

## *14. Teen Declaration of Independence*

We the students of America deserve more rights than we have today. We are not getting all of the rights that we need to thrive. We must learn to stand up for ourselves and fight for our right to sculpt our future. The structure we are expected to live by is unbearable and must be changed. Now is the time for us to act.

We the teens of America deserve the right to be taught subjects at the pace we need it at. Many classes move at a very rapid pace, making it hard for some kids to catch up. For example, in advanced chemistry nearly the whole class was not capable of understanding a chapter; however, the teacher proceeded on with giving out assignments and a test. While some kids do understand it, others are struggling. Nearly all students have had an experience where they feel embarrassed for asking a question or asking for help, which is unacceptable. Teachers must focus on students individually and listen to what they have to say about how fast they are going. Students will have to learn to speak up more and not be afraid to ask them to slow down.

We the teens of America deserve the right to have open campus lunch. School lunches are non filling and bland. Students may have an allergy or an intolerance to school food. There is only one other option for lunch if you don't like or can't have what the school offers, that is cold lunch. If you don't bring cold lunch or eat the few things that are offered you don't eat at all. Cold lunch may be nice for some but others have the same old peanut butter and jelly sandwich every day. Students love change, so why not give some space for it? If we were to be able to go to other places such as home or subway, we would be saving the school money on food and expanding our budgets for other needed things. Supporting local businesses such as sneakers could help out with their funding as well. Students that have a registered drivers license may be able to drive themselves or take along one other student, with approval, to go eat off campus.

We the teens of America deserve the right to be administered less homework. We spend nearly 8 hours a day in school working and learning new things. Humans brains aren't fully developed until the age of 25, yet we are pushing so many concepts and ideas into 14-18 year old brains. Each class has different topics they are learning, different assignments, different tasks, and yet somehow we are expected to grasp them all like it is nothing. Students go home after school and can spend so many hours on end working on one subjects homework, and then they have more to worry about as well. Classes like algebra have homework every night, no matter what after school activity or family situation we may have. It is disrespectful. When teachers see us working hard in class day after day don't you think we deserve a break? For those that slack off in class and mess around, they must make up the lost time at home. However, there will be no homework for the students who behave and try hard in class.

We the teens of America deserve the right to have things other than structured grades determine our WIN levels. WIN levels are determined by our grades that we have at the exact moment the staff determines they want to change them. There was a time levels were coming out and i had a C in a class because I was sick and had not made up a test yet. The specific teacher puts zeros in the grade book for any task not yet completed, therefore I was red level. Not even 24 hours after levels were determined and grades were looked at, my grade went up to an A. If a kid that gets all A's on their report card and is an honor card holder is red level, there is a problem in the system. Teachers do not understand how important it is to never have a grade below a C in the gradebook, simply because of WIN levels. They always say that it'll be fine and it'll be back up to an A soon, yet they don't get how crazy structured levels are.

We the teens of America deserve the right to have the staff member value us as people, not robots. Teachers tend to view us as a job or simply nothing. They belittle us. Staff has such high expectations for us as students and when we don't meet those expectations, we are punished. Honor cards set a slate for students to meet in order to be viewed as a "smart" or "good" student. As everyone may know grades do not determine whether someone is a good student or smart. Some teachers are expected to teach at a bell curve grading system. Bell curve grades look like a few students have an A, most of the class is around a B-C, and a few are at a D-F. Isn't it a little unfair that teachers *want* students to be failing their class. We are humans. We have feelings as well. We have jobs, families, and duties to do outside of school. As students we must learn to value our teachers opinions and be kind to them in order to receive the same treatment for ourselves.

We the teens of America deserve the right to have different members of the community be a part of the School Board Committee. The School Board Committee has very large, impactful change on the future of our High School. They decide whether someone gets expelled, detentions, or suspended as well as typical things to do with school. If we constantly have the same people deciding what our future is made up of, there will be no changes at our school. Students thrive on changes and get bored of having the same routine every single year. If new members become a part of the School Board we will have to be open to new ideas, new people, and more changes. In the bigger picture, new concepts could be very helpful and fix any problems other members were unable to figure out.

We the teens of America deserve the right to have sports count as physical education credit. Physical education is a 3 semester required course students must take to graduate. In those classes most students do not want to drain all of their energy before practice. Students barely break a sweat, if they do so, in Physical education class. Sports are much more engaging and challenging and they also take up out of school time. Students could spend that hour of working out studying a subject that prepares them for college, such as chemistry or calculus. Each sport counts for one semester of credit, therefore if you played in sports year round all three credits

would be covered within a year. The credit will still be required for the students that do not participate in sports.

We the teens of America deserve the right to have a better grading scale. There are no opportunities to get anything above an A, no matter how high the percent. 100-92% is an A, 92-80% is a B, 79-70% is a C, 69-60% is a D, and any below that is failing. Grading is very strict here in the United States and is causing major stress on many students. There has been a very large increase in mental illnesses in teens specifically because of school. Students are pressured to do good by everyone around them, even their peers. Now if someone gets all F's and D's people claim they are dumb and useless but their percentages in their classes shows otherwise.

We, therefore, the students of America demand the right to be heard and command our problems to be fixed. Many things should be changed now for our own well being and for future generations. All humans must have value and be listened to. As teens, we must be able to study subjects that will gear us towards our future career, have open campus lunch, have no homework, have more fluctual WIN levels, have the staff value us, have new members of the School Board Committee, have sports count towards our physical education credits, and have a better grading scale. We may no longer ignore all of this societies issues, we shall fix them instead. None of these changes are out of our reach and will help our school, students, and future.