volleyball so much?**

Inacio: The sport of the game, 100%. When you're on that court, the competition and the drive is unreal. Yes, the people already on the team also have their reasons and inspiration to play, but overall, the attraction to volleyball is the love of the game overall.

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Patricki (left); Anderson (right)

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## **SUPER BOWL LVI, A BREAKDOWN**

**Andre Esteves**

On Sunday, February 13th, the Cincinnati Bengals took a trip to SoFi Stadium to take on the Los Angeles Rams in Super Bowl LVI (56). The Cincinnati Bengals played in this game with a chance to make history. A win that Sunday would've meant the Bengals won the first Super Bowl in franchise history. Super Bowl LVI was the Bengals' first Super Bowl

appearance since the 1988-89 season. The Los Angeles Rams, on the other hand, have had much more success recently, especially under Head Coach Sean McVay — the youngest Super Bowl winning coach ever — who began coaching the Rams in 2017. In his 5 years in charge of the “Mob Squad,” McVay has made it to the Super Bowl twice, having won his division in every season except 2019.

### **The First Half**

With about 6:52 left in the first quarter, Rams Quarterback Matthew Stafford found Odell Beckham Jr. in the endzone to open the scoring. The Bengals would continue trying to fight back, only mustering up a field goal in the remaining time of the first quarter. The score at the end of the first quarter was 7-3, in favor of the Rams. In a drive that would last just over 3 minutes, Matthew Stafford found



Cooper Kupp in the back of the endzone for an 11-yard touchdown. This touchdown now put the Rams up 13-3. Joe Burrow led the Bengals offense up the field, and looking to score points, had a trick play up his sleeve that had Running Back Joe Mixon find tight end Tee Higgins in the

endzone. The score was now 13-10, as both teams headed into the locker room for halftime.

### **The Second Half**

The Bengals opened the scoring in the second half where a missed face-masking call on Tee Higgins led to him scoring a touchdown. The Bengals now led for



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the first time in the entire game by a score of 17-13. In the third quarter, both teams would also add three more points each. The Bengals opened up the 4th quarter leading by a score of 20-16. The Bengals were not able to muster up much offense in this last period of the game, meanwhile the Rams added on a field goal. In the longest drive of the entire game, the Rams marched down the field looking to win the game. There was a lot of controversy, but Matthew Stafford found Cooper Kupp in the endzone for what ended up being the game winning touchdown. The game finished 23-20 in favor of the LA Rams. Cooper Kupp was named Super Bowl MVP.

**The Halftime Show**  
For many people who may have not

been interested in the game itself, this year's Pepsi Halftime Show did not disappoint. This was the first time the Super Bowl was in Los Angeles since 1993, and many West Coast Rappers came out for this special occasion. This show was headlined by Dr. Dre, and all the songs that were performed at the halftime show were produced by him. Artists such as Snoop Dogg, Eminem, 50 Cent, Kendrick Lamar, and Mary J. Blige all performed at the event, in what some people are calling one of the best halftime shows ever.

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**POLITICS**  
**Mask Mandates in Schools**  
**Victoria D Rengel**

After dealing with Covid for nearly three years, masks have become second nature to many. At the start of the 2021

fiscal year, the Governor of New Jersey Phil Murphy announced masks would be required in schools. Many teachers and parents were in favor of this since vaccination rates were low and transmission was still high. Almost 5 months later, Phil Murphy announced that effective March 7th, masks are not required in schools. This decision comes due to the fact that many students are now vaccinated. Some teachers across the state have expressed concern while others are excited to "see their kids' faces." There are also mixed feelings about the state's handling of covid safety.

Many schools in NJ closed down after winter break to prevent the spread of

COVID-19. One in four schools were closed in January in the state. The omicron variant is not as strong as other strands, but it is definitely the most contagious. Experts argue since many people were exposed in short periods of time and vaccinations are high, herd immunity is closer than ever.

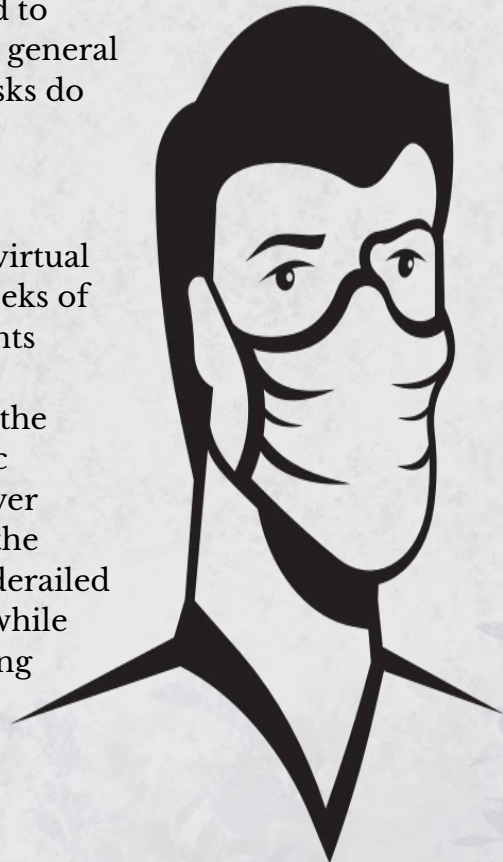
### NPS

Newark Public Schools has come out and said that they will still require masks as of now. Many parents and teachers are pleased to hear this, given the fact that surges can still happen similar to



late December and early January. Students are also pleased to hear this as the general idea is that masks do keep us safe.

NPS made the decision to go virtual the first two weeks of January. Students reportedly got “flashbacks” to the early pandemic periods. However many say that the online period derailed their learning while others love being online.





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## The Lunch Beat

Ashley Lourenco

Even if you're not the first in line, you've probably tried the school-provided meals before. Those here before the shutdown can reminisce in the memories of daily pizza (or, if you were fancy, you got the food from the right side of the cafeteria). After a good year and a half without school instruction, the cafeteria isn't afraid to show out once in a while! Let's look at what's new.

First, an honorary mention: Sunchips have finally made a comeback! **This** is the normalcy we needed a return to.

Second, the breakfast is admittedly pretty good. Pictured below are some honorable mentions.



# NJFEA'S BLACK HISTORY MONTH PERFORMANCE

Victoria Rengel

The New Jersey Future Educators Association is a club run by Ms. Davis-Parks. The NJFEA is focused on recruiting the next generation of educators. This does not mean these individuals plan to go get a teaching degree, but rather that they know how to communicate and teach others. This fiscal year specifically the club is aiming to increase diversity in teaching fields. The club meets in Ms. Davis's room every week on Thursday.

On Thursday, February 24th, the chapter held a performance to honor Black History Month.



The performance featured dancing, poems, speeches and introductions to Black and Afro-Latino Figures.

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Charlie the Charger wants you to write for the school newspaper *The Voltage*.



**Google Class Code: ybhgjh**

Join the Google Class for more information.

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***The Voltage***  
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