



Jesse Conlin Staff Writer



P.R.I.D.E. is a very beneficial class to all students at DHS. Some of the assignments may be out of date or seem pointless, but still, P.R.I.D.E. is beneficial. Each grade learns things that are going to help them after high school. When you graduate you should know things like how to write a resumé, goal setting skills, how to fill out a college application and financial awareness. P.R.I.D.E. prepares us for a world that, before high school, not many of us thought about. However, P.R.I.D.E. is not only focused on life after high school.

A lot of students are very busy after school with sports, work, volunteer time, arts, and let us not forget that all important social time. Add that all up and there is not much time left for homework. On passing days P.R.I.D.E. gives you about half an hour to get homework done that may not have gotten done the night before or that there may not be time to do that evening. Freshman Anna Whiteman said, "When I forget to do homework I can do it in class." Let's face it; every one has forgotten something at one time or another. Many students may occasionally forget to do their homework. So, you can use the passing days to get it done. You can also go to a different class to get help on a specific subject. Teachers want you to understand what they are

teaching. You can tell your teacher you are having trouble with a certain area and they will give you a P.R.I.D.E. pass. The good thing about these passes is that when you go to the other class you do not have 20-30 students all learning the same thing at that moment. The teacher has more one-on-one time with you. Teachers give group projects sometimes, and because of conflicting schedules it may be hard to get together and get it done. However, in P.R.I.D.E. you can all meet and work on your project together. There are numerous clubs at DHS. NHS, Interact and Spanish club are just a small sampling. P.R.I.D.E. gives us a chance during the school day to cut away from academics and go to those clubs. There is a club at DHS for almost everyone, and they look

good on a college application. All the clubs focus on different interests, and many interesting people join these clubs. Nevertheless, everyone may not be able to attend after school clubs. You can meet people in these clubs that have some of the same interests as you. These people could become very good friends of yours. There are also the assemblies we have for homecoming. To make time for those we eliminate P.R.I.D.E. That way we do not have to drastically cut classes. Without P.R.I.D.E. we may have to do something else with those assemblies, or just eliminate them altogether. Also, do not forget about the school announcements. These contain a lot of important information, like college scholarship opportunities

sports scores, club information, birthdays and much more. Freshman Kaitlyn Reil said, "It's a time for the whole school to watch the announcements." High school classrooms tend to be very fast paced and without P.R.I.D.E. students would have to watch announcements during one of their classes. That would take away from instructional time, or free time they sometimes have at the end of class. Even though the things we learn in P.R.I.D.E. are required not just by Mike Foster, imagine what would happen if we did not have P.R.I.D.E. There would be 35 extra minutes in the day. What would happen to those 35 minutes? Most likely they would make all of the classes longer. Imagine your least favorite class. Imagine that class longer than it is now. Not a nice picture.

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P.R.I.D.E. is easily one of the biggest blow off classes in high school. Students seemed to agree that it is mostly the assignments given on work days that are unhelpful. They waste time and have little to no benefit. But on the other hand, they find homework days very useful. If you have homework that is. Sophomore Chelsea Bozzo said, "A couple people sleep," and that a lot of people talk in her P.R.I.D.E. Class. This is not the only instance of slackers in P.R.I.D.E., classes around the school gab and goof around playing games like tic-tac-toe or hangman on the white boards. Students asked via survey said that the class would be better if there were more interesting assignments to do or if assignments were eliminated all together. A few teachers disagree. In Sheryl Ezze's senior P.R.I.D.E. class, students learn how to take care of themselves after high school. They learn how to do their taxes, pay for insurance, etc. She finds these assignment days most helpful versus homework days when many students do not choose to go to other teachers for help or to do their homework. Ezze says that passing days might be helpful for clubs but she also said, "I don't know if that's something that should be part of the curriculum." She

feels that if the students care enough about the club, they will take time out of their schedules to meet before or after school. Juniors Jennifer Hogg and Brad Despina both agreed that P.R.I.D.E. is boring and that no one takes it seriously. "Across the board it's pretty much not helpful," said Hogg. She said it would be better if there were assignments that helped students find colleges on an individual level. That way, students who are interested in a drama career won't be forced to mull through pages of business colleges or be told once again that they should go into the arts. Still other students think P.R.I.D.E. is a good thing and say that the class would be better if it were an hour long instead of just 30 minutes. Simply getting through announcements sometimes takes up to 10 minutes. During this useful time students are supposed to sit quietly, listen and aren't allowed to do homework or study. These students find that the class is a good time to get things done - homework, studying, going for help - but others and many teachers think that no one actually uses the time given. Some say that P.R.I.D.E. would be better without activity days. Some say that activity days are the only days that students get things done. Still others say that the class should be longer. No matter what change is being pushed, P.R.I.D.E. does need to change.

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Now that school back in gear, students are feeling the pressure, specifically on their back and shoulders. Textbooks are being handed out and backpacks are filling up. Freshman Zack Trago said, "They're ridiculous and my shoulders just kinda popped one day." Many students would agree that the heaviness of the books in their bag cause their shoulders to ache. Freshman Carly Leppala said, "My deltoids get sore a lot." Although the freshman this year are the first to hopefully accomplish Michigan's new high school requirements, they're not the only ones stressing about the weight of their many textbooks. Senior Billy Baker said, "If I wear my backpack too much my shoulders slump." According to the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) more

than 40 million students carry backpacks to school and more than half of them may be carrying too much weight. Students carrying backpacks that are too heavy will likely suffer from neck, shoulder and back pain. It also affects posture and breathing. The growing awareness of potential long-term problems to students has resulted in more medical research, more coverage of the issue in the media, and proposed legislation in at least two states to address the issue of backpack weight in relation to student health, the AOTA suggests that a student should be carrying 15% or less of the student's body weight. A student who weighs around 150 pounds should be carrying a backpack no more than 22.5 pounds. Teachers and parents may suggest to get a backpack with wheels, but seriously, no one wants to be seen walking around with a backpack on wheels. Therefore, students will have to deal with the backpack

they already have and find new ways to lighten up the heaviness of their textbooks. Senior Connor O'Keefe said, "Using your locker helps." It may not be easy for students to stop by their lockers before every class. But doing so would easily take away much of the strain from heavy textbooks. It would also be helpful for students to figure out what materials they need for the next day and leave everything else behind. This may require some help from teachers letting their students know if they need to bring their textbook to the next class. School textbooks seem to not be much help and they are very expensive. High school textbooks range from around \$60 to \$100, in price. Not only are these textbooks, heavy, boring and expensive, but in some cases they are very hazardous to a student's body. According to www.kidshealth.org, if a student's backpack is too heavy, the

weight of it can create a force that pulls the student backwards. This can cause the student to bend forward at the hips, arch their back and cause the spine to compress unnaturally. Teenagers will usually compensate for the extra weight by leaning forward, which over time can cause the shoulders to become rounded and the upper back to become curved. Not only is it painful, but it isn't too attractive. This website suggests that students pack their backpack with the heaviest materials closest to their back. They also suggest trying weight training, Pilate's and/or yoga to strengthen the student's core muscles, which helps prevent serious back injury. Leppala said, "It feels like I'm carrying a small person on my back all day." After a while students will start to realize that whining will not get them anywhere and complaining is definitely not going to get rid of their heavy textbooks.

Sophomore Theresia Kurkowski said, "I think we should have it so the teachers tell you when you need them." The question to be asked is are the school textbooks helpful enough to be worth all this aching and fuss? O'Keefe said, "You can get the same out of a class without using a textbook; they're really not necessary." Students should learn in a variety of different ways, instead of just reading through a boring textbook. "My textbooks are kind of helpful, but only because my homework is in them" said Leppala, "In class we use them about five days a week and outside of class three days a week." Textbooks are great for homework, but during class students should get a chance to be active in their learning and expand the way they learn during class. If students were able to pull their heads out of their textbooks during class, it's

possible they would learn more and stay awake, causing teachers to be in better moods. With new technology popping up all over the place, books are being used less and less every day. Some schools have thrown out the books and replaced them with laptops. Students need to be prepared for what is to come and a great way to prepare them is to allow more of the learning time searching on the Internet, instead of reading through an old, boring heavy textbook. It would be better for students to be given worksheets to fill out using resources like the Internet and possibly the reference section of the library. Also, the Internet is constantly being updated with the latest information on serious issues, media and history, while textbooks take time to be written, printed, and shipped to the schools that use them. The world changes every minute and for that reason so does the Internet, but textbooks on the other hand are slow, outdated and of course heavy.

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Public Displays of Affection, better known to most students as PDA, has been viewed by most students and teachers as fine, however it can be taken too far. "I think hugging and holding hands is fine but, when people start making out it just goes too far." freshman Kerissa Bradley said, "I don't think that its a major problem though in our school." Some other people think PDA is perfectly fine no matter where you are or what you do. "PDAs good and nothing goes too far." said junior Tyler Bach. Teachers that see students participating in PDA, like Bob Acre and Dan O'Rourke, have different views about the topic than the students do. "A brief hug or holding hands are okay but kissing and making out is just inappropriate." Acre said, "It is not a big issue in the school but if it gets out of hand then I speak to people about keeping PDA appropriate and usually after that they keep it more appropriate." "I think there is a time and place for every thing, being appropriate." O'Rourke said, "Hugging and holding hands is fine but kissing and

making out is just too far." "When people are aggressive in public its nasty but I haven't seen much of that at school." sophomore Taylor Canfield said, "I think kissing in fine but making out is just too inappropriate in public." So most students and teachers think that hugging and holding hands are perfectly fine but kissing and making out is too much. What if students knew that their parents were walking the hallways, would students still participate in PDA? "If people knew that their parents were walking up and down the hallways then I think people wouldn't participate in PDA. Maybe some kids would if their parents didn't mind that much." Canfield said, "I wouldn't participate in PDA if my parents were in the hallways. I think that if people's parents knew what they were doing they would flip out in their kids." Some people like freshman Leah Shooltz thin differently about it. "I defiantly think that students would still participate in PDA if their parents were walking up and down the hallways cause there are always ways of getting around them. If my parents were in school hallways then I wouldn't participate in PDA. I don't think that parents would freak out if they knew what their kids were doing in school because they are responsible for their kids and should know what they are doing on a day to day basis." "I don't think kids would do PDA because their parents would like stalk them wherever they went in school." Bradley said, "I would still participate in PDA though because my parents can't control what I do with other people forever. I also think that parents would freak out if they knew that their children were doing in school because they think that one thing lead to another." "It depends if I was going out with a person I wouldn't care if my parents saw us but, if they didn't know I wouldn't want them at school to see us." said junior Danielle Jenkins. Did you know that in the Dewitt Code of Conduct it states that students can not have any physical contact? Very vague don't you think? So does that mean we can't give people hugs or hold hands? Students at Grosse Point North High School, Buckley Community High School and Zeeland High School can not participate in public displays of affection. If the students do participate in PDA their punishment will be more than a talking to by a teacher

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So what if our school banned PDA? Would you still participate? "I would still participate in PDA if it was banned in our school because that is an absurd rule and the school board shouldn't make decisions like that." Jenkins said. "I might still participate in PDA but it really all depends who I was hugging or holding hands with." freshman Caleb Higbie said. So what do you think? How far is too far? Would you still participate in PDA if your parents were walking up and down the hallways? Would you still participate if we had a policy that banned public displays of affection in our school? You be the judge.

