

February

Good evening everyone!

Many students, such as myself, are all trying to get back into the regular school schedule, and remember what was taught to us before we left for break.

I would like to begin my report by talking about activities going on at East. Right before break, STUGO announced our red and grey spirit week theme; ‘Stranger Things Are Happening at East’. Which, you can probably guess, is based off of the Netflix show, ‘Stranger Things’. We also revealed our 10 Top Dog candidates who were nominated by the Senior class for exemplifying positive qualities and school spirit. I am excited to see who will be our 3 winners at the end of our Red and Grey week!

Three of our sports teams made it to state right before we left for break, which meant we had 3 dog runs! If you are unfamiliar with what “Dog Runs” are, it is how we congratulate our peers for making it to state. Usually those students run through the halls, as both Jazz Band and the drumline play music, and cake is handed out by Student Government afterwards. I have only heard positive feedback about dog runs, and I am glad we have the ability to do them! The 3 we had before break were for Alpine Ski, Nordic Ski, and Dance Team! Even though none of the teams won, they still had amazing performances and experiences! We have another dog run set for Boys swim this Thursday. From the swim team, Senior Joey Zelen set both section and team records when he won both events at their Section Final! Unfortunately, both boys and girls hockey seasons recently ended. Boys and girls basketball are still working hard before sections, which will begin shortly. In a couple of weeks, senior August Qson will be representing Duluth East at State for the Math Team! Looking over at fine arts, Speech and Debate have been hard at work as well! Auditions were just held for our spring play, which is called ‘The Little Prince’. If you would like to support our students at any of their events, make sure to look at the Duluth East activities calendar!

I am excited to announce that our Students in Point of View are having Denfeld's “Golds Group” join us on our next PAWS day during 3rd and 4th hour! East’s Student Point of View, also known as POV, is a group of about 30 students, and a few members from our administration, that meet once a month to discuss school issues. These students bring in diverse perspectives and new ideas every meeting. Denfeld has something very similar, but it is called Golds Group. We are very excited to discuss ways we can collaborate, and hear more about the issues they are experiencing, and identify potential solutions.

More positive news, Student Government has rescheduled our community service project to April 19th! It will be Spring themed, and I will have more details about that next month!

Unfortunately, I was not able to receive much student input throughout this past month. I was only able to host one student forum meeting on our last PAWS day. As most of you know, there are still issues surrounding PAWS days for our students. For those unfamiliar, East has one Wednesday a month called “PAWS days,” during which regular classes are shortened to 32 minutes. We only have two 40 minute block periods where students can attend clubs. One in the morning and one in the afternoon.

As an officer of Key Club, which currently has about 200 students enrolled into, I need to be present for meetings, which are always held during the second block. This only leaves me with one block period to meet with students during school hours. I held it during the morning PAWS, which already had numerous other clubs and activities happening. The first meeting of Promcom was occurring which is a highly attended club, as were volleyball intramurals, regular study halls because teachers still teach during PAWS days, a PSEO informational meeting, among other clubs and activities. I know our previous Student Rep, Kate Dean, sent out a google form asking students for their opinions on this new schedule. She received a lot of negative feedback. I plan on creating a new form to gather more feedback on this ongoing issue our students at East are facing. I also plan on distributing it to teachers to hear their opinions on our PAWS days. I intend to hold one more student forum meeting a month, in the morning, to hopefully gain more participation, but I recognize that some students have other morning commitments, and transportation could also be an issue.

I did however, still gain some input from a couple students at the one meeting I held. We have now switched into semester 2, which means all of us have at least one new class. Some students have experienced challenges in the new schedule. Whether that is not having enough room or time for all of the electives they want, having new teachers for the same subjects, study halls being overcrowded, not being able to fit everything in one day, teachers incorrectly marking students tardy on the very first day of the semester, and more. It has been brought to my attention that many students are struggling so far this semester mainly because of getting new teachers for the same subjects, and getting acclimated to the new expectations. I understand that classes can be crowded, but I know it is also difficult to switch teachers in the middle of the year. Especially because some have different expectations.

After the January school board meeting, I thought a lot about lunch lines. An issue, now resolved, that students were facing was that one lunch had about 100 more people than the other. A couple fourth hour classes were all switched into the other lunch so they could even it out. Now, a month later, students said grey lunch is still very packed and red lunch is not. Some students are getting their lunch 10 minutes before it ends, and they don't feel like they are getting enough time. It has also been brought to my attention that they run out of lunch often, so the later lunch sometimes will only have one option to choose from. I understand that lunch is free, but if

we are giving that as an option, we should be able to have enough food for every student. Students agreed that having separate lunch lines for every food option will be more effective.

One of my biggest goals is to increase student voice. I want to collaborate with Real Talk from Ordean, and talk as much as I can to other East Students to really understand the real issues going on in our schools. I want to help encourage students to speak up, and not be afraid to share their questions, opinions or concerns. I also want to speak more with those in Special Education, and learn more about how I can help them. I want to talk to those in clubs, sports, fine arts, and those who are not as involved, to understand the differences in people's experiences at East.

The last issue I would like to address is from our Sweetheart dance that was held at Clyde Iron Works on February 7th. A couple of students brought to my attention that our administration wasn't checking tickets after about 30 minutes. They kept telling students that they could just go through and weren't properly checking if those students went to East or had a guest form. Some students also mentioned that it felt like the chaperones weren't doing much to keep out those under the influence. I know everyone wants to have a fun and safe time at our dances, so I hope these are some things we can keep in mind for the future!

You have the ability to balance your perspectives with our perspectives. Students will keep questioning decisions, and I will do my best to help them understand why they're put into place. I know you all work to try and represent the best interests of our students. Those efforts need to keep including a genuine and consistent commitment to listening to all students. Many students have unique insights and perspectives that can significantly enhance the effectiveness of our school. When students feel heard and valued, it creates a more engaging and positive learning environment. I urge you all to continue to actively seek out, listen to, and thoughtfully consider student feedback. It is important to not only hear it, but to embrace it.

Thank you all for this opportunity and your time.

Many students are still feeling frustrated because we were told the purpose of moving to a seven period day 2 years ago was to hopefully give students more opportunities for electives, especially students that are in music, art, and language. Unfortunately, adding the new requirements has made it more difficult for students to take electives and even some requirements. Many students who have taken 9th grade futures, computer science, college career life readiness, and personal finance, have not found these courses beneficial. I did learn that computer science will not be required after this year, which I know many current ninth graders are thankful for. It is unfortunate for the current 10th and 11th graders who had their gpa affected negatively because of that course. Students are also saying 9th grade futures is just like college career and life readiness. They are feeling like these requirements are just putting on busy work and even our previous Student Rep stated; “this is a prime example of the district neglecting to ask for student input on decisions that so directly affect them and because these classes were added so last minute, there doesn’t seem to be a well developed curriculum”. Many students have felt like their voices haven’t been heard regarding this issue, and I know class requirements are a common issue between all students at East.