

# our voice

ISSUE 2

oh, my!  
**GENERATION**



Is Genration Y  
Self-less or  
Self -absorbed?

Dear Student Trustees,

The power of the student voice is often unrealized. The opinions of you and I are passionate, diversified and intelligent. There is no doubt that today, the student perspective is the most important perspective in education.

On behalf of the OSTA-AECO Communications Committee and OSTA-AECO Executive Council, I am enormously proud to present to you the second issue of Our Voice, OSTA-AECO's official journal for student trustees. Our Voice exists to encourage dialogue between students and adults, voicing viewpoints through various forms of creative writing. Our writers tackle topics that they personally feel are essential for the students of Ontario.

This publication stands for the value of freedom of speech and active citizenship. I hope you find it thought-provoking and engaging. Our hope is that our articles will spark stimulating discussion and new ideas for the education community.

Our voices want to be heard.

Always take pride in your words and ideas,



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This issue available online at:  
[www.osta-aeco.org/](http://www.osta-aeco.org/)

**WE  
WANT  
CHANGE**



Voting, democracy, politics; for most teenagers in Ontario, these words are foreign, uninteresting subjects, and it wouldn't be surprising if half the students who have started this article have already turned the page. The reality of the situation is that these are important topics, and they must be discussed and understood by everyone, including young people. It's this crux, discussion, engagement and involvement, that the Canadian political structure functions and without the participation of youth in the system, we will inevitably corner ourselves with situations where our voices and opinions are not heeded.

The fact of the matter is that until youth become a more active and reliable voting bloc, most government officials will continue to disregard us for those in society that do consistently exercise their right to vote. It is this situation that is the basis, and unending circle from which apathy has grown and also the reason that students have continuously disengaged themselves from politics and government. In the last federal election the turnout rate for youth between eighteen and twenty-five was only thirty five percent. For a country that so proudly promotes and stands up for democracy around the world this is an astonishing trend that, if allowed to continue, will erode the fundamental purpose of democracy within Canada and cause governments to be elected that do not accurately represent the Canadian people.

It simply takes a short glance at the current federal situation regarding the reigning minority government to gain an insight as to why young people are continuing to remove themselves from the political scene. Sixty two percent of Canadians did not vote for a Conservative candidate in their local ridings during the 2008 election, yet the party was able to form a minority government that was only a few seats short of a majority. This

seemingly disproportionate representation of Canadians has lead many that do not understand the first-past-the-post system to grow apathetic, and question their reason and purpose to vote.

The government and school boards must combat this ever increasing reality by approaching civics classes from an entirely different perspective. They must work to reform the class so that students are not just memorizing facts and figures, but actively participating in community projects, and engaging in exciting, political events and discussions that are relevant to their lives. Students aren't interested in abstract theories that have no apparent meaning to their life. To continue forward with this approach to civics education is folly. It's our job as students to pressure the government to give students hands on lessons that teach students how to engage, participate, and become active citizens. This means writing letters to your board, talking to your student trustee and raising awareness amongst your peers so that the ineffective civics class that is failing to educate the youth of this province is changed.

For the health of the Canadian democratic process, students across the country must engage their government and board and work to reform the current civics education within our schools so that each and every student across this province has the opportunity to become a more active, responsible citizen. This doesn't mean that you have to become a political junkie, nor does it mean that you have to dedicate all of your time to government activities, rather it entails being aware, and gaining an understanding of the system so that democracy can flourish, and young voices and opinions can accurately be heard. To quote Barack Obama, a product of youth political involvement, "nothing can stand in the way of the power of millions of voices calling for change."

We must collect together, call for change and let our voices be heard.

*\*(All statistics taken from Elections Canada)*

# Y

by  
**MATT FONDEVILLA**

**GENERATION** *my, oh, my!*

*Do they have the skills to take on the world,  
or do they just like to think that?*

It is argued whether Millennials, or Generation Y, are selfless young people or self-absorbed beings simply out for their own self-satisfaction. Some agree that they are on a “self-esteem overload”, blaming the consistent praise from their boomer parents. These observers claim it is this attitude that will render them unprepared for the challenges of the 21st century.

**Editor’s Note:** In Matt’s last article, the idea of “Digital Kids” and their “Digital Generation” of today was expressed. “Generation Y” or “Millennials” encompass these Digital Kids. This article explains more than just the digital prowess of the current generation. It effectively explains the perception of them from others.





Photography: Cassie Valchuk  
Photo Treatment: Matt Fondevilla  
Model: Sarah Vendell

Others argue that the Millennials' expertise in new technology and high confidence puts them ahead of others in the global economy. Their twitch-speed to learn new technologies faster than their parents has proven to be useful in the work world.

**Millennials, Generation Y, Echo Boomers**, whatever you may call them, will soon be taking over the jobs left by the retirees of the work world. Canada in fact is projected to have more retirees than young workers to fill up those previously-filled positions. Millennials are sure geared to success with no stopping in sight.

However, Millennials can never understand the hardships that their parents went through. Millennials never get 'F' grades. Teachers no longer use a red pen because it intimidates students. Sports teams give out participation awards so no one felt left out. They don't have a real understanding of how the world around them works; in fact they expect the world to work around them.

William Strauss, writer of *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, argues that they volunteer more often, tend to work harder, are more socially conscious and less violent and, are more focused on academics than previous generations. He continues to state that, "They are a generation with a strong sense of civic duty, adept with modern technology, and great at teamwork."

But high achievement is not what is all cracked up to be. It does have a price. Similar to a mid-life crisis, Millennials can suffer from an early burn-out as early as 25. This is called a quarter-life crisis.

Taking an excerpt from the *Toronto Star*, one 22 year-old Torontonion, Mandy Pipher, shares her story living as a millennial.

*"At 11, she earned a part in a film about multiculturalism. From then on, she maintained a furious pace; she helped form a club giving presentations around Ontario and the U.S. about the importance of learning about different cultures, then joined the Toronto Youth Cabinet. Next, she was off to university, where she studied, worked part-time, mentored youth in Regent Park and volunteered at a women's shelter."*

In short, she had to isolate herself to understand her future plans and passion. She moved to France for a year, returned with a new goal in life and graduated with a major in English and a double minor in anthropology and political science. She describes her trouble as "...passion and energy going in all different directions...it was hard to tell what was important, [and] what I should be doing."

Many can relate to this after-school special story about deciding what your post secondary future holds, where you see yourself working in and what path will life take you. Millennials face this tribulation but under a different light. Pipher was over-scheduled, over-indulged and over-worked at such a young age and continued until she couldn't decide what to pick out as her path to follow, from all her community work, extra-curriculars and school life.

Others have criticism about the average Millennial.

University professors in Canada have noticed the new norm for freshmen. They whine, fidget and still rely on their parents for everything. The nightmarish

archetypal degenerate students come from the millennial generation. Universities have had highly successful students from high school, drop out of their first or second year because of the difficulty, anxiety or depression. Expectations from these drop outs were different from what they have grown up with in their lifetime at that point.

Other generations who work alongside with Millennials find them to be trouble. Their perception of a working millennial is a procrastinating young kid who is over-confident in their abilities and that can only achieve what they need to, whenever they feel like it. They feel that millennials are entitled and they wonder where these millennials get this mindset. Millennials feel they can change the working world into a more efficient, livable and flexible place. If their boss was to ask a millennial how they would see themselves in one year with the company, they reply: in your chair, but I'll buy a better one.

Writer of the book, *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled – and More Miserable than Ever Before*, Jean Twenge criticizes that, "The general focus – everyone gets a trophy, no one makes a mistake, and you should feel good about yourself all the time – played a role in building narcissism." She goes on to say that boomer parents have raised a narcissistic generation. Her work as a psychologist led her to survey 16 000 college students about their lives. Her findings led her to find that millennial generation is more narcissistic than those who in the 1990s and 1980s.

Her analysis also stated that they are more likely to drop out of college and suffer from anxiety and depression later in their lives



because they isolate themselves from people in their lives. This analysis included those born in the 70s, 80s, and 90s even herself.

“I would make the argument that kids in China and India are not raised to focus on themselves,” she said, “So they may be more competitive if we have too many people who are just out for themselves.” This means that it would be a tough competition for Generation Y when it comes down to finding a job because of the different mindset that other countries have. Canadian studies have shown that narcissism leads to behavioural problems like bullying and vandalism.

Perhaps this hyper-confidence is not the problem, but hyper-confused about what is a Millennial can do might be. This can lead them to become an over-achiever; trying out everything they can to find out whether it works for them.

There are other factors to consider to what makes a Millennial who they are. Latest parenting trends have shown that there are parents who are overprotecting, over-indulging and over-scheduling their kids. A helicopter parent is a term to describe this trend; they hover over their child and swoop down whenever there is a problem. Jason Dorsey, an advocator for the millennial voice and professional speaker, made an appearance on 60 Minutes and mentions that this generation will not make the same mistakes their parents made.

“I remember my dad getting laid off and all these things growing up that’s because they sacrificed for the company,” said Dorsey, “...the first reaction from me is, I sure didn’t want to do that, I’m going to be in it for me and I’m going to make it work.”

Dorsey who is a part of Generation Y, a millennial, notices this disconnects in the work world and tries to show past generations how to enable a healthy working relationship with Generation Y employees. His ultimate suggestion is to always praise them because that’s the world they have developed in.

The way a Millennial sees life is that when it comes to finding a career, they put lifestyle and socializing first because they saw their parents settle for work and work only; they do not want to settle. Millennials know there are options and that they can work more than one job in a year and still manage to squeeze in a party. It’s the matter of fact that they will keep adapting, switching, changing until they figure out what it is that works best.

Millennials have grown up to be successful. Whether it is their aim in life to become successful at work or live a lavish lifestyle with friends and family, their attitude remains debatable.

The confidence that Millennials have exerts itself more than their personality and skills. Students who are Millennials find it tough to prepare for the post-secondary education without their parents. But their ability to adapt to new technologies and being more socially-aware proves to be useful and needed in the world around them.

Their confidence can be their benefit or downfall; whether it be selflessness or self-absorbed, either way Generation Y still has yet to experience what their parents have.

## **SIGNS OF AN AVERAGE GEN Y'ER:**

1. Born from boomer parents
2. Aged 25 or below
3. *Highly* self-esteemed
4. Multitaskers
5. Technologically savvy
6. Procrastinators
7. Demanding that the world work around them
8. *Notorious* for short attention spans

# PULLING OUT OF PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION



Diversity, knowledge and progress have long been cornerstones of a Canadian identity, and we pride ourselves on our accomplishments in those fields. However, the recent sexual education mishap, which ended badly for everyone on both sides of the political spectrum, should act as a warning sign to Canadians that maybe we are not as progressive as we would like to think. Our current sexual education laws are not quite as draconian as Arizona's proposed racial profiling and anti-immigration laws, but sexual education in Ontario is currently still rooted in tradition and not solid scientific research. The Liberal government prematurely postponed their big push for expanded sexual education which would have eliminated the heterosexual-focused curriculum and diversified the types of sex taught to younger children.

The majority of backlash has come from "family values" groups which have called the curriculum, one which encourages critical thinking and

introspection, "indoctrination" and "traumatizing for children". From a personal perspective, I find the label "family group" frankly disgusting.

*If one has children who are queer or questioning their sexuality, would they no longer be a part of any **'family'**?*

*Are members of the gay, lesbian and transsexual communities stripped of their ability to form a **'family'**?*

*Why do these groups decide to impose their own beliefs on others when they could simply pull their kids out of sexual education classes?*

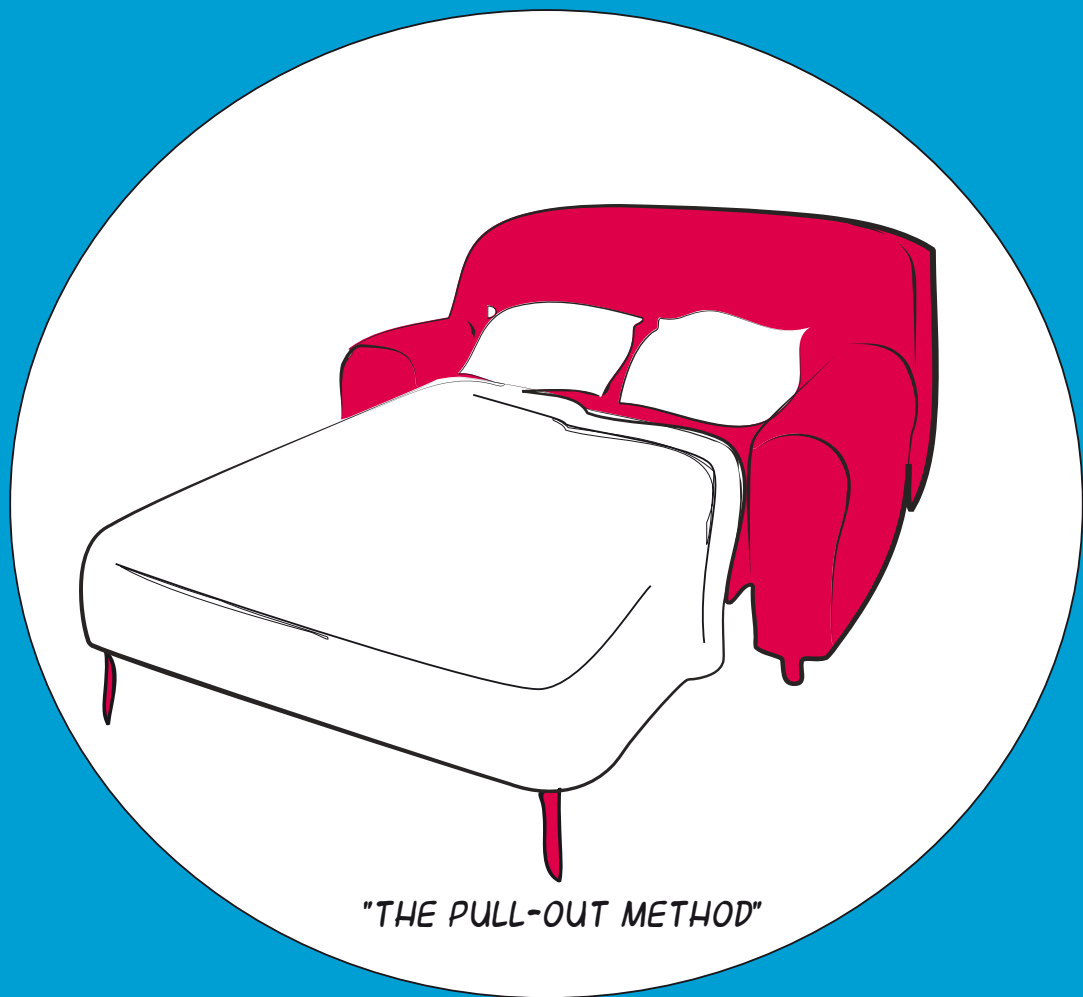
The conservative groups who have destroyed the government's (and the public's) faith in new sexual education bill ultimately seek to undermine freedom of expression and sanctity for all human life.

Not only will sexual education classes become more exciting and colourful for children after McGuinty's change, they will teach

important lessons in self-respect and critical thinking. Questioning children will grow up accepted in the classrooms with the whole spectrum of possibilities taught to them.

Even children who have less-than-supportive family or friends will at least be taught that sexual variance is OK. Sexual education in schools can act as a valuable counterbalance to what children learn on the internet or in their household environments. However, a curriculum as challenging and open-ended as this invites critical questioning, by children, of societal and personal values at a young age. They will be able to form their own individualistic definitions of what is right and what is wrong independent of the media's influence, and this skill perhaps trumps everything concrete we can teach kids about sexual education.

Much has been made of Dalton McGuinty's lack of consultation with communities, parents, and students, and his lack of knowledge on the issue itself. But the real problem was that the



government failed to clearly outline exactly what the sexual education changes would be. Thus, they lost many supporters who would have come out to fight the backlash against so-called “family values” groups of religious fundamentalists. Without ammunition to back them up, supporters of all-encompassing sexual education were left to flounder, and their hesitation gave the “family groups” a chance to conjure up false assumptions on how sexual education can damage our students.

It is now up to students of all ages to rally against archaic,

harmful sexual education. We – not parents, teachers or administrators – are the people who should have the greatest say in what we are taught in schools. I urge you to research the policy, read every relevant detail and do the government one better.

Any initiative created and led by students – whether it be a protest at a town square, a local Facebook group, or a forum for open debate – would draw massive media and, more importantly, political attention. The government *pulled out* from their vision of a groundbreaking elementary sexual education curriculum,

which would definitely have saved many lives through the spread of knowledge. But the possibility of a Canada pregnant with fear and doubt at the thought of our school systems turning our children gay or sex-addicted is closer to becoming reality.

It is our job as students who are in the system, searching for our own ways around sexuality, who must take the ultimate step to dispel sexual education myths and present Canada with the **truth**.

*The Liberal government prematurely postponed their big push for expanded sexual education which would have eliminated the heterosexual-focused curriculum and diversified the types of sex taught to younger children.*

JACOB  
BRODKA

by

# THE INFORMED STUDENT

WHY AREN'T TODAY'S  
STUDENTS AWARE OF  
WHAT IS BEING DONE IN THE  
EDUCATION SYSTEM?

*A local grade eight student had no idea that in high school next year he would not be able to purchase the soft drink and chocolate bar he had for his lunch that day from the cafeteria because of new nutritional policies being put in place.*

*This policy is one of many things that students had an opportunity to share input on.*



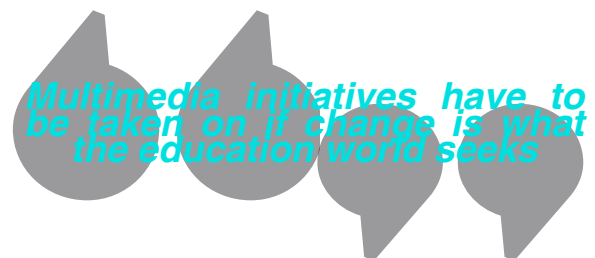
Amongst the greatest of triumphs in a student's career as a young individual is making steps towards responsibility - whether it be taking initiative when it comes to school work or even taking on a part time job and managing their own personal finances for the first time in life. What is for certain is that the youth of today have no shortage of outlets to focus their attention on. Perhaps this is where the problem lies when it comes to how informed students are about what is happening in the education system that they are carried through for many years of their lives. With so many things in life to focus on, many students become passive about what changes are being made and developed for a system that influences millions of students each day locally and across the province.

In a world plagued by media and other distractions, students sometimes forget that one of the things that should be valued in the present time is education. Should the young individuals that make up our local school communities want to aspire to being whatever type of person they choose to be in the workforce, they need to take on the challenges that the education system has to offer. Since staying up to date with music and the latest reality television series has become so prominent in the lives of many - learning becomes a challenge - even attempting to make changes to the system that provides it seems absurd.

There has always been an opportunity for students to share their opinions and ideas about the educational community they are involved in, but as of late there has been a great emphasis in Ontario to get students involved in sharing and developing what they think would make the experience of learning and living in today's schools that much better for themselves and for students to come. There are many aspects of education that students can have an impact on which ranges from nutrition to services and curriculum. Though input is welcome, students do not always feel welcome to share their valued thoughts. This is where student government and the initiative of certain individuals needs to step up. Students need to first off have access to information about what

is being reviewed for change. This needs to be conveyed in a viable way that excites students to pursue submitting what they have to say. If this information is presented to students in a creative way they will feel as though someone actually does want to take what they think and put it towards conclusive and beneficial changes. The fact remains that dry and bland surveys are not the way to approach the student body as a whole. Multimedia initiatives have to be taken on if change is what the education world seeks.

For student government, committees and student stakeholders present in most schools and across the province the goal is simple. These groups of individuals have chosen to take on a role that involves solving the problem that has been identified, making sure that a student perspective is always considered in education. They need to work in coherence with those capable of implementing change to make sure that what is being sent out to students for opinions is being done so in a



manner that is attractive to such an audience. When students are shown that they can make changes to what is relevant to themselves in this type of fashion, there is no doubt that the desired student viewpoint will be attained for the good of all those the system involves.

When the people who are working through what has been implemented come together to review what could make school not just about learning and turn it into an experience, the youth of today and tomorrow could be on a fast track to success.

Credit Recovery is an Ontario Ministry of Education initiated program that is aimed to helping students attain the credits for classes they have failed. As part of the Student Success initiative, it encourages students to stay in school at least until they're 18. Data collected has shown an 82% student success rate after this program, which is said to decrease the drop-out rates in high schools. To some, this is an excellent program of keeping students in the system, but to others, this is simply encouraging lethargy in students. "There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning

from failure." Colin Powell said. By allowing students to escape the consequences of their actions, are we ironically cheating them out of success by not allowing them to fail?

The GECDSB and WECDSB's student representatives reached a consensus that although there are positive sides to this program, further changes are necessary to truly make this program a beneficial one. The leniency of this program connotes that it's okay to miss all your assignments and fail a class because there will always be that safety net of Credit Recovery at the end of the year. A student can redo all his/her assignments and earn the

same, or even higher mark than the student who worked hard all year. This opens up the paradox of a teacher taking off 20% for a project that is a day late, but nothing for one that is technically 8 months late during Credit Recovery. Students sometimes can "earn" the same marks and credits in just a week nearing graduation.

On the other side of the argument, it is clear that the students using credit recovery could be the ones who may not be able to achieve in a regular-paced class due to language barriers, family issues, or learning disadvantages. Whatever the case may be, this program is

## Credit Recovery: *Failure is Not an Option*

by *Canada has always been a nation who gives second chances – whether be it financially through welfare, medically through universal healthcare, and now academically through Credit Recovery. Does this breed a generation that will always seek the easy way out of life?*



without a doubt valuable to those who truly need them. In all cases, however, there are ones who abuse the system. The biggest concern of course, is implementation. According to the guidebook drafted by CESBA, the number of credits granted per student and the criteria for student selection is up to the discretion of the teachers, guidance officers, and principal. "The final mark should reflect achievement of all course expectations," it was

stated, but first those expectations should be clearly defined. It is evident that not all schools are adhering to these suggestions, and this inconsistency within our school boards could become ineffective and detrimental in the long run.

The solution could range from absolute transparency on transcripts, a quota on the number of times Credit Recovery can be taken, or a specialized grading system.

Our students deserve a more structured and fair program to help them succeed, and not one which prompts them to develop lethargic habits for life.

<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Education (May 29 2006), *Student Success Commission to Focus on Greater Student Achievement*. CNW Group Ltd. (Ontario Newsroom Media Releases), R.D. 9 April 2010.

<sup>2</sup>Sklash, Karen. *Credit Recovery: Guidelines, Models, and Experiences*. Web. <[www.cesba.com/pdf/CreditRecovery-KarenSklash.ppt](http://www.cesba.com/pdf/CreditRecovery-KarenSklash.ppt)> R.D. 13 April 2010.



by  
**JOANNA  
WOLINSKI**

# Athletic Funding

## *and its Impact on School Spirit*

**A**s school boards across the province slash athletic budgets, school spirit is suffering. More and more boards have decided to focus on increasing student success, literacy rates and meeting new ministry standards. While this is not necessarily a bad thing, officials need to take into account the entire picture. Studies prove that when given access to school sports and intramurals, high school drop-out rates decrease. When you cut athletic funding, everyone loses.

Photo: Stock Exchange

School spirit is an integral and necessary part of every high school. Even students who are not on a sports team can relate to the fond memories from pep rallies, football games and cross-town rivalries. Sporting events tend to bring out the real nature of a school as a whole. However, when funding cuts are introduced, not just the athletes suffer. The entire school is affected negatively. Sports are an outlet for many troubled youth who come from broken homes. Sometimes the only reason a student is still in school is to play basketball or football. Without sports these students will look for other means such as drugs or violence to fill the void. Likewise, vandalism increases when after school sports programs are cut as teens become bored and turn to vandalism as a form of self expression.

Athletics are not only a way to keep kids involved and away from

other negative influences but they also build character and stamina. Teamwork is a natural part of any sports team whether it be varsity or intramural. Athletes benefit from a positive atmosphere of team building and hard work. Without these teams, many would be lacking the added moral values sports bring to their lives, which often do not occur in the classroom. Many do not realize that they are leaders till they are given the opportunity to flourish as one on a team.

In fact, a 2005 study for the *Journal of Labour Economics* found evidence that "leadership is not just a natural talent, but one that can be developed by participation in extracurricular activities." Continuing this phenomenon is Christy Leares, who wrote last year in Social Science Research that students who participated in sports and other extracurricular areas in high school had higher earnings ten

years later, even when compared to those with similar test scores.

The facts consistently show that when you cut athletic funding, you are essentially cutting school spirit. If your board is considering implementing these cuts, **speak up!** Raise this issue with your student trustee to be sure that it is being monitored. Become educated and informed before you take action. Find out how your high school's athletic department is funded whether through user fees, fundraising or the school budget.

Decision makers need to realize how crucial a role athletics play in the development of a student, beyond academics. School board officials need to become aware now of the direct hit on school spirit as a result of a decrease in athletic funding.

The future of our high schools are at risk and now is the time to take action.



*"How can we expect children to learn if they can't even fit inside the building?"*

*Derek Zoolander  
(Played by Ben Stiller)*

## Sizing Things Up: The Difference between Small and Large High schools

by  
**JOANNA  
WOLINSKI**

**L**ittle bear, big bear. Short kid, tall kid. Small schools, large schools. This dissimilarity exists and can have an impact on the students of the high school community. Whether a student goes to a large school or a small school, the obvious distinctions are the school occupancies and the size of the buildings. But is there something more special, a secret weapon or unique school lifestyle that one can offer over the other?

To look at the differences between small and large high schools, one must first decide what qualifies large schools and small schools as such. Though standards vary across school boards in Ontario, it is fair to say that in this setting, a small school holds around nine hundred or less students compared to larger schools that will exceed the one thousand student enrolment mark. Through this we can compare the two.



## Mini

In small high schools, the entire student body can have a large effect on the school community and the education process. Although a small population means less funding resulting in a fewer microscopes, fewer clubs and sports teams, along with a limited variety of course selections, smaller high schools benefit the

small population as a whole.

In smaller schools often I believe the chance for student participation is recurrently higher because individual students can have more impact on what's around them; as a result, children in smaller schools and their families have more of a stake in their school. There are greater chances of making a particular sports team,

landing the lead role in a particular play, being recognized for your strong efforts in your schoolwork, and clearly, gaining one-on-one time with the teacher.

The size of such schools promotes belongingness. Compared to larger schools, the atmosphere is more personalized and makes it easier for students and staff to create a bond that will enhance the learning

process. A small school has a close-knit community, and although there are fewer AP classes and fewer clubs, there are also fewer kids with whom everyone has to compete with for attention.

(

## Mondo

On the other hand, larger schools offer other benefits to their students. One of the primary arguments for large schools is the curricular diversity, or variety of classes, they offer.

While small schools may only be economically equipped to offer French, for instance, larger schools might offer instruction in Italian, German and Spanish as well. They may even offer more opportunities for gifted education, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate coursework.

Large schools generally have more to offer students in the way of extracurricular activities, too. Larger schools are placed in sporting events against other greatly populated high schools, placing them in higher tiers for local, regional and provincial tournaments. In large schools more sport interests are represented from the greater population and there is also a larger choice of team players. Beyond sports teams, large schools tend to have every club imaginable. Clubs in existence can indeed range from student government, to chess club, to poetry club, to environmental club and more. Often, if a club does not yet exist, it eventually will. Personally, in a large population, I believe every student has the opportunity to find his or her niche!

### RURAL OR INNER CITY?

Schools aren't just big or small based on the general demographics of one area compared to another. Something that remains questionable is the assumption regarding the size between rural and inner city schools. Although kept one would think rural schools would be small, sometimes rural schools can be larger in size in order to be able to accommodate for an entire rural community. Ironically, inner city schools, depending on the city may be smaller in size because of other contending schools nearby and different school boards that can factor in a decreased enrolment.

## BREAKING COMMON ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL SIZES



"WHAT IS THIS?  
A CENTRE FOR ANTS?!"

### DIVERSITY IN LARGE SCHOOLS

Another common assumption can be questioned. It can be debatable that larger schools have a greater diversity than smaller schools. One assumes that if there are more students in a school, there are more opportunities for cultural and economic diversity amongst the student body. However, some schools may offer special programs like the English as a Second Language Program that may draw more Canadian immigrants to that particular school over another. Therefore, this can result in an increased diversity of students. With an increased cultural or religious diversity, the variety of students helps those attending to adapt and prepare them for what the world outside of high school is all about.

Small and large schools have both beneficial and limiting factors that must be considered. There are significant differences between small and large high schools. Whichever appeals to those students, we must study open-minded about the stereotypes placed on certain schools. Size alone does not determine a school's success, but it certainly can be a contributing factor to the success in school of any student!



# Hogwarts *vs* ONTARIO *schools*

HILARY  
HOLMES

*by*

Bother  
Bother!





There are many similarities and differences between Ontario schools and the magical

institution that has inspired many of us – Hogwarts. It can be argued that Hogwarts students have a questionable education; the school has severe cases of cliques and stereotypes, as well as favouritism. There are many cases where Ontario institutions can consider themselves a winner when compared to the supernatural academy of our childhood imaginations. But there are also many things we could learn from our magical counterparts.

What do Hogwarts pupils learn from their classes? There seems to be a lack of curiosity and scientific inquiry in this magical establishment. In Ontario schools; this type of thinking is often encouraged. Hogwarts students never inquire WHY they have supernatural powers. They never attempt to discover the basis of magic, or how their many spells and enchantments are possible. Students never compare their world to the muggle world. They lack the curiosity to dig deeper into many common things in their society. Students never question why their humble abode is unplotable. Hogwarts pupils also never query flight, or travel. The Floo Network is never explained, and apparition is just as simple as getting your driver's license. The best description of the skill needed to apparate is given by Wilkie Twycross, Ministry of Magic official and Apparition Instructor: one has but to recall The Three D's: Destination, Determination and Deliberation. No science is included in this everyday wizard convenience! As for broomsticks, no one ever questions their human-like qualities, like reacting to a command such as "up!" No one ever attempts to think

outside the box or experiment with new spells, with the exception of the young Severus Snape using the alias of the Half-Blood Prince, Fred and George Weasley's mischievous experiments, and Albus Dumbledore who discovered the 12 uses of dragon's blood. You would think the most inquisitive of students, the one Hermione Granger, would spend her days doing more than researching historical events, looking up complicated potions and ultimately remaining fascinated with the great works of other witches and wizards. When Harry is cleaning out his trunk in the first chapter of book seven: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, he realizes that he has not yet learned how to heal minor wounds. This seems like basic magical education fit for a first year! It is easy to see that at Hogwarts students memorize material at the expense of problem solving and creativity.

A massive, obvious problem with Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is its cliques and stereotypes. Although this is a problem in Ontario schools as well, it is not nearly as blunt as it is at Hogwarts. At the academy, students are divided and labeled their very first day when the sorting hat places them in one of four houses; Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Gryffindor is well known for bravery, daring, nerve, and chivalry. One may argue that some of its members do not fit these qualifications - Neville Longbottom or Peter Pettigrew, for example. Hufflepuff is well known for loyalty, fair play, honesty, and tolerance. Ravenclaw value wit, creativity, and wisdom. Slytherin value ambition, cleverness, cunning, resourcefulness, and pure blood heritage. The kids that exemplify characteristics from two or more houses are simply placed

where the sorting hat thinks is best. Doesn't it seem rather unfair, that as soon as you step inside the castle's walls, you are immediately branded with a crest that lets everyone know your basic qualities? What an easy way to be judged and ridiculed by people of other houses that barely know you. One also must consider how your family's involvement in a particular house effects your placement. Draco Malfoy's and Ron Weasley's families may regulate how they belong to Slytherin and Gryffindor, respectively. Sirius Black is the only member of the Black family to not be a Slytherin. The only instance where we have evidence of a student having any input to their house decision is when Harry requests NOT to be placed in Slytherin. All in all, every student deserves the opportunity to request where they live, and with whom they are destined to make friends with.

In the eyes of teachers, you can see where this division of students may result in issues of favouritism, separation and inequality. It is well known that Professor Snape dislikes Gryffindor students. He openly degrades them and seizes every opportunity to take away house points, while at the same time openly favouring Draco Malfoy and other Slytherins. During the first movie, we see Albus Dumbledore's delight in seeing Harry welcomed into Gryffindor, and throughout Harry's time at Hogwarts is clear that Dumbledore values Gryffindor pupils most. Clear proof of this is in Harry's second year, when Dumbledore awards just enough points to grant Gryffindor the House Cup. An additional form of favouritism and elitism found in the Hogwarts castle is given to school prefects. In book four: Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Harry takes a bath in the prefects'



bathroom. The swimming pool sized tub is equipped with a hundred gold faucets that spew water at a perfect combined temperature, in various colours. The water is laced with many aromas and different kinds of bubble bath. Never once in the series do we hear of where other students bathe, and the conditions of their restroom facilities. Prefects receive special compartments on the Hogwarts Express and are labeled further with badges pinned to their robes. In Ontario certain students may receive benefits for their work, such as compensation for being a school board trustee. But these privileges are usually kept somewhat under-the-table, instead of being flaunted.

Similar to our own educational institutions, Hogwarts is subject to censorship in its library's Restricted Section. Unfortunately, in Ontario's schools, students can't simply ask a teacher for permission. Therefore many of them must find alternative ways to gain information and feed their curiosity on censored books and websites.

Another downside to Hogwarts may be the lack of careers and civics education. There is no evidence of guidance counselors at the school, or opportunities for assistance with personal problems and academic inquiries. When leaving Hogwarts, do students really have a clear idea of a career they would like to pursue? Or how to be a good witch or wizard residing in the Ministry of Magic's jurisdiction? Do all students aim to be Ministry of Magic employees, or do some migrate towards service careers in Diagon Alley? Harry's ambitions to become an Auror are clear, but we never gain insight on what Ron or

Hermione – or any other student for that matter – will do after graduation.

Far away from graduating are the anxious 11 year olds beginning their magical journey as Hogwarts first-years. Remember your first day of Grade 9, when you kept getting lost on the way to class? Now imagine how you'd feel if you were in a giant castle, the rooms migrated and the stairs kept changing on you! The lack of familiarity, endless corridors, vast grounds and winding staircases are hardly necessary at Hogwarts (aside from adding to its fantastical whimsical feel)!

In Ontario, we could do with some of the spirit at Hogwarts. Enormous amounts of school spirit can be found floating throughout the fortress like Peeves the poltergeist. The interest in intramural quidditch at Hogwarts is soaring. Imagine walking through the hallways and seeing literally EVERY person you know clad in their house colours, cheering and eager to get out to the pitch and support the athletes. It's a sight not commonly seen in our province. The inter-collegiate games in Goblet of Fire bring a new kind of spirit to the school. Although Hogwarts students must choose to support the golden boy Cedric Diggory or The Boy Who Lived, every single student is out at the tasks cheering on their favourite contestant on their Tri-Wizard voyage for eternal glory.

How many of us have sat in awe while viewing the grand Hogwarts castle, either on the movie screen or as a picture flashing through our minds? It is definitely safe to say that the facilities for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry are absolutely incredible. Hogwarts

is located somewhere in Scotland. It has many charms and spells cast over it that makes it unplottable and invisible to the muggle eye. The castle has extensive property that includes sloping lawns, flowerbeds and vegetable patches, the Forbidden Forest, the Black Lake, several greenhouses, an owlery, and a full-size quidditch pitch. Each house has its own common room. This is an area that all Ontario schools could invest in! A common, comfortable area for students to hang out, with that as its sole purpose (unlike a library or cafeteria) would be beneficial for social development.

The amazing building leads us to believe that Hogwarts must have a supernatural source of funding, unknown to Ontario's many district school boards. In the books it is subtly suggested that families partially pay for the schooling. We know that there is a financial assistance program that was accessed by none other than Lord Voldemort when he came to Hogwarts as the virtuous Tom Riddle. In Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, the Ministry of Magic's attempt to seize control of the academy implies that it is a publicly funded school.

The Ministry of Magic seems to be very similar to the Ontario Provincial Government. Both Hogwarts and Ontario schools offer a government-regulated curriculum. This curriculum is exasperated in Order of the Phoenix when Dolores Umbridge goes nuts with all of her educational decrees. Hogwarts also adds to the amount of standardized testing taking place in education today. To qualify as a listed practitioner of magic, students must take the



Ordinary Wizarding Level (O.W.L.) examinations taken at the end of fifth year. This may be compared to the literacy test that must be completed by all Grade 10 students in Ontario. If a student scores well enough on an O.W.L. he or she may take advanced classes in that subject to prepare for the Nastily Exhausting Wizarding

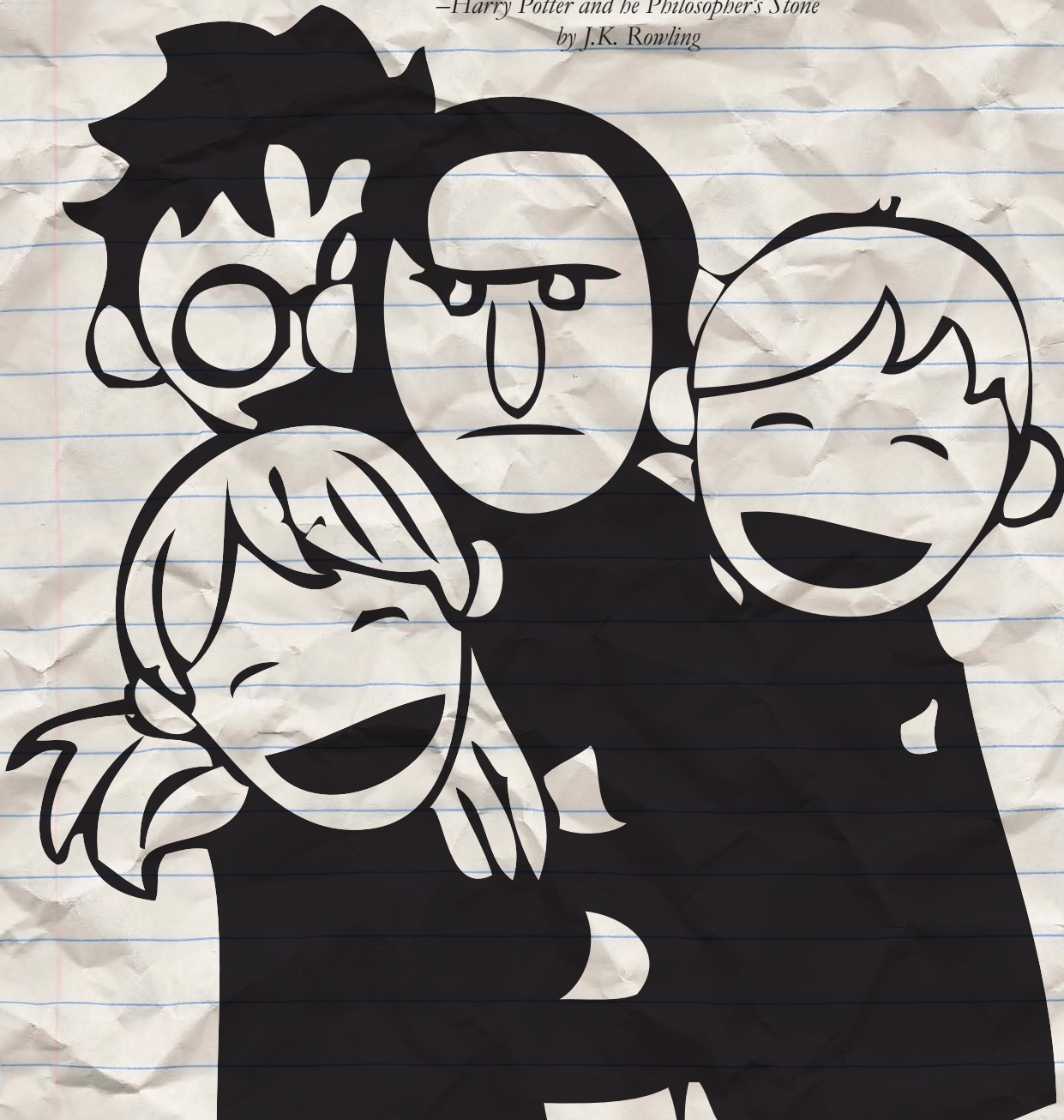
Tests (N.E.W.T.) exams at the end of seventh year. A student in the United Kingdom generally takes just three or four A-level subjects and exams, just as a Hogwarts student only takes a few N.E.W.T. subjects.

Also similar to the way we run things in Ontario is how the staffs of Hogwarts are accountable

to a Board of Governors. Governors are essentially the same as Trustees. Unlike Trustees, Hogwarts Governors are appointed. How else would Lucius Malfoy get the job? Hogwarts should take a hint from Ontario though, and elect some Student Governors!

*"The narrow path had opened suddenly on to the edge of a great black lake. Perched atop a high mountain on the other side, its windows sparkling in the starry sky, was a vast castle with many turrets and towers."*

*—Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone  
by J.K. Rowling*



# Standardized Testing for Cookie Cutter World

by  
**CHELSEA  
GRAY**

Everyone is special. We are all unique. No two people were made the same. Most people have been told this over and over again since the time of their birth, and it is true; no two people are the same. It has been scientifically proven that each human being is different in the way they learn, think, and process information. Differences in gender, cultural background, socioeconomic status, domestic situations, original languages and physical needs are all major factors that affect how a person learns. Perhaps that is why it seems strange that none of these factors would be taken into consideration when students from across the province are forced to write the same, standardized test. In fact, it is more than likely that in many cases, the only similarity between a student writing the test in Ottawa, and one writing in Waterloo, is their grade.

Standard, by definition, is something regarded as the usual, normal, or most common in a set. But

how do you define the average student? In the cultural mosaic that is Ontario, it is impossible to classify specific characteristics as the norm. While certain communities undoubtedly have high populations of students with the same cultural backgrounds, the same cannot be said for the entire province of Ontario. None of these important factors can be accounted for in a standard, province-wide test, and when teachers or schools try and assist students to meet their specific needs, it is seen as cheating and they are accused of skewing results.

The OSSLT is a prime example of the injustice that exists in the standardized tests within our education system. This test is most commonly referred to as the literacy test and is taken by grade 10 students across the province. It is a requirement for graduation from all publicly funded high schools in Ontario and the test must be taken in English. The test was first established in 1999, and according to the Government of Ontario, the content and passing expectations have not changed since then. On the contrary, the curriculum has changed several times since the initiation of

the literacy test, and the lifestyles of students have changed significantly as well. It is clear that the same standards cannot be expected in today's education system as were seen over 10 years ago.

*...the only similarity between a student writing the test in Ottawa, and one writing in Waterloo, is their grade.*

The most recent results of the literacy test are available on the website for the Ministry of Education and it shows a ranking of school boards based on the passing percentage of students in each board. On top of the list is the Halton Catholic District School Board, followed closely by the Halton District School Board. These results do not come as a surprise given the reputation of this area. Halton, composed of Oakville, Burlington and Halton Hills is known to be one of the most affluent communities in Ontario, with Oakville being the town with the highest GDP in Canada. The area is also known to be a predominantly white community with much less multiculturalism than most other regions in the province. Halton contains the stereotypical 'standard' student, and so it is a testament to the



racial, economic, and social prejudices demonstrated by a standardized test.

Compare the results of the Halton boards, at 92% and 91% passing rates, to the success rates of the French school boards in the province. These boards show results that are up to 24% lower than the Halton rates, and none of the boards even scratch the 90% mark. There is an obvious prejudice existing in this system against the French boards of Ontario. They are equal to English schools in that they are publically funded by the government of Ontario, they fall under the Ministry of Education, and they are teaching students in one of the official languages of Canada. It would be logical that a French speaking school would be able to write tests in French, however even these schools must write the test in English, which somewhat defeats the purpose of having French schools at all. In a sense, this encourages the idea of teachers counseling their students in specific preparation for the test. This language difference is one that is acknowledged and accommodated by the government of Ontario, however,

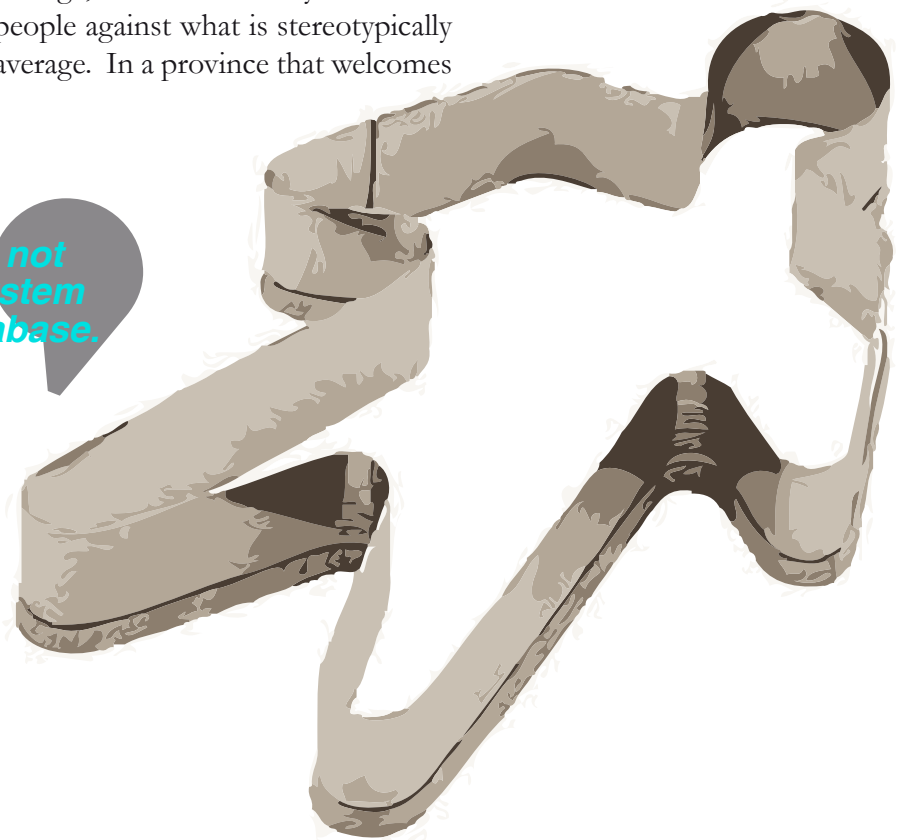
consider those qualities that are not accepted by the ministry. There is no way to account for these differences in a test that is designed for people who are all the same.

Even for students who could be classified as average or standard, the test is not an accurate measure of their knowledge and intelligence. A single test written on a single day does not properly show the success of a student simply because of the volume of possible factors and distractions that could hinder the student's ability to write the test. Coping with a death in the family, a lack of sleep from the previous night, nervousness when taking tests, or just generally having a bad day cannot be accounted for in the test, but can make a highly academic student seem below average in the eyes of the province.

Students are individuals, not numbers in a computer system entered into a ministry database. By attempting to measure their academic potential using a test tailored to the average, we essentially measure people against what is stereotypically average. In a province that welcomes

and supports cultural diversity so strongly, it is incredible that there would be so many tests to measure student success with blatant disregard for any kind of religious, linguistic or cultural individuality. In a sense, these tests are a contradiction to much of the work the ministry does. While the ministry of education funds schools for black students, students with disabilities, French speaking students, and Catholic students, there is no special accommodation made for any of the individual needs of these groups. With all kinds of specialized schools it is difficult for the ministry to define certain schools as standard; but if schools cannot be classified as standard, how can we categorize students the same way?

*Students are individuals, not numbers in a computer system entered into a ministry database.*



*Watch out...!*

*The  
JOCK!*

*The  
PREP!*

**WILDCATS**

*High School Cliques...*

**THEY  
EXIST!!!**





**The Breakfast Club. Mean Girls. High School Musical. According to the movies, high school is the breeding ground for cliques. These films are an exaggeration of everyday life as a student...or are they?**

**Year after year students enter high school looking for a spot to fit in, or rather a “group” they can relate to.**

**As soon as you are labelled the “jock”, the “prep” or the “misfit”, that group is often where you still stay for the next four years of your education.**

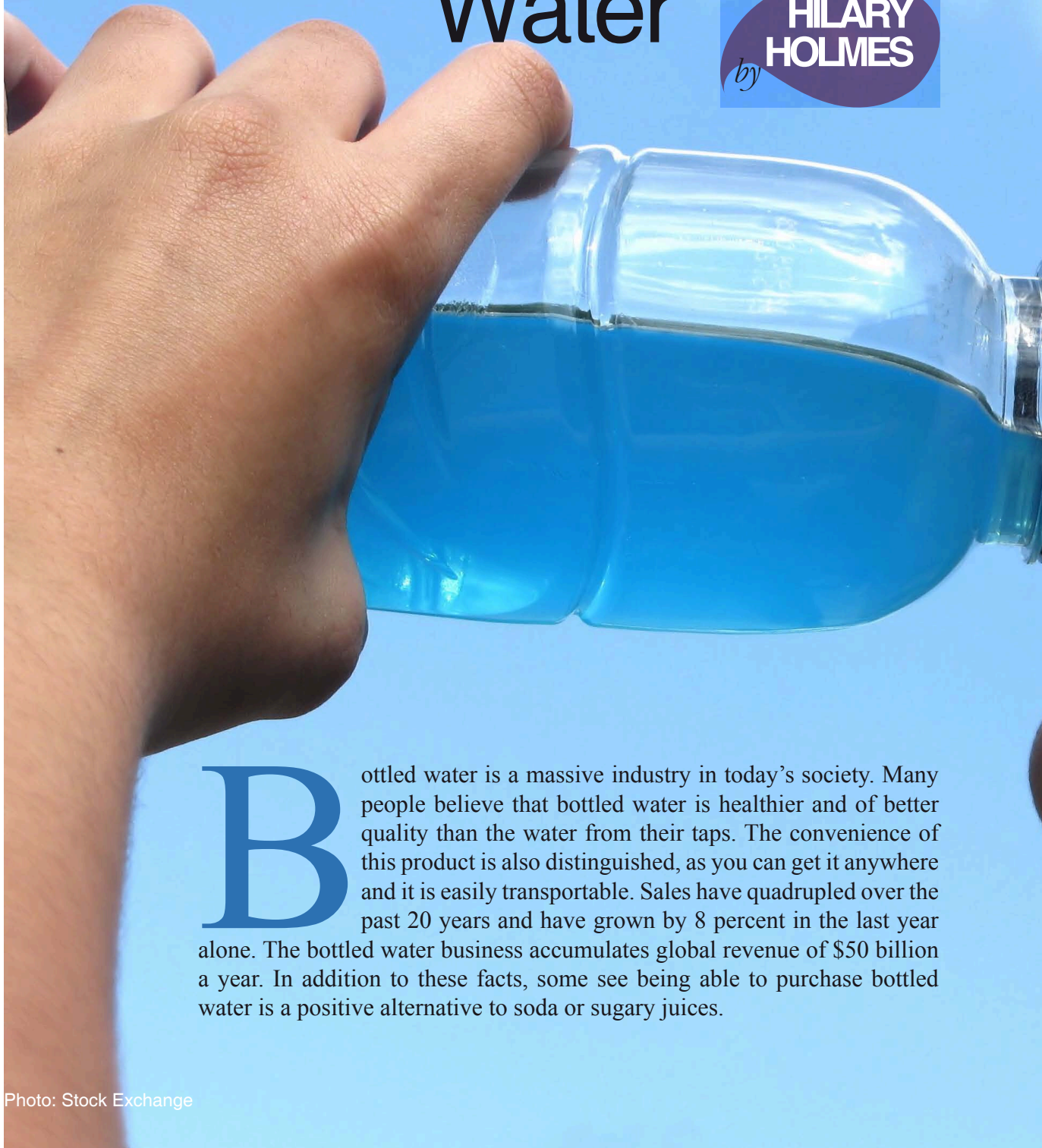
***The question is, can this cycle ever be broken and what does it take to stand up and stand out for yourself?***

In order to examine high school cliques, we have to look at what age they begin at. According to John Coie of Duke University and Ken Dodge at Vanderbilt University, cliques begin to emerge in third grade but really take effect in fourth grade. This adds a lot of stress to children as they begin to transition into roles as teenagers who are trying to discover more of an emotional depth to their lives. From an outsider's perspective, cliques can be seen as a group of conformists rather than friends, unable to express their individuality and too afraid to stand out. Cliques can also be seen as a fight to climb the social ladder and a chance to work your way to the top. For example, the film *Mean Girls* portrays very stereotypical cliques. The most popular “run” the school and everyone wants to be like them and conform to their lifestyle. But only a select few make it. The issue is that though this is an exaggerated version of reality, this type of catty behaviour still exists and must be stopped in our schools.

On the contrary, there are many students who have enjoyed being part of a clique in high school. Instead of being seen as a collection of conformists, it's a group of people who bond and share the same interests. Yes, this is also known as friendship. It's impossible to befriend every single person you meet, to share your life story with a random of strangers, and bond with those who seem as if they live in a completely different world. That's not reality. However, with those people you do seek friendship in, make sure you don't put others down in the process. That's poor character. And that's what puts social stigma on the high school cliques of today.

So are high school cliques seen as a “glass half full” or “glass half empty” situation? Here's the thing: we've seen cliques in the past, and they're still here. It makes me wonder...will this ever stop? I think the negative clique begins with a lack of self esteem. To me, this needs to be replenished with an opportunity in leadership. Having attended leadership camps I've watched this very theory unfold before my eyes. At our camps students arrive feeling like representatives of labelled groups, and we leave as a family in a matter of a weekend. If you feel as if you are negatively affected as a “jock”, “prep” or a “misfit”, go to leadership camp. But you feel accepted, appreciated and understood in your group – embrace your clique. Ultimately, NEVER change who you are for anyone. Abraham Lincoln said it best “whatever you are, be a good one.”

# The Drip on Bottled Water



**B**ottled water is a massive industry in today's society. Many people believe that bottled water is healthier and of better quality than the water from their taps. The convenience of this product is also distinguished, as you can get it anywhere and it is easily transportable. Sales have quadrupled over the past 20 years and have grown by 8 percent in the last year alone. The bottled water business accumulates global revenue of \$50 billion a year. In addition to these facts, some see being able to purchase bottled water is a positive alternative to soda or sugary juices.





However, consumers cannot be entirely sure if their bottled water is superior to tap water. Numerous buyers are unaware of how the product affects the environment, and the possible effects it may have on human health. People may also be uninformed of the inflated cost of a container of water. Is bottled water a product we need in our civilization and our schools? The truth is, bottled water places strain on the environment and economy, has suspected negative health effects, and is an unnecessary expense and luxury in our world.

There are many reasons why bottled water has become an everyday sight in our communities and schools. Everywhere people go, they can expect to find vending machines or stores that will supply them with a cold, refreshing bottle of water. Many of these individuals believe that the packaged product tastes much better than the water provided by their local municipalities. The general public can also be easily fooled into thinking that water labelled “glacial” or “spring” is of better quality than water drawn from a nearby source. Many consumers point out that bottled water is a positive alternative to sugary soda and carbonated juices, not to mention that the containers are easy to transport in cars, to meetings, to sports events and more. North American citizens are also strongly influenced by media and large scale bottling companies such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi have aggressive advertising and marketing schemes that viewers are often misled by.

Whether bottled water is better than tap water seems to be the ongoing argument between water suppliers. People are often led to believe that tap water should not be trusted.

Little do consumers know, some bottled water is, in fact, water from a municipal supply. Coca-cola’s water brand, Dasani, contains water primarily taken from the municipal water system in Brampton, Ontario. In an article written for CTV news,

Polaris Institute representative Andrea Harden reveals that although bottled water guzzlers may get the impression that their form of hydration is safer and healthier than the water dripping from their faucets, bottling plants are generally inspected once every three years, whereas municipal water sources are tested multiple times per day.

The city of Ottawa tests its water about 125 000 times in one year. Many bottled water buyers are also not aware of the different chemicals that can be found in bottled water compared to tap water. The Canadian Dental Association has concluded that fluoride levels in local tap water are proven to reduce tooth decay by 15%. However, few bottled water companies report fluoride in their products.

Consumers argue that bottled water is simply more accessible than tap water. Yes, you may fill a water bottle at home and bring it to work, but what happens when you are finished that supply? Are there safe places in our society to replenish water without purchasing a plastic bottle? Unless you’re comfortable filling up your bottle in the washroom, the answer is often no.

People want cold, refreshing hydration, something that may not be readily available in the workplace, park, school or sports field. It is obvious that at this point in time civilians are not willing to stop the surge of bottled water for the tap water of equal quality.

Another controversial issue in the bottled water industry is the damage it does to the environment. Many people do not understand how they are polluting the planet by purchasing a bottle of water. Not only are tons of greenhouse gases created in the production and transportation of your water beverage, but resources are being used up as well. Plastic bottles today are made with crude oil and are transported using crude oil. Many industry observers view the business as a waste of energy.

Aside from environmental problems created in the manufacturing sector of bottled water, the real giant problem is the disposal of them. An environmentalist that is very passionate about this subject is none other than Canadian David Suzuki. Suzuki refuses bottled water on all occasions, and is appalled that Canadians are willing to pay more for bottled water than gas. He believes that bottled water is wasteful, and plastic is one of the main contributing factors in the ongoing pollution of our planet.

One of the most talked about issues when it comes to bottled water is recycling them. Toronto city councillor Shelley Carroll reports that in our provincial capital only 65% of plastic bottles make it into recycling plants. The other 35% are lost in the garbage system and buried in landfills. Bottled water and anything packaged in plastic is negatively affecting our precious environment.

Are you aware of the inflated cost of bottled water? Did you know that the cost is not even near the total value of the product you are purchasing? Well it’s true; your \$1.50 bottle of water actually costs \$0.00002 when streaming from the tap. Ever heard of people spending \$2.00 on a bottle of Evian? Spell Evian backwards.

If we were to give up bottled water we could improve water systems and availability in other countries and in deprived areas of our own. For someone that bought a bottle of water daily, you would save yourself \$547.50 a year.

People living with unreliable water sources need to remember that as a human being they are entitled to affordable, clean drinking water. Needless to say, if you are looking to cut costs, bottled water should be the first thing to go!

There is definite uncertainty in our society when it comes to the possible health effects of drinking bottled water. Many people are



concerned with the possibility that chemicals from the plastic container can leach into the water.

Moreover, some consumers may not be aware that it is not necessarily the bottle, but what is inside that could be affecting their health. Scientists have found traces of antimony in bottled water that has been stored for more than 6 months. Antimony poisoning causes headaches, dizziness and depression. The National Resources Defence Council surveyed 103 bottled water brands and found contaminants in 1/3 of them. Included in the contaminants were carcinogens linked to cancer and phthalates.

Phthalates are found in cosmetics, fragrances, shower curtains and baby toys. This chemical does not leach from the bottle, but is often unknowingly added to the water at the processing plant. They also found that one bottle labelled "Spring Water" came from an industrial parking lot next to a hazardous waste site.

Bottlers have also have pulled their products from the shelves about 100 times between 1990 and 2007, due to suspicions that the water was contaminated with mold, benzene, coliform, microbes and even crickets. Many scientists believe that the bottles are safe, except when stored in places that are too cold or too hot. In 2007 scientists confirmed that BPA (a plastic component used in sports bottles and water jugs) may cause neurological problems in fetuses, infants and children.

A Washington-based environmental advocacy group did a study on the contaminants found in bottled water. The study found 38 contaminants between ten bottling companies. The contaminants included bacteria, caffeine, acetaminophen (used in pain relievers), fertilizer, solvents, plastic-making chemicals, chlorine by-products and the radioactive element strontium. Environmentalists and industry observers have made it

quite clear; your safest bet is with the surge of tap water.

Many cities have placed restraints on where bottled water is sold. London, Ontario has adapted new rules to cut back on the amount of waste produced due to bottled water. No bottled water is sold at any city-owned buildings, events, or parks. Toronto is considering a bottled water ban of similar ruling. Bottled water bans allow the city to cut costs by shrinking their waste and recycling intake. I think that a ban such as this could be the next step in our worldwide green movement.

So, if a city can manage a bottled water ban, why can't a school board? The Waterloo Region School Board did just that in April of 2008. Ottawa-Carleton District School Board also placed a district-wide ban last year on the not-so-eco-friendly product. Other schools boards have bans as well, and many are considering a ban due to the environmental impact of bottled water. Bans on bottled water in a school board include cafeterias, vending machines, in addition to school and board functions. These bans do not stop students bringing their own bottled water from home. Many school board trustees and staff fear the loss of revenue provided by the sale of bottled water. The question is what is our environment worth to us?

Throughout researched sources, many alternatives to bottled water have been mentioned. The first of which is to fill a BPA-free stainless steel water bottles with tap water. Toronto's Claude Watson School for the Arts even teamed up with a local store to sell stainless steel BPA-free water bottles to its students for a discounted price. Some schools choose to solely promote the use of these containers instead of banning bottled water products altogether. The steel bottles protect your water from any leaching of chemicals, keep the water cold and are just as portable and convenient as plastic bottles. If you still don't like the idea

of drinking tap water, buy a filter for your faucet. Filters are inexpensive and definitely purify your water source. Water coolers come with 5 gallon jugs that are filled locally. It is cheaper to refill these containers than to buy a new one, which promotes the reuse of valuable materials. If you still do not trust your municipal water source, you can always boil your water to ensure that it is safe to drink. If you're not picky, just drink a glass of tap water!

To conclude, bottled water has terrible effects on the environment and economy. The inflated costs and health concerns are part of the reason that many environmentalists and industry observers recommend drinking tap water. Bottled water is not a necessity in the Western world. It is the consumer's choice to feed the bottled water companies greedy thirst with their patronage.

Jenny Powers of the  
Natural Resource Defence Council  
puts it best:

*"Bottled water is an  
increasingly growing business,  
and with that comes  
a whole lot of  
environmental impact  
that can be avoided  
by a turn of the faucet."*





*A large part of why many students thrive in today's education system is the devotion teachers put into their students beyond the average school day hours. It is the time that is spent after school with students that allow them to further grasp critical concepts or questions reviewed in class.*

# Teacher Devotion

THE TIME  
TEACHERS  
SPEND  
(or do not spend)  
AFTER CLASS



**A**s a high school student I see teachers staying after school every day to help those that need help. The fact is, with students trying to be actively involved in the education system and outside of school - especially individuals involved in extracurricular activities - it is sometimes difficult to keep on top of what is being taught. Without help outside of regularly scheduled classes, we would be stuck.

Unfortunately, in some instances a teacher may not be able to devote the time that a student may need. Students are particularly fortunate that this is not the teaching body as a whole. In fact, most teachers are comfortable in providing extra time. However, cases exist where teachers are involved with other commitments outside of the schoolyard. Certainly teachers have the right to do whatever they please outside of their employed hours, right? It is said that getting teachers involved in more than just what they teach is encouraged by administration - but for some individuals they need more than friendly encouragement. Do teachers realize the positive impact they have on us after class?

We have all seen or heard of at one point how teachers are machines that plug into the wall and recharge when not teaching. For the teachers that have helped me in the past, I can attest that this is true. But it isn't always. It is sometimes frustrating from a student

perspective to see teachers leave when the last bell of the day goes as for many students at that point their day's activities have just begun. With sports teams and clubs only able to be run with teacher support, it is not a surprise to see students upset about staff not getting involved in the school to support a community.

Teachers should be the types of personalities that want to help and make school fun, challenging and a diverse experience for the students they teach. After all, is that not why many of them drafted towards the teaching career in the first place?

The social structure of a school relies so much on how teachers use their time while with the world's future leaders - the kids.

Whether one is supervising for fun or for education - some teachers need to evaluate what their role means to them. The motto of teaching as a whole needs a clear and drastic shift. If it means extra work, is it for the better or the worse?

As for the teachers that do so much and go out of their way to help - cheers and kudos to you!



*Farewell*  
*to the*  
**OLD**

*and*

*Hello*  
*to the*  
**NEW**



## *Outgoings*

Our outgoing student trustees are the ones who just completed their first or second term as representatives for all the students their board, attending multitudes of meetings, and being quite informed on the education system as a whole. They have learned about numerous topics of interest, made many memories, and opened doors to a bright future. A few of whom will even be attending an Ivey league school in the fall! Outgoing student trustees will be the ones who will inform you about the honour of being a student trustee, of the role's many challenges but also its cherishing opportunities that were a result of having such a position. Outgoings will prepare their incomings with tricks of the trade and organize them for a year of success as their qualified replacements. Then they will be off into the world, prepared for whatever may be thrown at them. For through all the experiences and lessons they have attained, they are more than prepared for their next new journey ahead of them.

## *Incomings*

This title is reserved for the newest of the student trustees. Our incomings that have tagged along to take their first dip in the water may feel a little like 'minor niners'. This is just the beginning and the first push to learning the life of being a student trustee: the voice of the students in individual boards and as a whole, the voice of the students of Ontario. Incoming student trustees will embark on a journey during their term that they would never thought imaginable. Their toolkits will slowly fill up during AGM. They will be mentored by their board's current student trustee(s) and even grasp some of the many acronyms of OSTA-AECO and Ontario's stakeholders. Altogether, these incomings will not be afraid to ask the many questions that will enable them to grow for a successful term. An incoming should continually be informed about the down-low of the education system, listening to the voice of the students, and educating themselves about their position to the best of their ability. They will prove to be some awesome student trustees for their school board in the near future!

## *Transitional*

And last but not least, our transitionals. Transitional student trustees have the best of both worlds. About to conclude their first term, they have the honour of preparing for another year of representing the students of their board while armed with a wealth of experiences from a year around the board table. Whether they will be entering their senior year this September, or taking a victory lap, these students are more than prepared to continue representing their peers. A transitioning Student Trustee has the advantage of already experiencing a full year of serving in the position and is able to take on their second term fiercely and accomplish another year of undertakings.

*Some of us know that this weekend is the last of  
their well-spent OSTA-AECO conferences,*

*a small batch know there is another fulfilling year ahead,*

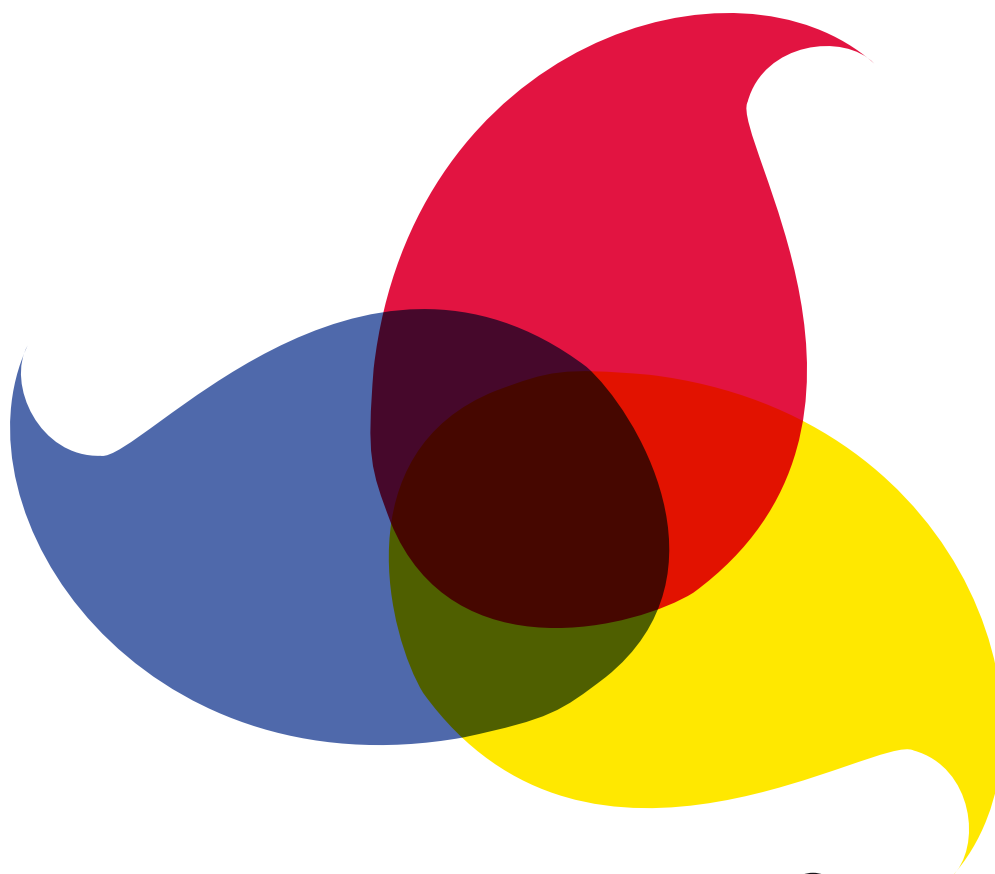
*while others are just getting ready for the journey that  
no other student in their board will ever know.*

*Whether you are an outgoing student trustee,  
a transitional or an incoming,*

*the Annual General Meeting is one that, hopefully, will never be forgotten.*

*~ Joanna Wolinski*





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needs you!

## JOIN THE STAFF

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