

# ESL smooths transition to new country and New Trier

Program helps integrate students from 11 different countries into school

by Darcie Kim

Once a student is determined to be an ELL, they are given schedules that integrate the appropriate ESL and mainstream courses, tutors/in-class aides if necessary, and communication between families and the school through parent support groups and ESL College Night programs.

Senior Yoo Jung Yoon moved with her family to the United States in August 2016 from South Korea, and she can still distinctly recall the anxiety she felt on her first day of school at New Trier.

This experience was a reality for the 25 English Language Learners (ELL) in our school's English as a Second Language (ESL) Program, who moved from 11 different countries spanning all corners of the world to become students at our school.

Yoon remembers feeling lost in the midst of a close knit student body.

"A lot of people here have been friends since junior high. When I first walked into my sophomore advisery, I was surprised because everyone seemed to know each other and it was hard for me."

When an ESL student is introduced to the school system, they are immediately flagged and tested for English proficiency to be



ESL students posed for a group picture in 2017 after seeing a play and having lunch in the community | Yoon

placed in a range of ELL classes or mainstream classes.

For Touchanon Thammavijitdej, a senior who moved from Thailand May of 2016, his largest struggle was his limited ability to communicate with his peers.

"When I moved, I didn't have a lot of English skills," he said.

Similarly, sophomore Ekaterina Sukhotskaya, who moved from Moscow, Russia in July 2017, said that overcoming the language barrier and adjusting to student life at New Trier was a difficult change to make.

However, she expressed

gratitude towards her teachers in the ESL Program.

"My teachers have been very helpful and whenever I'm confused, they try to explain things and find information for me. They go slowly when they explain concepts to me and use simple English," said Sukhotskaya

The predominant struggle ELLs face during their transition into English speaking classes is keeping up with the speed of native English speakers and learning a new set of vocabulary.

"I still struggle with speaking

and it's hard for me to compete with other American kids. Sometimes I get nervous to participate in class, but I just try to confident," said Thammavijitdej.

This difficulty with vocabulary persisted for Sukhotskaya even in her math class. On her first geometry test of the year, she received a bad grade because she had been unable to keep up with her teacher's explanation of critical concepts.

Despite this setback, Sukhotskaya refused to give up and went in to see her teacher multiple times before the next test to make sure

she performed to her full potential, and she ultimately received the grade she wanted on the next test.

Yoon expressed similar sentiments, "Even though I may be comfortable with math, solving word problems was especially hard for me. Especially in science and history, a lot of the vocabulary is hard to understand."

It's also difficult for many students to ask for help while overcoming the language barrier,

"There are a few students in ESL 1 and ESL 2 who have advisers who don't really help them and because we, the people in ESL 3, understand their struggle, we try to help them. But a lot of these younger students push away from our help because they feel uncomfortable accepting it," said Yoon.

Although these three students may have come from three separate countries, a common thread among them is their resilience and willingness to learn in their new environment.

Despite a formidable language barrier, the ELLs have fought to adapt to a new culture and curriculum. The ESL Program offers a variety of services to help ease ELLs and their families into the American school system, but this transition is undeniably difficult and should not be underestimated by other students.

"There are so many things I wouldn't understand if I had to take regular classes right when I moved here, and I'm really glad to be a part of the ESL Program. I wish teachers and students could be more understanding because we're trying our best and many Americans would also struggle if they were in our place," said Yoon.

## What happened to the marching band?

Anti-war sentiments led to end of program in the 70's

by Connor Caserio

As football advanced into the first round of the state playoffs, students may have noticed that, unlike most schools in the area, New Trier does not have a marching band.

Throughout most of the early and mid 20th century, New Trier had a marching band that performed at football games and other whole school events. Despite this history, the school decided to shut the program down in the early '70s.

Pep Band Sponsor Matthew Temple said the school chose this course of action because "the community felt like the marching band was too pro-militia."

Modern marching bands evolved from the traditional military bands of the 19th century.

Through military style uniforms and commands such as "forward march," bands today preserve many features from this early military past.

During the Vietnam War, which was one of the most controversial American conflicts, anything military-associated was heavily scrutinized.

It is no surprise that the school thought the marching band was too militaristic.

One might expect the controversy of the Vietnam War to have resulted in a mass elimination of the American marching band. Yet, New Trier stands out among high schools and colleges for getting rid of its marching band.

"People complained a lot

about the noise of a marching band rehearsing outside at 8 o'clock in the morning," said Music Department Chair David Ladd, pointing to the close proximity of the Winnetka campus to local residences.

For a number of reasons, New Trier has been without a marching band since the '70s. The biggest administrative push to have a marching band again occurred when the school was advertising for his position, Temple said.

"The administration was really hopeful that they could start a marching band again, but the further they discussed it with the music department, they determined that it was not going to be a feasible idea."

The administration identified the current structure of the music program as the most important reason for why starting a marching band was not the best idea.

Unlike most schools, New Trier's jazz, concert band, and orchestra programs take place during the school day.

Once the day is over, most musical Treverians are involved in a sport or other extracurricular activity.

"If we started a marching band that rehearsed primarily after school, I don't know if enough kids would be available to do it," said Temple.

The schedule of sophomore jazz band member and cross country runner Lincoln Crowe reflected on this logistical reality.

"I think [a marching band] would be a good experience, but most New Trier students and faculty don't have any more time to spend on a marching band without sacrificing something else in their day," said Crowe.

The obvious solution to this

issue would be making marching band a class, but this solution has its problems too. Over the years, the department's current curricular programs have enjoyed much success, and it would be hard to cut back on any of them in order to create a curricular marching band.

"We have a huge, really vibrant jazz program and so that is sort of our marching band," said Ladd.

Some community members feel that the department's curricular emphasis on the jazz, concert band, and orchestra programs reflects musical elitism.

Senior Allen Saakov said that he believes the music department feels "we're above a marching band."

In 2007, New Trier was named the National Grammy Signature School, an award given to the best high school music department in the nation. From Carnegie Hall to the Sydney Opera House, New Trier musicians have performed at prestigious venues across the world.

Critics have good reason to believe an elitist attitude may play a role in the music department's decisions.

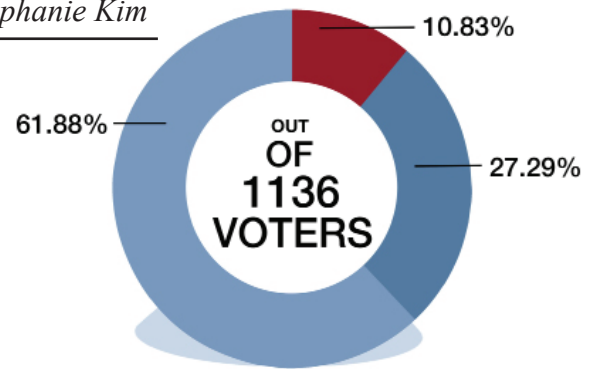
However, the department strongly refutes these criticisms. They point to the above reasons for why they do not field a marching band and emphasize that they have an extracurricular Pep Band, which performs at home football games, pep rallies, and basketball games.

Temple said that most fans are more interested in the atmosphere than a marching band. "They don't really care so much whether people are marching on the field. They just want music that is adding to the festive atmosphere."

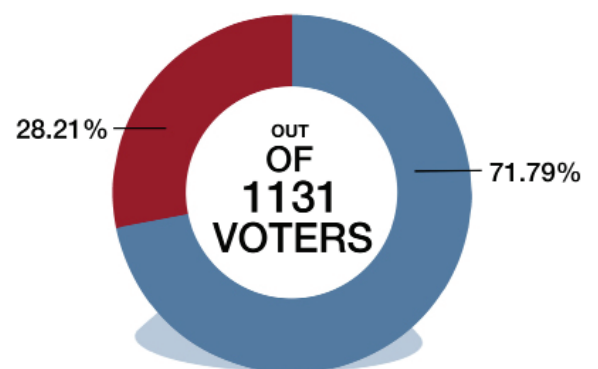
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## Results of the mock election

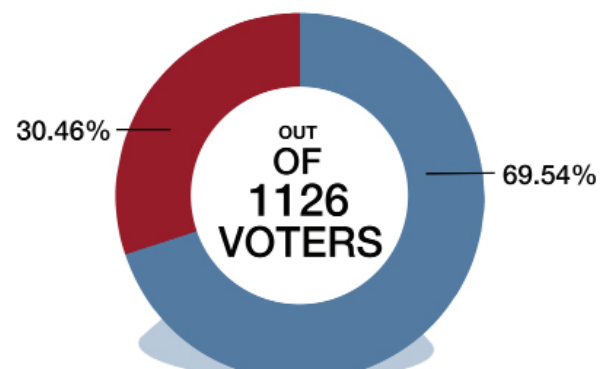
by Stephanie Kim



★ BUBBA HARSY (LIBERTARIAN) ★ ERIKA HAROLD (REPUBLICAN) ★ KWAME RAOUL (DEMOCRAT)



★ JOHN ELLESON (REPUBLICAN) ★ JAN SCHAKOWSKY (DEMOCRAT)



★ DOUG BENNETT (REPUBLICAN) ★ ERFAD SCHNEIDER (DEMOCRAT)