Downes and Dr. Rose Soapbox Starts:

Students were shown videos of last year’s District 20 Soapbox Expo peer and younger peers. After they analyzed themes, speaker stance, moves, and props, they were given a list of potential Soapbox topics to inspire their Soapbox speech design.

Ariana Arias:

An issue which concerns me is mental health. Ever since the onset of the Pandemic, we as young persons have learned to become accustomed to being in isolation. We have had to seek social remedies for that isolation in different ways. The internet has been one way we have sought to deal with isolation. While adults and kids know that the internet can be vile and be unsuitable for younger kids, still many kids, myself included have resorted since March 2020 to relying on the internet to help with isolation issues. This reliance on the internet has harmed so many persons’ lives, including my own. But as a kid, I have not had the opportunity to speak out on this mental health issue, because many adults will react to my words by answering: “You’re just a kid.”

Mayada Ahmed: I am passionate about discussing the issue of war. Innocent persons die almost every day just because of a conflict. Countries often enter into war, because one said something and then the other reacted to that statement. Their anger escalates. Then it transforms into actions like dropping bombs and using guns. They do not pause to think about all the innocent people who die as a consequence of these actions. Why? Imagine what a different outcome there would be, if we had peace. Why can we not have peace, not war?

Ermine Toussaint: My issue is climate change. This also entails environment sustainability. Our earth is in the arc of the iceberg. If we do not act soon, there will be nothing remaining of the earth, but gases. The ocean has been ruined by oil. Many earthquakes have occurred. Persons have been trapped underground. No one cares about these events. Some say they are not true. This climate change is actually happening.

Nayeli Saldivar: My issue is rent deadlines. As someone who lives in an apartment, I fear for those who cannot pay their rent on time. If they do not pay their monthly rent, these tenants will get evicted. Many do not have a job. This prevents them from paying their rent. If they lose their apartment home, where will they and their families sleep? A homeless man sleeps outside in my neighborhood. No one helps him. Even people who have money to help him, just pass him by.

Jaden: Homework is my issue. Homework causes stress. We already have too much to do at home already. This additional homework load is just representative of stupidity. That is my opinion. It wastes our time in our homes. It is school impinging on our lives at home. We have less time to spend with others at home. That is why homework is my soapbox concern.

Genesis Lopez: My issue is walking on the streets of my Brooklyn neighborhood. As I walk home with my brother, I worry that someone might kidnap us. I also get anxious when strangers on the street look at me and at my brother. I have a weird feeling about the way that they look at us. My fear is that these strangers are planning to do something bad to us. To be honest, I also fear the homeless persons I pass on the street as I walk my brother home.

Nushaba Nashim: I have several concerns or issues. I am not that much of a social person. I find it hard to speak to others. In addition, I am passionate about the issue of suicide. Persons should not feel alone in this vast world. When they do feel isolated, they get depressed. Their emotional self is in poor shape. Depression’s causes are bullying and discrimination. We must act now to prevent people from feeling alone. Depression is dangerous.