



The New Trier News

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Students pursue dreams through alternative schooling

While sometimes hard to navigate, students find that alternative schooling is worth it.

by Sarah Zhang

While most students decide to stay at the same high school all four years, a small group has decided to take an alternate route, one that can take them to another state, or even out of the country.

According to Gerry Munley, Assistant Principal for Administrative Services, around 10 to 15 students have approached him in the past year, interested in this kind of schooling.

While not all interested students end up taking part, Munley said that the more well-designed and popular the program is, the easier it is for students to be able to go.

"We've been sending kids to some programs for a long time, so we know them very well. Some of them are brand new programs that we've never heard of, so that may take more effort."

Effort is a large part of the transfer process, said Munley, but it's unique. "It really depends on the student and the program they're going to, and what the student has already completed here at New Trier. For some students it's difficult, depending on the actual courses they have or have not taken."

For senior Victoria Tucker, a



Senior Stephen Stearns immersing himself in the Chilean culture during his year abroad | Stephen Stearns

participant of a Spanish exchange program used before by New Trier, doing an exchange program her sophomore year was well worth the effort.

Tucker attended a public high school in Badalona, Spain. Her transition from the North Shore to Badalona wasn't easy, "It was harder than I thought it would be to get accustomed to the Spanish way of life. It's a very different culture and there is so much about a culture that you have to learn."

Senior Mia Neumann decided

to attend a school closer to home, with a differently structured program.

Neumann transferred to Oxbow School in Napa, California, to begin a rigorous art program.

Her decision to transfer was driven by her ambition, Neumann said, "While I was happy with my experiences in the art department, I knew that a semester at a school like The Oxbow School, where I could devote my time and energy to my portfolio, was most important for my senior year."

Pursuing a dream is a common

thread among these students. Senior Stephen Stearns said his year abroad in Chile was all about the Spanish immersion: "I really wanted to reach a high proficiency in Spanish and the best way to do that was by living in a foreign country. I love languages and taking 40-minute classes every day in school wasn't getting me where I wanted to be."

The schooling for Stearns and Tucker was similar, and much like a school that could be found near home with a block schedule. Neumann's schedule is much different than other

high schools in the area.

"We start big projects that last 3-4 weeks, with general themes that guide our learning. Every day, I have three hours of studio time, and in the afternoon I have three hours of either academics or gym class."

All three said that they gained a lot from their experience, whether making friends or more experience in a career field they're pursuing.

Tucker said, "I loved being able to develop so many friendships that I wouldn't have otherwise been able to form. I learned so much about their culture, myself, and the world."

Regardless of the diversity in programs, the reasoning behind students participating in such schooling centers around making their high school experience their own and in gaining experiences they never would have been able to otherwise.

Stearns said of his love of going abroad, "If you get the chance, study abroad as early and often as you can. Since I studied abroad in high school, I'll get to go through this amazing experience again."

Neumann spoke to making her high school experience truly her own, "If you feel like you don't belong, then you should take the initiative and find a way to get what you want out of the four short years of high school."

Homecoming craze hits new heights

Re-scheduling the dance causes stress for students and organizers

by Anna Ferguson

The Homecoming Dance, usually held in late October, has been rescheduled to Oct. 3 and has put a strain on both the organizers of the dance and those planning on attending.

Homecoming was moved up this year because of the construction project New Trier is currently undergoing.

The school adopted a condensed schedule this year in order to make next summer a long one so that the construction can progress as smoothly and quickly as possible.

Because of this condensed schedule, many annual school events have been moved up, including Homecoming.

Pep Club, the club behind the Homecoming Dance and this year's 'Candy Land' theme, has been working to have everything ready for the unusually early dance.

Bridget Butterly, the sponsor of Pep Club, said this year has been more stressful than previous years in terms of planning the dance.

"The theme we're doing this year is a lot more do-it-yourself. With the beach theme from last year, we were able to buy a lot of the decorations, but this year we have to



With the condensed schedule this year, Homecoming has been pushed three weeks earlier to Oct. 3 | NT News Archive

make most of them ourselves."

The rescheduling of Homecoming has also had an impact on the student body. Typically, before Homecoming, there is time before the craze sets in. Not this year though. "It felt like as soon as we started school, people had already started talking about Homecoming," senior Bella Miller said.

Homecoming is a stressful event for students to begin with. Long gone are the days when the only planning that went into the dance was coordinating the boy's tie with the girl's dress.

Today, if someone decides they

want to go to a dance, they'll have to find a date, find a group, pick a theme (if they're a junior or senior), decide where to take pictures, organize transportation, pick a restaurant to go to before the dance, and find an afterparty.

The pressure of organizing the evening, along with the everyday stress of school, can serve as a catalyst for arguments among groups and couples.

"Dances bring out the worst in everyone," said senior Brendan Loftus. This sentiment has been echoed by many students during this preparation period.

"Even discrepancies over themes create tension," said Miller.

It's no wonder that Homecoming's earlier date has students scrambling to organize everything on time.

Students are already stressed over getting the hang of their schedules, navigating the college application process, and keeping up with their social lives, so the stress from organizing Homecoming is unwelcome.

"People are still trying to get the feel of school and all their classes, and Homecoming just adds to the stress of everything," said senior

Taylor Kwok.

In some cases, the struggle to keep up with the rush to organize Homecoming and get acclimated to school has driven students to extremes. "I think it's too early because people haven't gotten to know the people in their new classes. Like I barely even know my date," said junior Helen Fagan.

Dances are always stressful events, but the rescheduling of Homecoming this year has only added to the stress inherent to all dances. Despite all the stress surrounding the dance, however, students are still looking forward to it.

"Preparing for Homecoming is stressful but I think ultimately it's worth the stress because you get a really fun night with friends at the end of it," said junior Matt Mastrapa.

Homecoming Spirit Week

- American Monday
- Team Tuesday
- Wacky Wednesday
- Throwback Thursday
- Class Color Friday (Seniors: Green, Juniors: Blue, Sophomores: Gray)