

September 2025

Since the start of the year, East Students have been adjusting to new routines and schedules, myself included. I am excited to be back for my first report of the 2025-26 school year!

To begin, I asked for updates from the captains of our fall sports teams! The girls tennis team has been on the courts and are having a great season! The girls volleyball team is playing Proctor at home tonight. There is a soccer double header at East on Thursday night. The girls will play Denfeld at 5:30, and the boys will play Denfeld at 7:30. It is the boys' senior night, and we are excited to see everyone who shows up to support our players. The football team is well into their season with their next game being this Friday at Grand Rapids and next Friday at home against North Branch. We are all excited for the homecoming game against Cloquet on October 10th!

The boys and girls cross country teams have been practicing since August and have a meet today at Grand Rapids. On Saturday, they will be heading to the University of Minnesota to compete at one of their biggest meets. The girls swim team has also been practicing since the summer and is well into their season. We are wishing them luck for their home meet tonight! The cheer team consistently shows up to support all of our athletes all while maintaining a reputation of their own. They lead cheers in the student section at all sorts of events, and we love seeing their routines and stunts at assemblies.

Moving on to some club updates: The drama club ran auditions for their fall musical—Alice By Heart—last spring and started rehearsing at the end of August. Since coming back to school, they've been in the theater or choir room almost every day. The show will run from October 23-26, and we're excited to see them bring this retelling of Alice In Wonderland to life!

The Climate Club has done a ton of research and earned grant funding to improve East's sustainability by trying to implement composting. Unfortunately, they've faced issues with getting opportunities to have open conversations to address some administrative concerns. They are working hard to find their next steps, and their commitment to our future gives me hope!

I am looking forward to starting student forum back up for the year, and today, I met with Mr. Flohaug to discuss POV. There are efforts in the works to include more underclassmen and non-club leaders in the group, and we are hoping to expand our membership to 30. With that, I received an email about planning for the intra-city student council, and I'm ready to continue working with Superintendent Magas to bring the idea to life this year.

Without WIN, finding time for our huge number of unique clubs to meet is difficult, and we are waiting to hear what our PAWs day schedule will be for this year.

Next, for some more general school updates: Student Government has already hosted a welcome back assembly and dance, both of which were on the first Friday of the school year. Last Friday, seniors were at Brighton Beach at 6 am for our senior sunrise event, which featured pictures, yard games, and lots of doughnuts. It's been a busy start to the year, and we are in the midst of planning for all of our Homecoming events.

On Saturday evening, a group of about 30 students from Albstadt, Germany and two of their teachers arrived in Duluth. They are spending the next two weeks living with East students (mostly those who are in a German class). They are shadowing us in our classes and taking the chance to learn about American culture! It's been super fun to have them here!

On the academic side of things, there are currently around 80 juniors signed up to take the PSAT in October. Four East seniors who took the test last year have been invited to fill out the application to become a national merit semi-finalist, which is an incredible achievement!

On a more serious note, with coming back to school, there have also been some really difficult moments and conversations.

In the wake of the shootings at Annunciation and Evergreen, my Economics teacher opened up our class hour for students to talk, and the testimonies, opinions, observations, and emotions that came forth were really eye opening. At the start of the year, students spend time listening to presentations with info from the district handbook in their third hour classes. A lot of our conversations revolved around the language, information, and policies from the handbook.

Here's some of what I heard:

- When talking about procedures for a lockdown, it seems like administration doesn't want to name the fact that a shooter is a threat we may face. We talk about lockdowns and evacuations in the event of a gas leak or dangerous animal or crime in the neighborhood. It feels like active shooter situations are a taboo subject, when in reality, they're something that students think about every time they step foot into one of our district buildings.
- In addition, students feel really concerned that we only go through drills at the start and end of the year. My peers are really concerned that we only talk about emergency procedures in one classroom and only at the start of the year because most students change classes, teachers, and/or schedules at the start of the new semester.

I know this is a really difficult subject, and there's a ton to think about and discuss. The fact that my teacher sacrificed an hour of instruction time that we completely filled with open conversation is a prime example of how badly issues like this need to be discussed. Students

care, and it would mean a lot to see and hear our administrators making it clearly known that they care too.

Another issue that has been coming up in the past few weeks is where CITS credits are coming from for CITS pre-calculus, CITS physics, and CITS American Government and Politics. Students in these classes at East have felt a lot of frustration due to the fact that not all students across the district will be receiving the same credit even though they will be completing the same classes.

Administration has made it clear that decisions regarding budgets, course offerings, and practically anything that affects students should be made in the most responsible, transparent, and equal manner possible.

According to the district website, the CITS courses that are being offered through UMD at Denfeld should be through Fond Du Lac. At the least, this statement should be changed to accurately reflect the difference in courses across the district.

I don't want anyone to misunderstand me and think I am saying that I don't want students at Denfeld to have the same access to CITS classes because I absolutely do. Our frustration rises from the fact that students were not notified of this discrepancy in where credits are coming from and when or why the decision was made.

In addition, the decision to have the high schools go through different colleges in order to offer CITS credits at both schools is contrary to how situations like this have been handled in the past. In the 2021-2022 school year, East didn't have a teacher qualified to teach CITS physics through Fond Du Lac, we had to offer honors physics. That same year, Denfeld had a qualified teacher, so they were able to offer the course.

We are aware that it would be an added expense for the district to have CITS credits through UMD at East & that it is too late to adjust credit partners for the year. With that said, we hope that the district is able to understand why this decision is so frustrating for CITS students at East. We are putting in the same work and hope that in the future, *all* students will earn equally transferable credits.

The last portion of this report was not saved for the end because it's an afterthought, but because there is really no way to follow it. As some of you may have heard, the East Community is grieving the loss of Shimia, a 2025 grad who had been battling cancer for the past few years. Since East students and our greater community heard the news of her loss last night, there has been an outpouring of grief and support both on social media and at school. School administration worked quickly to bring in support staff, and doors to the counseling center and

career center have been open all day to welcome students in. Shimia loved to dance and was a member of the East Dance Team, a group who loves her fiercely and is especially feeling the weight of her loss. Shimia asked that donations be made to the Northern Lights Foundation in lieu of flowers.

With all of that said, I'd like to thank you for your time and turn the floor back to Superintendent Magas.