

# the NEW TRIER NEWS



## Poli Sci classes increase engagement before election

Classes focus on election process through action and discussion

by Tia Rotolo

With the election on the horizon, the political science class offered seniors chances for involvement in local campaigns through action and education.

AP Political Science used to just be for students looking to be future politicians. The upcoming election, many seniors have taken the course for an individualized understanding of politics.

Andrew Zilka, a political science teacher, acknowledges the predetermined political beliefs of students.

“One thing we talk about is political socialization or how your views are developed. The number one thing driving this is your family,” he said. “I enlighten students through our discussions.”

The election makes the class more interactive for many students. Senior Carly Duris took Poli Sci to get educated on government as a first year voter.

“The whole class is so much more interesting since I can vote this year,” she said. “Everything we read is relevant to me. Sometimes, during debates, candidates will discuss



Political science students in the Waukesha Democratic Organization's office getting trained on canvassing | Twitter

cases and legislation that we had learned about in class that day.”

But the class doesn't stop with daily discussions of the election. The class has recently begun a service project that goes to advisories to inform students on the importance of voting and give brief overviews of politicians and their policies.

Senior Kelly Keenan loves the opportunity of informing her peers. “We've had a few opportunities to learn about each candidate's campaign specifically,” she said. “We just began our recent voting project in which we go around and present to advisories about the different candidates for all the federal and state elections to inform students who may

or may not be voting.”

This is only one of the service projects that Political Science has implemented. Last week, for the first time, classes went to Waukesha, Wisconsin to campaign locally.

“I think the field trip gave real world experience that reflects what it's like to participate in politics, more than just voting,” Zilka said. “Students were able to see people who dedicated their entire lives and careers to the campaigns, which is especially interesting for the many students interested in politics.”

Senior Niko Gjaja recognized the impact of the field trip. “The election is much more of a local effort than people think,” he said. “You get

to see what people are doing at the local level and further, as a national effort. I have a deeper appreciation for just how much effort goes into campaigns that isn't acknowledged or seen.”

The field trip also addressed ways for ineligible voters to get involved in the election. Zilka addresses the multiple ways to participate and make a difference.

“We stress that even if students can't vote, there's a lot they can do like campaigning, talking to parents, and going door to door. Our hope is that they remain politically involved even if they can't vote,” Zilka said.

For Keenan, who can't vote in the upcoming election, the class still

remains interesting.

“Not being able to vote doesn't change my perception of the class because I know who I would vote for if I could vote. We are all still very active in class discussions about candidates and the election,” Keenan said.

While most discussions are balanced between republican and democrat perspectives, some right-leaning students hesitate to share their views.

Senior Louis Shaw said, “My teacher does a really good job of explaining both sides without bias. Regardless of the teacher's attitude, there is a hesitancy for students who support Trump to share their views in discussion.”

Duris agrees that the occasional right-wing comment can receive backlash. “The class can feel overwhelmingly democratic at times. It can be scary to share a more right leaning opinion during discussion,” Duris said. “But it is really interesting to see people so passionate about liberal ideals, it's definitely changed the way I look at government.”

But the class maintains support of all points of views. Students all agree that they'd be at a loss with the election if they hadn't taken the class.

“The class does a great job of exploring perspectives that wouldn't be explored,” Shaw said. “If you didn't take the class and partake in discussions, you wouldn't be able to digest all of the election.”

## Unisex single bathrooms pave way for change

Bathrooms allow alternative facilities for all students

by Amelia Lytle and Ben Morrissey

As the conversation about gender identity and safety becomes more prominent, New Trier students and faculty are embracing the new unisex single bathrooms in the school.

“It allows for students and adults to have an option. They now can have an option that is not far away from instruction,” Winnetka Principal Denise Dubravec explained.

Single bathrooms existed near the Gaffney Auditorium, but with the new construction the administrators thought it was time for these bathrooms to extend to more accessible parts of the school.

*“I can't speak for entire student body, but I wouldn't judge someone for using it.”*

These bathrooms now exist on the first and second floor near the entrance of the school, and are available for students, staff, and guests.

A main consideration when installing these bathrooms was for the safety of the students using them.

At Palatine High School, a

group of parents asked for the assimilation of unisex bathrooms to support people of all genders. There was a public dispute over a transgender students' access to bathrooms and locker rooms, which sparked the conversation across the nation.

The federal government pressured the district to allow the student access to the girls locker room.

“We stand committed to the basic principle that no student should be left out, treated differently, or stigmatized because of who they are,” the group of parents wrote. “We also strongly believe that discrimination towards a group of students hurts the entire District 211 community.”

Students had mixed feelings about using the new restrooms because of what others might think.

“I can't speak for entire student body, but I wouldn't judge someone for using it. The majority of the student body wouldn't bat an eye,” senior Duncan Holzhall said.

Senior Austin Miranda explained that “there will not be any issues with face to face bullying when people see other people going into these bathrooms, but there will most likely be some gossip that will negatively impact people who use these bathrooms.”

The unisex bathrooms are new and that has caused some concern over the potential reaction of students after seeing another student come out of the unisex bathroom.

Due to the separation of these bathrooms, a student may feel



Located on the first and second floor, these unisex single bathrooms are open all day for students' use | Zervas

singled out by using them. However, many students said they would feel comfortable using the bathrooms and would not feel judged by others.

More unisex bathrooms are being built in public spaces and that has helped people be more comfortable with their existence.

Schools in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Illinois have created unisex bathrooms or single stall bathrooms as the Obama administration has called on public schools nationwide to allow transgender students access to the bathroom that matches their identity.

This nationwide awareness

of transgender issues are causing changes to take place in schools across the country.

To accommodate the growing needs of students, schools of 2016 may be vastly different than the schools that exist even 20 years from now.

As unisex bathrooms become more common in public places such as Starbucks and Target, schools are following this lead and building more of these facilities to try to accommodate their student body.

Dubravec discussed how important it is to think about what kind of student body a school has and

how having these bathrooms would affect a student's day to day life.

“I think they need to think about what works for their school. But for New Trier it is a great opportunity to allow students to have this option. They need to think about providing options and how it will allow for a safe environment,” Dubravec said.

The reaction from the student body over the new unisex bathrooms is mostly positive. Students believe that a safer environment for students and more options for everyone will result from more unisex bathrooms.