

March 2025

Good evening! To preface this, know that I haven't had a student forum meeting since my last report, so there isn't as much new student feedback for this report.

Firstly, I'd like to thank Member Sadowski for coming to the last Active Youth of Duluth meeting. It was led by some of my peers from Marshall, but there were tons of East students there engaging in conversation about climate advocacy! If anyone is interested in coming to our next meeting, I will share the details with you! In addition to that, there is a Student Forum meeting coming up next week! I apologize for not sharing this information sooner, but there are going to be two Student Forum meetings on our next PAWS day, Wednesday, March 26. There will be one meeting in the late morning and one in the early afternoon. If you're able and interested to listen in on some great student discussion, let me know, and I will get you the specific times!

Now, to share about some exciting things that have been going on at East! Last week was Red and Grey Week, a spirit week that culminates in the crowning of our three top dogs. There were ten students nominated by the senior class for demonstrating positive qualities and school spirit. I'm sure you know one of the winners very well: Mia Patronas! The theme for the week was "Blast to the Past," so everything was centered around childhood memories. The halls were decked out with rainbow light covers, and we had great turn-outs at our movie night, picture recreation station, and other activities. The assemblies were also a huge success! I'd highly recommend checking out the East StuGo Instagram to see some pictures.

The Climate Club is working to get school wide involvement and support to get composting in our lunch room. We've taken inspiration from our peers at Marshall and are super excited to continue working to make our school and district more sustainable. There have been surveys shared to get student feedback and involvement, and I think that people really appreciate being kept up to date about things happening in the school.

Next, Amnesty International just finished their Write for Rights campaign and is ready to send out over 100 letters. It's genuinely so inspiring to see this group of my peers engaging with each other to speak up on international issues. I notice students at East who are constantly seeking out engagement and activism, which is a really incredible thing.

Members of our drama club are back in the theater starting rehearsals for our spring play: Lost Girl. Performances are on the 8th, 9th, and 10th of May! The speech team is still in the midst of their season. East students have earned numerous top places along with consistent representation in final rounds.

Boys tennis just had the start of their season, along with softball. Baseball, cheer, boys and girls lacrosse, and track are all practicing as well! There is a track meet this Saturday, which is exciting, as it is one of the biggest teams at East!

With Red and Grey week behind us, Student Government is brainstorming new committees for the rest of our year. March Madness will be held next week! We will also organize a senior sunrise, powder puff football game, and teacher appreciation week. I'm looking forward to Friday, when we will all share slideshow presentations with ideas for other projects or activities to take on.

This week, administration at East is running an attendance challenge. The three first hour classes with the highest average attendance this week will earn doughnuts. I asked some students what they thought of it, and there was mixed feedback. One person didn't know it was happening, and another shared that while they don't think it's super effective, it's definitely starting to get people's attention a bit more. I think that this sort of positive reinforcement is a great approach, and asking for student ideas or opinions would increase engagement!

On a different note, I'd like to share that I received some questions from a student *still* wondering about how the decision to get rid of WIN and shift to the seven period day was made. Even as someone in a position that should have a strong understanding of how these decisions were made, I realized that I didn't know enough to give a good answer. I reached out to Mr. Flohaug, and he pointed me to you. I think that this really serves as a reminder of something that I've mentioned in the past: the importance of keeping students in the loop. The students that I speak with are curious and excited about opportunities to engage, and it's important that you try to meet them halfway.

One method I see to achieve this is to help me stay up to date and knowledgeable about how decisions are being made, and I will do everything I can to get that back to students. I've felt incredibly welcomed by this board, and I believe that you care about student voice, but simply having me here isn't enough. If there are discussions happening around issues that are really pertinent to students, I *want* to understand what's happening. I did some brainstorming about how I can work with you to reach this goal, and the main things I thought of were participating in feedback sessions to get more student input on policies and providing clearer (or more publicized) follow up information about issues that we've demonstrated interest in (for example, solar for schools, changes to the library next year, and how we will feel the effects of the budget cuts). In addition to that, I think we should start discussions about following through with the idea of an intra-city student council.

I talked to some students about the violence prevention policy, and they feel that it doesn't seem like it's authored with a strong understanding of what our school environment is like. People

found it odd that we aren't able to access the policy while it's still being discussed, and it was repeated over and over that this is exactly the kind of issue you should be going directly to students to learn more about. I am more than happy to work with you on that.

With that, I've appreciated receiving the District Digest, but I've heard feedback (that I understand) that the information shared feels either insubstantial or is written in a way that's not meant to be understood. Last week, I sent an email to Superintendent Magas and Assistant Superintendent Bonds with a few questions raised by the March 9 Digest, but I haven't heard back yet. I would love to have some conversation in the near future about how that sort of communication could be of even more benefit to students.

Next, I would like to briefly circle back to two of the issues that East Students care about the most: our library and our Dean of Students. Decisions about our librarian and media center are what I've been asked about the most. Students are greatly appreciative of your decision to keep the library space open, and we are still upset to hear about the possible loss of Mrs. Knettel. As a student who has checked out many books from our library and as a book club co-president, I've personally interacted with Mrs. Knettel many times, and I can't emphasize her impact enough. One day, when I told my mom that I was going to school early to do work in the library, she was surprised and brought up instances she remembered from my freshman year when I complained about how no one liked being in the library and that it wasn't a nice environment. So what's changed since then? Mrs. Knettel arrived. She is an invaluable resource, and it makes me sad to imagine our school and library community without her. Next, I hope you will be mindful of the fact that every single testimony regarding Mr. Clark shared during the listening session is personal and comes from a unique place of care. I bring this up because I know that the stories shared in listening sessions can often follow similar themes. I challenge you to continue to remember that any sort of "repetition" isn't that at all. Every story deserves to be heard and considered on its own and then be strengthened by the fact that it is one of many. The decisions that have been made regarding the library, librarians, and Dean of Students are not in alignment with the goals that this board has promised to work towards for every student, every day.

To wrap up, I'd like to share a bit about what I've been doing within my role. In the past few weeks, I've started a newsletter with updates about board meetings and summaries of the District Digest. For now, each update is added at the top of a public Google Doc. I've shared the link with students that come to Student Forum, and I encourage them to share it with anyone else! If you're curious to check it out (which I hope you are), let me know so I can share the link! In addition, I do my best to make sure students know they can reach out to me with questions, things I should share with you, or anything else! I do this using social media, announcements at school, and with qr codes posted around the school that lead to a Google Form. I have been in contact with a teacher advisor of Real Talk, a student discussion group at Ordean. I am hoping to connect with them in the near future, and I'm excited to think about how I can share their voices as well.

I'm glad to be hear tonight, and thank you for your time!