

Student sharing has many flaws

Editorial

Recently, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) staff announced a new schedule for next year. Mondays and Wednesdays will always be “A” days and Tuesdays and Thursdays will always be “B” days. Fridays will be alternating.

Along with the new schedule, comes several problems and issues.

First is the complication and confusion of getting used to a whole new schedule, which is a big mistake.

This all started because a small number of students wanted to go to different schools for different classes that Bowie doesn’t have available, like cosmetology at Crockett and video game design at Travis.

But, shouldn’t it be about the other 3,000 students? We all have to adjust to a completely different schedule for less than 20 people in the south area.

The students aren’t the only ones who have to adapt, teachers have to change their lesson plans as well.

On some weeks, there could be up to five days of no instruction in some classes. This could become unfair when some students have a night to study for tests and finish assignments and others have four nights.

Another problem is the fact that late starts only occur on Thursdays. With the

new schedule, “B” days would always be cut short and teachers would lose about 200 minutes of instructional time. That also goes with having Monday holidays. The teachers would have to conform to having fewer days to teach their lessons.

This will result in teachers having an uneven amount of time with their “A” day and “B” day classes.

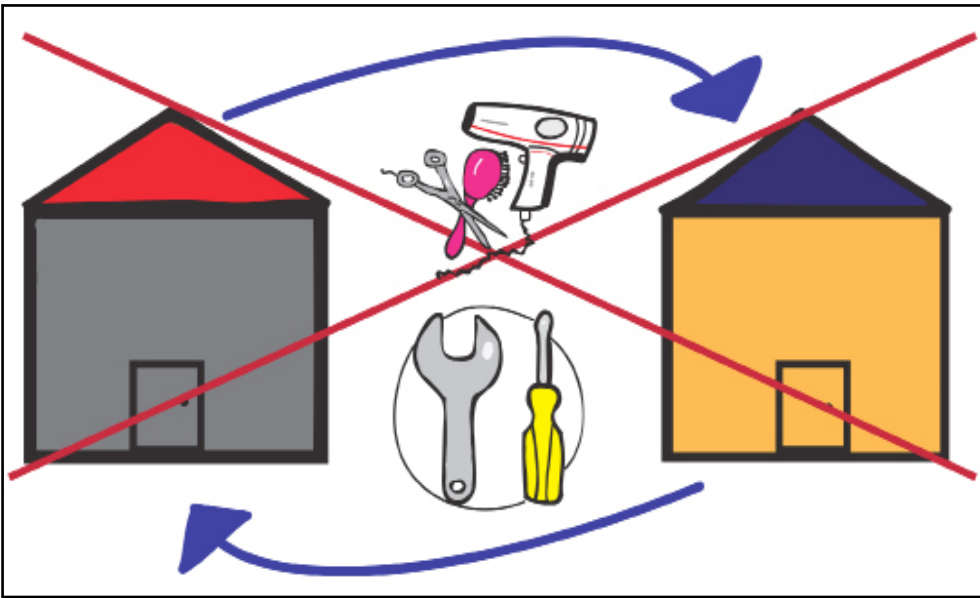
Another change for next year is potentially having Flexible Instructional Time (FIT) every day. FIT can be functional if used in the right way. It can be either a quiet place to study or a good way to catch up on missed tests, quizzes, and assignments.

In theory, giving students an equal opportunity to participate in the exchange of classes offered at different schools is a sound concept, but logistically it just can’t work.

The transportation will take a lot of working out and may have kinks that must be fixed on top of everything else.

For athletes, games occur on certain days of the week. With the new schedule, athletes will miss their “A” or “B” day classes weekly and make up the work for the same missed class constantly.

It is still being decided how the lunch period would change. Principal Stephen Kane gave all teachers the opportunity to vote on whether we have two 40-minute lunch periods or one school-wide hour-long lunch. The hour-long option would require teach-



ers to be assigned lunch duty to monitor over 3,000 students.

Not many, if any, teachers will voluntarily want to watch students, so it is highly likely that lunch will be 35 to 40 minutes.

The decision should be made based on what will help the students academically. Lunch is used by students to study and make up work for classes and that can’t really be done in 30 minutes.

If the schedule must change, the administrators should allow an hour-long lunch. An hour-long lunch would allow students to

relax, catch up on work, and it would allow seniors to go off campus for lunch, which is a privilege for seniors.

AISD administrators should also make late start days all be on Fridays and include FIT every day to accommodate for lost time.

If late starts were always on Fridays, then it would alternate between shortening “A” and “B” day classes, as opposed to always shortening “B” day classes. This would help to equalize the disparities between “A” day and “B” day classes brought about by the new schedule. ★

Letter to the editor: Re: Who’s Who needs changes

I am writing on behalf of the Who’s Who Committee in response to Justice Capello’s editorial in the last edition of the Lone Star Dispatch. While the committee did not agree with many of Mr. Capello’s opinions, we did agree that, perhaps we need to be clearer about what the award is for, as well as how the process works.

After more than two decades that have seen generations of both students and teachers at Bowie, we realize that many may be unfamiliar with exactly what Who’s Who is, and why the award was created. Thus, we created a FAQ Sheet to address questions about this unique honor.

What is it? Who’s Who is the one honor that Bowie faculty bestows annually. There may be other student recognitions made by outside entities (scholarships, trophies, medals, etc.) for academics, athletics, and community service, but Who’s Who is awarded solely by the faculty.

Who’s Who is NOT exclusively an acknowledgment of academic achievement. Instead, it recognizes students who are well rounded. Some past valedictorians and/or salutatorians did not make the final 24. Who’s Who may not be the strongest students academically, but all are leaders in the classroom and in Bowie extracurricular activities.

WW is the faculty’s recognition of 24 seniors who have made a positive and obvious impact in terms of making Bowie a great school and advancing Bowie’s culture through their contributions to the school and the greater Bowie community.

FAQ Sheet - WW Process:

- Nominations:** The entire faculty is invited to nominate senior students whom they feel qualify in academic standing, leadership, and character. The first list goes out, and if a faculty member notices that a student has been overlooked (usually because each teacher only gets to nominate five students; sponsors are allowed to nominate 10 students), faculty can ask that the missing student(s) get added to the list. That’s why there is usually a revised list within 48 hours of the original.
- Applications:** Those nominated students are required to submit three current or past academic teachers’ and two extracurricular sponsors’ names for evaluations. The students must submit a resume consisting of academic scholarship highlights, Bowie service activities, and Bowie leadership positions during their Bowie HS career. The third component of the application is one

essay about their contributions to Bowie OR how they would like to be remembered by the Bowie community.

This is the first reduction in numbers, since many students choose not to take this step.

- Evaluations:** The five faculty members chosen by the candidate evaluate that student on a 1-10 scale. Once those evaluations are submitted and calculated, the Who’s Who committee (current and former Teachers of the Year, and department chairs) meet to discuss the evaluation numbers (not the students!) and a cut is made that usually reduces the number to roughly twice the final number who will be chosen.
- Faculty Input:** A member of the committee prepares binders that contain the resumes and essays of the candidates still in contention. Those materials are made available to each department, the counselors, and the administration to read and make comments. At this point, each staff member has the opportunity to advocate for those students they believe are worthy of the honor.
- Final Decision:** The WW Committee meets and discusses the positives of every candidate in the binder. The committee

members do not know every candidate and teacher comments are invaluable. Every comment about the candidates is shared.

Each committee member votes privately and anonymously on a ballot. The voting continues until the 24 are finalized.

6. **Recognition:** The final WW recipients are recognized at an annual reception, where teachers, students & families are invited to celebrate the accomplishments of these outstanding students. Additionally, Who’s Who are recognized at the Trustee Awards Assembly. Their pictures are hung in the Outstanding Room Only in the Bowie library where they remain for four years, at which time they are placed into a scrapbook with other past Who’s Who recipients.

As a government teacher, I applaud Mr. Capello’s use of the media to attract attention to an issue that may need discussion. This is one of the finest roles of the media, that of igniting public concern that may result in more transparency and policy assessment by government.

Sincerely,
Carlen Floyd
AP US Government & Politics and
AP US History

Why can’t teens have fun?



Kamryn Bryce
Editor-in-Chief

Somewhere on the road to that vast, unnerving world that waits for us just beyond the doors of high school we lose the simple enjoyment of growing up, of just being, and trade it for gravity.

What ever happened to the sweet, smiling kids that lined the halls of elementary schools, single file, ready to take on the world one step at a time? When did we become machines, forced to perform at a standard that exceeds expectation, holding ourselves together with worn metal and rusty bolts?

I must have missed the assembly where they told us that school would cease to be the highlight in a kid’s life and become the unpaid job for over-worked teenagers that it is today.

I don’t recall my teacher’s names, the classes I sat

in every single day, or even the subjects we studied, although I know that my education was shaped by my earliest teachers.

What I do remember is the excitement I wore on my face every single day I walked through the doors of my elementary school. Now a decade later, I step out of my sturdy, white truck, juggling a mass of junk I need to bring each day, and say to myself, “just get through the day.”

One week out of the year at Lago Vista Elementary School, just a few miles from the evaporating Lake Travis, the students were treated to what I remember as the best week of the year, ocean week.

Each day was filled with something unique, celebrating the bodies of water that occupy more than 70 percent of our earth. Day one, we ate shrimp and crawfish outside in the sweet Texas air. Day two, the art teacher’s painted bright, cerulean seahorses and guppies on our cheeks. Day three, the whole school danced the electric slide in

the cafeteria, and so on.

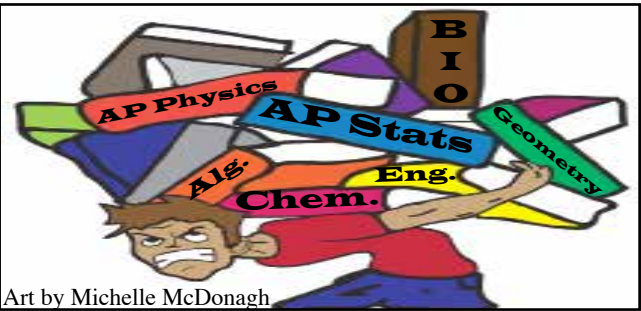
I understand that in a high school of 3,500 plus it can be near impossible to accommodate a festival like that, but on a smaller scale we have to realize what we are emphasizing as ‘important’ to students.

The pressure to be ‘perfect’, the perfect student, the perfect friend, the perfect daughter or son, is ridiculous.

There isn’t a day that passes by that I don’t question why I work so hard, why we all work so hard. I get to school at eight-twenty in the morning and sometimes don’t leave until 11 p.m. at night.

I do my homework in the period right before the class it’s due. The stress and pressure that students endure is something I always expected in college but never in high school. Teachers tend to hold our hands when it comes to responsibility but expect us to reach the moon when it comes to performance on tests and the herculean workload we have to complete.

If we stopped to appreciate that, despite popular belief, we are still just kids and every once in awhile if we celebrated the work we do or acknowledge how hard students are working just to be average then maybe so many kids wouldn’t feel left behind, like they can’t keep up. ★



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The Lone Star Dispatch is an open forum for student expression. The Lone Star Dispatch is not reviewed by school administration prior to distribution, and the advisor will not act as a censor. Content represents the views of the student staff and not school officials.

The Lone Star Dispatch will work to avoid bias and/or favoritism. We will strive to make our coverage and content meaningful, timely and interesting to our readers. Our articles will reflect our genuine objective of reporting news and will be held to a high standard of quality.

We will make every effort to avoid printing libel, obscenities, innuendo and material that threatens to disrupt the learning process or is an invasion of privacy. We will avoid electronic manipulation that alters the truth of a photograph without indicating that the photographer is an illustration.

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