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# The New Trier News

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## Dressing inconsistencies: school spirit or disruption

by Katherine Rhea

Costumes are allowed and encouraged at New Trier during Homecoming Spirit Week and Halloween.

However, costumes are still not allowed for seniors on the last day of school, even though their purpose is to show pride, school spirit, and celebration, according to the administration.

New Trier Assistant Principal for Administrative Services, Scott Williams, distributed this year's guidelines for New Trier student's Halloween costumes to all New Trier faculty.

According to Williams, students are not allowed to wear ethnically or culturally stereotypical costumes, masks, face paint that covers a student's whole face, sexually suggestive costumes, or bring scooters or roller skates.

If students do not comply with these rules their costumes will be confiscated.

"Normal school rules also apply to student's outfits during spirit week," said Williams,

"It cannot be distracting from the educational environment and it cannot have drug or alcohol references or excessive references to violence."

Erin Guder, senior and Pep Club President, said, "Faculty does have to approve spirit week dress up days. There is a board meeting held prior to that week to discuss plans for homecoming and dress up days."

According to Williams, senior costumes are confiscated because there is a different attitude that seniors have on that last day of school that could make for a unsafe environment.

"Unfortunately, over the years, we have had a number of students who dress up on that last day of school and also have a party mentality. It disrupts the school day when they engage in behaviors that are disrespectful to the educational environment for the two thousand other kids who are still in school," Williams continued.

The administration believes that Halloween costumes, while disruptive to an extent, do not turn into a mob mentality type of event.

"I don't find them [Halloween costumes and spirit week costumes]

distracting at all. I love when students of such a larger school are able to connect by dressing up. It unifies us. Sometimes my classes will take five minutes to get started because we are talking about costumes but what class starts on time?" said Guder.

According to Williams, Halloween is an individual event that does not bring a party atmosphere into the school.

"If we start to see students on Halloween chanting in the P-Stairwell, then maybe we would have to ban Halloween costumes. But until then, I see no equivalency with Halloween and the seniors' last day of school," said Williams.

Guder agreed, saying, "A few years ago on the last day some seniors damaged a large amount of property. This can be viewed as a result of the groupthink that happens among students when dressing alike. But for the administration to judge following years based on one group of seniors' actions is unfair."

Confiscating costumes is effective. According to Williams, over the years the administration has attempted to send a message to



Seniors Sarah Abrams, Jessica Jeon, Katherine Mayer, Kevin Slowey, Erin Guder, Amy Andrew, and Jeremy Lee posing during Homecoming Spirit Week denim | Abrams

students that, while the last day of high school is exciting and enjoyable, the school cannot become a party environment.

"Students have plenty of other

opportunities to celebrate graduation, whether that be with their families, the graduation ceremony, or at the amazing senior party that is thrown the night of graduation," said Williams.

## When team bonding goes bad



Sayreville High School, the latest epicenter of a hazing scandal | AP Images

by Julia Patton

Hazing has once again gathered national attention. This time the school in the spotlight is Sayreville War Memorial High School in New Jersey.

The hazing resulted in the cancellation of the entire football season and, according to the New York Times, took place in late September. This national story developed further when the freshmen, who were hazed, accused the older players of several disturbing crimes.

The hazing acts ranged from reported sexually suggestive acts to physical assault to sexual assault. In a letter written to the school and community, David Weitzel, the Sayreville War Memorial High School's superintendent, said, "Our inquiry determined that students new to the team were expected to participate in several initiations that were both humiliating and inappropriate."

These hazing acts were reportedly committed by several upperclassmen, some of whom were dealt criminal charges. The New

York Times reported that, on several occasions, four freshman students were outnumbered and assaulted.

After these events came to the attention of the school board, the remainder of Sayreville War Memorial High School's football season was cancelled. In addition, according to Fox News, the school's head football coach George Najjar and four of his assistants were all suspended by the Board of Education. This was decided in a meeting attended by over 100 community members.

The school community has also descended into a level of unrest. Students have expressed their anger at the freshmen for coming forward. Other community members were convinced of possible racial profiling, upset by the fact that all seven accused players were black. The team, according to the New York Daily News, was 70-80% Caucasian.

New Trier itself has a policy against hazing. The school's Extracurricular Code bars "Bullying and intimidation, hazing, and harassment of a written, verbal, physical, or sexual nature; including

but not limited to hand written, computer generated, or spoken words," according to the 2014-2015 Guidebook.

Consequences for this type of violation of the code vary, but usually result in a minimum of some sort of suspension from the student's extracurricular activities or sports.

In the beginning of 2012 the New Trier community saw a similar turn of events when several members of the Maine West boys soccer team were charged with misdemeanor and battery after an alleged hazing came to light.

One thing known for certain is that this hazing has created a rift in Sayreville's school community, not only causing uproar among teachers, parents, and community members, but also, according to the New York Times, tension among players who are trying to figure out who told the administration about the incident.

Many of the students initially accused of the violent hazing brushed off the claims by making it out as a joke, or something to bring the team closer. This prompted questions of how far students should be allowed to go with "bonding" and how serious schools should be in dealing with and preventing hazing.

With all of the tension that hazing can create, not to mention the physical and emotional harm that the hazed students underwent, perhaps it is time for all schools to have more strict policies against hazing.

"I feel like football won't be the same here in Sayreville," said a Sayreville senior interviewed by the New York Times.

## The deadline that can make, not break you

by Ben Portnoy

It's that time of year again. As seniors continue to finalize their college applications, they are also posing the annual questions about Early Action (EA) vs. Early Decision (ED).

The fundamental difference between the two is that for Early Decision, one can only apply to one school and, if admitted, must withdraw all other applications. Early Action, on the other hand, is a non-binding option, submitted to demonstrate interest.

"It gives the student, depending on the school, 10, 15, to 20 percent boost in your chances to get in [to a school] if you go Early Decision," said New Trier Post-High School Counseling department chair James Conroy.

In general, state schools will offer EA, contrary to private schools, which tend to offer ED.

While many schools offer EA, ED often causes the most stress for students. The issue of signing a binding contract often drives students away from this option.

One of the issues that has arisen with Early Decision is that colleges and universities are beginning to fill up their classes with Early Decision applicants.

"The problem you have to remember is, 10 years ago most colleges admitted 15 to 20 percent

of their kids Early Decision, some of them now are at up to 50 to 60 percent," said Conroy.

On the contrary, the non-binding nature of Early Action makes it especially appealing. Early Action generally entails an earlier deadline than regular decision, but it also notifies applicants earlier.

Early Action deadlines also generally correlate with scholarship deadlines so it behooves students to finish their application by the EA and ED deadlines.

There are schools that offer another alternative to ED and EA: Single-Choice Early Action, which is a combination of both Early Action and Early Decision.

In this case, students tell a school that it is their number one choice. Schools such as Tulane and Stanford both offer this type of application. However, what Single-Choice Early Action entails, varies from school to school.

At Tulane, if one chooses Single-Choice Early Action, the student is not allowed to apply to any other private institutions, therefore demonstrating your interest in Tulane itself.

"It depends upon you as a student," said Conroy. "There are students who sit there and say 'I cannot make this decision on Early Decision.' That's fine, let's move on."