

24 Teenage Declaration of Independence

As early as age fourteen, a person is held legally accountable for their actions in a court of law in the United States of America. Yet, that same person who is to be legally treated as an adult, is not given the social or legal *rights* of an adult. It stands to reason that if a person is considered responsible enough to be held liable in the event of a criminal accusation, they would also be mature enough to be treated as adults in their day-to-day lives. We, the adolescents of America, demand respect, freedom, and proper accommodations.

Public restrooms should supply free menstrual products. Menstruation is a bodily process that cannot be impeded, much like urination or defecation, and sanitary products that purify it are necessary. Toilet paper is considered a necessity and it is provided in every public restroom across the nation, so why aren't these necessary sanitary supplies? Toilet paper, a necessary restroom product, is provided even though people buy it for their homes as well; so why aren't these necessary sanitary supplies? We're not asking for the Quilted Northern or Charmin of menstrual products, but *something*.

Students, employees, and visitors of public high schools who have proper licensing should be permitted to drive any type of registered vehicle to public school as long as the vehicle does not damage school property, the vehicle is not a safety hazard and, if it is being parked in the school parking lot, takes up but one parking space. For example, if the weather is permitting, one would be allowed to drive a snowmobile to and park on the high school grounds. However, that same person would not be allowed to drive a large tractor through the manicured grass in April or May which would undoubtedly tear up/damage the lawn.

Phy. Ed./Gym classes should NOT be mandatory in order to graduate high school. I've asked *many* times over the years why these classes are required and the most common answer seems to be 'because they expose students to teamwork'. That's nonsense! We, as students, do not need to be forced into taking courses that alienate individuals so that others may act as brutes for 25 minutes in the name of 'teamwork'. English, Chemistry, Physical Science, Biology, Health, Civics, History, Psychology, and *many* other required courses and electives at SVHS and nearly every other school in the nation expose students to *direct* teamwork whereas bogus Phy. Ed. 'classes' only come close to any sort of teamwork when they put students into groups and call those groups 'teams'.

Tardy policies should not exist in public high schools. Students may be tardy for a multitude of reasons; some literally just have car trouble and cannot help running late! As long as the 'tardy' student is not disrupting the flow of the class or falling behind with their schoolwork, no "authoritative action" should be taken. Penalties for tardiness in high schools should not be concrete, but circumstantial. There are situations that one cannot help and that were bound to happen, just with incredibly bad timing. If a student gets X amount of tardies (amount dependent upon the school), they fail the class. That is incredibly unfair and does not accurately represent

that student's abilities, accomplishments, or work ethic in the slightest. Instead, one should look at the student and not the tardy mark and try to find ways to *help* if the student is continually late before enacting any sort of punishment.

If a teacher is unable to come to work for a week or more, there must be a QUALIFIED substitute to take their place or the class and assignments will count as "unfinished" until a solution is reached. This has been an issue nearly every year of my high school career, including this year. When the set teacher is absent for an extended period of time in a place of higher education, it is detrimental to the students, their families, and other teachers. As of now, it is perfectly acceptable to have the substitute be under qualified and have skills in classroom management that are mind bogglingly poor. The students' questions do not get answered yet the assignments keep piling up. When an entire class starts to approach the point of failing the course, that should be a sign that a change needs to be made in how they, the students, are being "taught".

All members of faculty need to be respectful of every student. I don't care if you're a month away from retirement, be respectful. You are a public servant. Every single person employed by the school is an adult and some really need to grow up and act as such. There needs to be punishment for those few who are blatantly disrespectful towards students/ other faculty members. These people are creating a hostile work environment for everyone and instead of doing their jobs and finding solutions to problems, they are creating new ones as well as amplifying existing ones. Do not assume that just because we aren't adults, we will accept being treated poorly or unjustly. This is not to say that students will not respect faculty; we are simply asking to be treated decently.

Students should get credits for working outside of school if they work 70 hours or more per semester, up to two full credits during their high school career. Working is the "class" that prepares students for adult life more than any other. Some kids *need* to work and piling homework onto that can be incredibly difficult to handle. If they are gaining credits, that job can be treated just like any course that the school offers and the student could then either use one class hour as a/n [added] study hall or have the full school day with the added job and earn all of their credits necessary for graduation much sooner.

If a student is not behind in any class (i.e they have no missing assignments or poor grades (with the exception of a missing teacher)), they should be able to leave ten minutes into W.I.N time. The ten minutes allows their "homebase" teachers to take attendance and get everything settled, but after that the students who meet the criteria should be permitted to leave the building. Some students complete all of their assignments in class or can easily do them at home without falling behind and have no need for any of eighth hour but are forced to sit being incredibly unproductive or distracting other students who *do* need W.I.N time.

We, the adolescents of America, **assemble and appeal** to the authoritative powers and members of our country and modern society to treat us with respect and dignity, supply us with

the proper accommodations of modern America, and to treat our schools less like penitentiaries and more like the healthy educational environments that they should be.