

# #METOO HELPS STUDENTS FIND THEIR VOICES

By Eve Gerston

Because of structured social stigmas some may find it hard to speak up in school. Through the growing #MeToo movement, many students are striving to inspire others and give them the confidence to raise their voices and make a change in their community.

"I think it's getting a lot of people involved," Clark Central High School senior Dalace Thomas said. "It's getting a lot of people to really speak up and speak out on issues that we clearly have as a country, and I think seeing it on social media is a good way to get people to really look at it and communicate with their friends."

The movement, started by civil rights activist Tarana Burke, provides women and men who have been sexually assaulted or

harassed with a platform to tell their story. "I think it's making people more open to discuss," Northwest Guilford High School junior Aidan Bennett said. "Rather than just pushing everything underground, it's all coming out to the surface, and I think that sort of visibility will make these kind of circumstances less likely."

Northwest Guilford senior Emma Welsh believes that this movement is an opportunity for students to feel confident in standing up for themselves. "To me, it's very empowering," Welsh said. "It's letting women know that it's OK to speak up instead of having to feel ashamed about it or be silent about it. It's letting women and men know that this is something that needs to be talked

about openly instead of repressed and maybe brought up years later." Welsh has seen firsthand how kids in her school are responding to the inspiration of those who are not afraid to speak their truth.

"We are finding communities within ourselves to talk about it more openly with each other," Welsh said. "I've known people who've become more confident about discussing it rather than feeling embarrassed by it. I've had conversations with friends where we talk about what would happen in certain circumstances, how we would treat each other, and how we would handle it with each other, and I've become closer with our friends that way because we've got more of a plan, and we're more prepared."



"I think women feel more comfortable to come out and say that they've been sexually assaulted or harassed. More people who have done that to women get prosecuted, and it has more attention. People, or women or even men, who were sexually assaulted or harassed are able to come out and be believed and feel heard."

**Aleyse Scarborough**  
Junior at Richard Northeast High School



"I think it's about time for change to occur. There's been a lot of stagnation in the political seam. This is just something that we've kind of pushed underground that just hasn't been talked about, and I think it's finally time for all of this to come to the surface. I'm glad it's happening."

**Aidan Bennett**  
Senior at Northwest Guilford High School



"I think it pushes our generation to be more open about things that happen, and I think our generation is already so powerful and we have so much courage to speak up that this is even more empowering for us."

**Emily Meevly**  
Senior at Stratford High School

**92%** of people in a 2016 survey said they experienced **sexual misconduct** and did not report it.

**11.2%** of students have experienced **rape or sexual misconduct**.

Among **undergraduate students**, **23.1%** of females and **5.4%** of males have been raped or sexually assaulted.

According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network.



# IT IS NOT OK