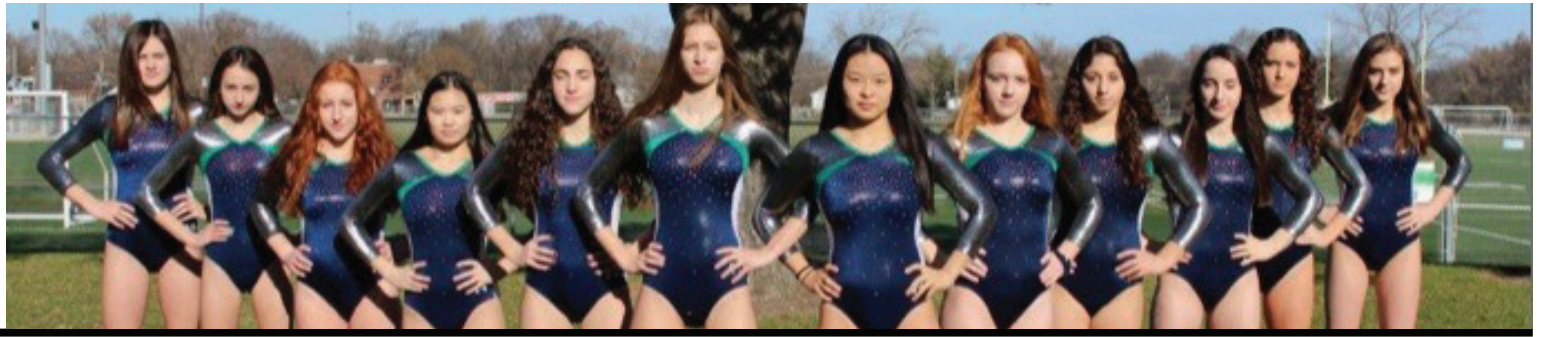


# the NEW TRIER NEWS



## IL to decrease P.E. requirement, NT unchanged

by Claudia Levens

A bill that could loosen Illinois' daily Physical Education requirement has prompted discussion concerning how it will affect schools statewide. For New Trier, changes to the KW system seem unlikely.

Bill HB0440, which was introduced in January by Rep. Jeanne Ives, amends the current school code to say that physical education "may" rather than "shall" be provided to students. As a result, it will be up to individual school districts to decide if and to what extent they want to offer physical education to students. The bill also would allow waivers or exemptions for students.

John Gilchrist the Kinetic Wellness Department Chair, along with other new trier administrators, has been attending meetings since October to evaluate what this would mean for New Trier.

"The administration has always been supportive of our curriculum, so the meetings have mostly been about getting on the same page and deciding that this really isn't going to have an impact here," said Gilchrist.

In addition, Gilchrist pointed out



Junior Trevin Hernandez works out after school in the fieldhouse | Thakkar

that junior and senior interscholastic athletes are already exempt from class when in season, and further exemptions could affect student's participation in the compulsory health curriculum- an issue not discussed or altered in the bill.

"Certainly the hope of daily KW classes is increased physical activity, but it feels like health is really valued among students anyways. I'm an athlete, and I work out on my own time, and sometimes KW feels unnecessary", said junior Maddie McGregor.

KW and health teacher Andrew

Horne pointed out that the benefits of P.E. stretch far beyond simply being physically fit. "There's the social-emotional aspect, the academic advantages, increased motivation and confidence that it builds," he noted. "If schools do physical education the right way, which we try to, then kids should have it every day."

Not just Horne has expressed these sentiments. From the White House to local school districts, public officials and educators have extolled the benefits of physical activity, and Illinois has been at the forefront in requiring physical education daily

for students: it is the only state that requires physical education for all students K-12 every single day.

In response the bill, Illinois Education Association has solidified its stance against the bill and has subsequently launched a campaign in support of defending the status quo of daily P.E.

Supporters of the new bill don't necessarily challenge the health benefits of physical activity as expressed by Horne and IEA. They acknowledge that these benefits can only be procured if P.E. is administered properly with adequate funding and argue that in many places throughout the state P.E. has been an unfunded mandate.

The Illinois Report Card of 2016 shows that nearly 1,200 schools reported having to cut physical education days from class schedules, citing problems with staff or facilities that prevent them from offering daily courses.

It also indicates that just slightly more than 60 percent of Illinois schools reported complying with the law by providing PE all five weekdays, leaving almost 40 percent without it.

Gilchrist pointed out that while P.E. is hard to fund, all classes cost money. Schools will still have to pay for teachers and resources for a class to replace P.E.

Not to mention, P.E. classes typically accommodate more students than a usual class. "Because class sizes are so large at the high school level, it raises the question of what do you do with all the students in those classes," said Gilchrist. This could mean that the accommodation schools would have to make to fill the vacant could potentially amount to a greater cost.

Before anything is actually implemented, the bill will be sent to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules where it will be written into a law- a process that will take 90 days. There, the committee will discuss the specific language used in the bill and add clarity to its details.

The bill would affect each unique school district differently, so while it might be more reasonable for some districts, the administration agrees that here, it is not as reasonable and therefore unlikely to change anything.

## New class 'lights the fire' for change

Social justice class will teach students to discuss challenges and advocate for change

by May Paddor

2017 has been a year filled with a number of controversies played day in and out on the news.

Starting next year, a new class, Civics and Social Justice, will help students explore these issues.

Student Voices in Equity sponsors, Todd Maxman and AnnMarie de Serpa, created this class in hopes of inspiring students to be a part of bigger conversations.

"Civics and Social Justice will fulfill the civics requirement but it's focused on other ideas current ideas of social justice. It's really social activism combined with an academic approach to civics", said Maxman

To combat the polarization of perspectives, Maxman and de Serpa plan to ensure exposure to all points of view.

According to de Serpa, the idea of the course is to look at multiple perspectives and have students look at policies, court cases, local issues, and national issues. "At the end, they will need to make a decision about how they view it."

Civics and Social Justice isn't just Maxman and de Serpa's creation, but the creation of the entire Student Voices in Equity club.

"For the last four years, we have been working with a really active group of students and our student group Student Voices in Equity," De Serpa said.

The idea came from a group of

very vocal students who thought that there was a lack in the curriculum that looked at social justice issues."

One of their members, junior Isabel Cox, said, "The members of Voices had input regarding the content of the class, and our sponsors modeled the class to teach and improve the skills that we develop in Student Voices."

According to senior member Jose Chavez, there was talk about having more students experience what members of the club experience.

"When Mr. Maxman and Ms. DeSerpa mentioned possibly having a full on course it, we never let it go", he said.

Student Voices in Equity helps students engage in difficult conversations and gives them an opportunity to share their voice.

Cox said, "Student Voices in Equity meets once a week and plan outreach events and projects. Sometimes, school administrators will attend our meetings to discuss current decisions regarding equity and get our input."

But the fate of the class is still undetermined.

Junior Mac Rescorl said, "I don't know if I would take the class. It sounds like it would be really interesting but it might be hard to debate such controversial topics."

However, some points of view are more widely shared than others.

"We acknowledge our bias because it's a course on social justice. We live in a system that we think can be more just," said Maxman. "We'll talk about how we can recognize the injustice in the system and address that in a place like New Trier, of privilege."

There might not be a "right" way to approach the conversation, but there should always be a conversation to address, the sponsors and members

of the club believe.

"Social justice is always a hot topic, whether the title is explicitly used or not, so it's important for people in our community to know how to effectively discuss social justice and its implications," said Cox.

There are more to these conversations than getting your point across.

"While having the intent to educate or persuade others in a controversial discussion is appropriate, effective discussion can only happen when each participant enters the discussion with the intent to listen and learn something new," said Cox.

*There might not be a "right" way to approach the conversation, but there should always be a conversation to have*

In the midst of all the controversies in our world, Civics and Justice aims to educate students in taking charge of their understanding of the world.

"This class would hopefully stimulate more receptiveness in talking, at least, about these controversial issues because having those conversations is so very important, especially now, when everyone is engaged in the politics and societal patterns of our world," Chavez said.

Maxman hopes students gain a voice. "We want to set the fire on our students to take things on, to take us on, to take the school on, to take the north shore or Illinois or the country on and say 'hey, let's make this a better place.'"

## The barrier is more than physical between campuses

The pros and cons of being separated from the upperclassmen

by Layla Saqibuddin

Freshmen Aahil Keshwani, one of fifteen freshmen on the ultimate frisbee team believes that the upperclassmen help create the team environment. The opportunity to work with sophomores, juniors and seniors is a huge advantage.

"When you separate freshmen and upperclassmen in clubs, students don't get an opportunity to improve themselves and understand what it means to be a team," said Keshwani

"Before the older kids came, the freshman would play a scrimmage, and the game wouldn't be very organized," said Keshwani.

Freshmen Eric Lui, who participates in the Science Olympiad team, believes that the separation is a disadvantage.

"It defeats the purpose of a team environment, especially because upperclassmen have more experience than us. If I could I would definitely change the way the teams are divided", Lui said.

Science teacher and freshmen Science Olympiad coach Nicole Hoefling said that there are benefits from the separation.

Some benefits that Hoefling mentioned were that freshmen have more individual time when needed. Also, unlike many other schools, freshmen here are able to compete at regionals.

Of course, there are also

disadvantages "Freshman are missing an influence from upperclassmen. Upperclassmen tend to have more experience, and sometimes students listen to each other more than adults," said Hoefling.

Freshmen starting quarterback, Eric Hernandez, believes that it's better that freshman and upperclassmen are separated in sports. "If freshmen and upperclassmen were on the same team it would be way too big to function, and we wouldn't be able to practice as much."

However, freshmen get to play with upperclassmen once a week during practice. Hernandez said, "He learned many skills from the upperclassmen in football this year."

Freshman Activities Coordinator Daniel Gross said, "That clubs that we duplicate like Science Olympiad is done to give more opportunities to freshmen."

Clubs that are parallel to those at the Winnetka campus are Triship, Girls Club, Student Senate, and Pep Club

"Our job is to give the same opportunities to freshmen that Winnetka students have. These clubs are given to freshmen, so they have the opportunity to continue the club for the next four years of high school," said Gross

Sophomore Nadia Malik, who participates in Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Comfort Dogs, and Science Olympiad clubs, said, "It doesn't matter if grade levels are mixed or not, as long as everyone who has the same interest is included."

"Essentially, New Trier does not try to separate anyone, but instead tries to give every student the same opportunity that every student deserves," said Malik.