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To sleep in or not to sleep in: debate over late start proposal

With an emphasis on sleep, admin hopes to reduce stress with weekly late starts

by Nadia Jaikaran

The New Trier School Board is planning to vote this month on implementing a 75-minute late start once a week in the 2019-2020 school year to ease stress on students and allow them to be more well-rested.

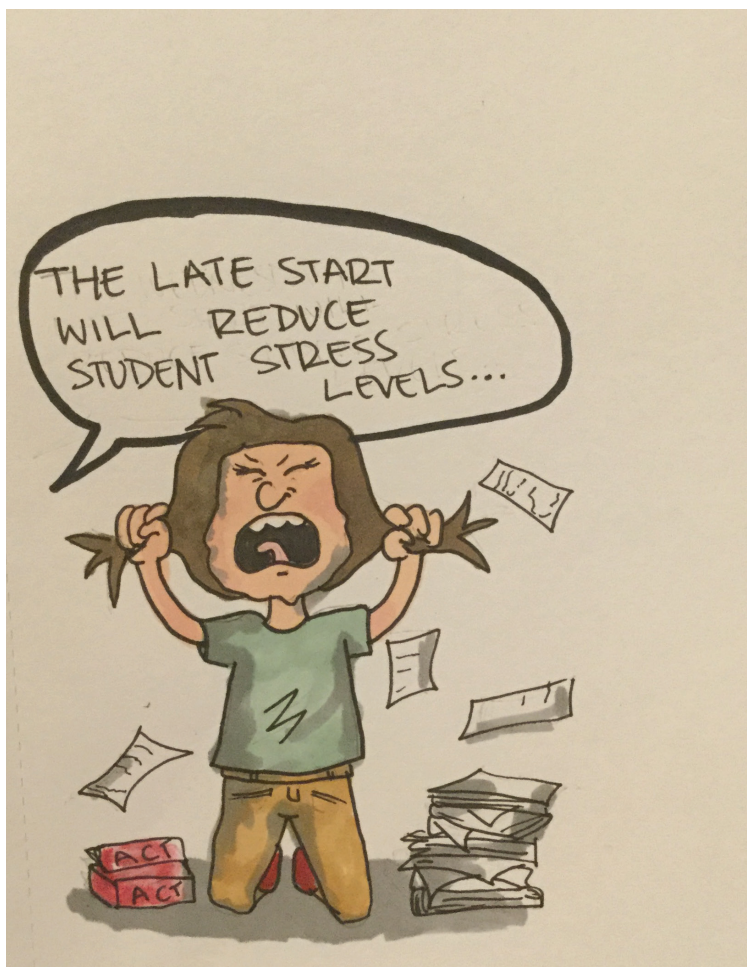
The "late start Wednesdays," which would allow students to start at 9:30 am at Winnetka and 9:10 am at Northfield, caused debate at the School Board on Oct. 16.

Members questioned whether the new schedule would decrease valuable instruction time and have asked Superintendent Paul Sally to get more feedback from the community.

Being at such a competitive school, students often push themselves with classes and activities. Because of the pressure of these responsibilities, sleep is a concern, which health classes emphasize.

According to the National Sleep Foundation, 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night are crucial in order for teens to function best, yet a study found that only 15% of students reported sleeping 8 1/2 hours nightly.

"About 75% of New Trier students get less than 8 hours of sleep every night, so we know it's a huge issue," stated health teacher Andrew Horne. "Sleep is the foundation of everything that we need to be fully functional, healthy human beings, let



Some students worry that late arrival will not help with stress | Liebovich

alone good students. And so the fact that 75% of our students are working below the baseline to be the best student they can be is troubling."

Sophomore Abby Finch weighed in on why students work below the baseline, "I think students at New Trier believe that finishing homework very late makes them more successful."

Senior Maddie Malueg supports the late start. "I think it's a really nice way to break up the week and it would let kids make sure they get at least one decent night of sleep and that would really help."

Sophomore Susie Shaker added, "I think it will allow us to be more awake for school and help us pay attention. It would allow us

to balance our sleep schedule if we stayed up late the night before."

Horne believes it's more than just about sleep and anxiety. He thinks NT should take into account academic load, homework, and extracurriculars.

"You have to think about how late teens practice and maybe if they're taking an early bird class. You have to think about the schedule of students and what they can actually fit in a 24-hour period and still have those 8 hours of non-negotiable sleep," stated Horne.

Junior Mekah Brown, like many students, believes the school just needs to cut back on homework.

In the FAQs section of an email sent to parents, the administration wrote, "The school is continually reviewing the role of homework to ensure that it is meaningful to student learning and reasonable in the amount of time it demands from students. The school has phased in homework-free breaks over the past several years, and the 2019-2020 calendar will explicitly name these days for students and parents."

While a weekly late arrival was presented last week, there are still many details and logistics to be worked out, such as shuttle bus and Early Bird schedules.

The most popular issue among the school board, according to Assistant Principal for Administrative Services Michael Lee, is the concern over loss of instructional time.

"You go from a 40 minute schedule to about a 33 minute schedule," Lee said. "That is time lost in the day where you compare that to our current schedule right now. We

did a study where it only comes out to be 1 and a half classes [lost] per semester."

Junior BJ Moses-Rosenthal is concerned that the late starts will increase homework.

"The late arrival would give teachers an excuse to assign more work because I know a lot of teachers complain there isn't enough time in a day," said Moses-Rosenthal.

In the email to parents, Sally wrote, "Our teachers have experience with shortened periods at times during each year, and they have the tools to develop effective lesson plans for that amount of time. We believe the benefits for students in both stress management and more collaboration among their teachers will make up for the time spent out of the classroom."

The plan for Early Bird depends on the class. Science classes will meet at 7:00 am on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Early Bird music and KW classes will meet at the current times with the substitution of Wednesday as the day off.

The administration is working with Metra and Pace to optimize the schedules for students on Wednesdays. More information with respect to the late arrival will be released within the next few weeks.

As the School Board plans to vote on Nov. 19 on whether weekly late arrivals should be added to the 2019-2020 calendar, Sally wrote that the proposal, which aims to give students and staff additional time to manage homework, sleep, and other aspects of their lives, "represents the culmination of a process that began several years ago."

Bright Pink assembly educates only girls adviseres on early detection

Cancer awareness organization founder talks to junior and senior girls

by Sofia Papakos

On Oct. 16, New Trier partnered with Bright Pink, a national non-profit organization, for a girls junior and senior advisory assembly, focused on early detection of breast and ovarian cancer in young women, raising questions on the school's position in not including male adviseres.

Lindsay Avner the founder of Bright Pink was recently named as one of the most influential "Women Doing Good" by SELF Magazine.

"One of the things that is incredible and different from generations of women before us, is that we have the chance to not only know our risk, but to do something about it," said Avner.

"There are so many things in life that we can't control, so teaching somebody what their risk is for breast and ovarian cancer and then help them understand what they can do differently is such an amazing opportunity and gift," said Avner.

Already, Bright Pink has raised more than \$1.3 million dollars and in 2010, was named the No. 1

Charity in Chicago by Chicago Scene Magazine.

However, many students questioned why only girls adviseres attended the assembly.

Sophomore Shane Michelon said, "Even though breast cancer, in most people's minds, relates only to females, it really influences everyone, which is why I think both females and males should have been included in the assembly."

Senior Kai Reinhard agreed and added, "More often than not when people think of who gets breast cancer, they think of females, who are the majority of victims, but New Trier needs to recognize the importance of everyone understanding the causes of breast cancer, how to check for it, and the fact that males can also get it. A lot of men, including myself, don't know enough about it to even check for it or just be more aware of it."

Addressing this discrepancy, Senior Girls Advisor Chair Susie Paunan said, "The reason behind not including boys wasn't because we didn't want them to be a part of the assembly, but more so a logistics component. It's unrealistic to fit the entire student body in the Gaffney auditorium."

"Also, Bright Pink has mainly focused on women's physical health and detecting symptoms of breast and ovarian cancer early on. If we included boys, the entire program



Lindsey Avner, Patricia Sheridan, Madalyn Kenney, and Susie Paunan sported pink for the assembly | Paunan

would have to be altered to fit everyone's mentality," added Paunan.

Junior Girls Advisor Chair, Patricia Sheridan said, "In theory, having an integrated all gender assembly could have worked, just the individual aspect in structuring women to support each other, would have changed. I believe boys can still be impacted by it, especially if they have sisters and moms. I just think this particular assembly for Bright Pink, the main concern was helping young women acknowledge the disease."

Although male adviseres weren't included in the assembly, the school has found other ways to

increase breast cancer awareness this month by encouraging various sports teams, including the field hockey team to wear pink.

"We've been doing this the past 4 or 5 years. I just think it's important we spread awareness throughout our team to show other teams to get the message going and in the end raise money," junior field hockey player Camille Scrine commented.

Scrine's teammate, junior Francesca Caruso, also noted the importance in "showing our support to those affected with breast cancer, which touches so many people."

In addition to sporting bright pink gear before and after their

games, Caruso noted "that by wearing and selling T-shirts for the program, we raised both money and generated curiosity. Lots of people would ask what connection we had to the shirts and what organization we were donating the money to."

According to Sheridan, as students continue to contemplate their futures for college and careers, Avner's personal story-- undergoing a double mastectomy at 22, the youngest woman to do so at the time-- "really encourages women to be proactive in reducing their risk by looking at their family history, diet, etc. and being more active in knowing their bodies."