

The evolution of Education

Notable changes in high school curriculum

By Melody Dickes

If you have ever asked your parents for help on a difficult assignment, more than likely you will get the answer "I don't know. I never had to do that in high school." The truth is the curriculum of your parent's high school years, as well as your grandparent's high school years, is not that much different from today.

Today at Antioch Community High School [ACHS], we have a wide variety of classes to choose from, as well as the option to attend the technology campus at the College of Lake County. This variety has not always been available. Jean Haling is a graduate of ACHS who graduated in 1954. She indicated that the core classes she remembers being required to take were Science, Math, English, Physical Education, and a language class.

"You would take a general science, Biology and Chemistry," said Haling.

Now although these core classes have always been present, the extent of advanced classes was not. A few different people remembered hardly any sort of honors, or advanced placement classes, including Don Zeman, ACHS graduate and social studies teacher of 34 years.

"There were only a few honors classes and no AP classes," said Zeman.

Besides having additional options that were not available many years ago, there are classes that were offered then that are no longer part of the curriculum. A course teaching short hand, a writing style using symbols and lines that represented words and phrases to help note taking, used to be offered at high schools. Also in many high schools, a foreign language offered many years ago but not as

nearly as often today was Latin. The former curriculum consisted of many more classes with applied and life skills, which we do not see as much of today. Classes such as sewing, cooking, woodshop, and auto shop were offered and were more popular than today. Courses required to graduate have increased throughout the years, and will continue to increase.

Programs that branched from the home economic department have been cancelled from many high schools, such as FHA (Future Homemakers of America) and FFA (Future Farmers of America). FHA has been replaced with FCCLA (Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America) and FFA is no longer relevant to the growing community of Antioch. Today ACHS requires 22 1/2 credits to graduate.

Phyllis Fay, ACHS assistant principal, indicated one purpose for the increase in credits over the years.

"The amount of credits required has a reflection on the college requirements today," said Fay. The college requirements continue to go up as well over the years.

Illinois State Board of Education has set high school requirements that each high school in Illinois must meet, but is not limited to. The purpose of the steady increase of requirements for the state is stated to overall increase the success and ability of students.

The curriculum will continue to change as our generation grows older and a new generation is introduced to secondary education.

The class of 2012, according to the Illinois State Board of Education, must have two years of a writing class, whereas the class of 2009 is not required to take any.

Want fries with that detention? Punishments cater to kids

By Sean Kelly

A school's methods of discipline for earlier generations are often thought of as pretty extreme.

One might recall the vindictive principal in *Matilda* "attacking" her innocent students when thinking of physical discipline being practiced in school.

Punishments are always changing for students who dare to defy the rules of their school.

Teresa Blaski, a resident of Antioch, graduated in 1947 from St. Paul's Academy for Young Ladies in Des Plaines, IL.

She described how the nuns ran the school with strict manner.

"You couldn't wear lipstick or make-up of any kind. Once I did and the nuns scrubbed at my lips with a wire brush until it was completely gone," Blaski said.

Piercings were also not allowed.

"When I wore earrings to school, they ripped them right out of my ears," recalled Blaski.

Blaski also remembers a punishment as being smacked by key rings.

Don Zeman, a graduate from the ACHS class of 1967 and current ACHS teacher, says that discipline has changed in some ways,

has remained the same in other ways.

"Kids were more concerned about violations of the rules than they are now," Zeman said.

Zeman also said there used to be more respect for authority.

"Any adult was worthy of respect. Sometimes now you need to prove you are," said Zeman.

According to Zeman, another major difference is home punishments.

According to Zeman home punishments were often more feared than the punishment the school would inflict.

"I'm going to call your parents' was something you did not want to hear from any school staff members," Zeman said.

ACHS dean Kathy Kelly agrees with Zeman.

"Students don't fear their parents," said Kelly.

Kelly recalled a story former ACHS counselor Gwen Varney told her when she attended school.

Kelly said a teacher was given the choice of paddling or a call to her parents; the teacher chose the paddling.

Sitting in a room is very comparable to the method of paddling that some teachers used.

According to Zeman paddling was not used by most teachers by the 1970's, and by the end of the 1970's paddling had disappeared completely.

Although Zeman said he did not remember many teachers using paddling, the ones who did, used it regularly.

Kelly said that punishments for students are now more flexible for the student than they used to be when she started at ACHS.

According to Kelly, punishments used to be harsh; now the student gets to schedule the detention whenever it is most convenient.

College: from optional to mandatory

By Victoria Leonard

In a society where success is rated by money, and money dictated by education, high school students are being put under a lot of pressure to go to college.

Has college always been the main focus of high school curriculum? Was everyone expected to go to college?

According to the Antioch Community High School profile, 87% of the senior class of 2006 went on to college. In 1999 only 74% of seniors chose to go to college.

If the college matriculation rate has gone up 13% in the last eight years imagine what it was like fifty years ago.

"There were two tracks to take in high school, college prep or business education," said Diana Zehren, a 1959 graduate of Saint. Benedicts high school in Chicago.

The focus of secondary education was not entirely college driven and students could decide whether or not they wanted to take the courses required for college admission.

While students heading for college had to take to take the entrance/placement exam.

"They accepted almost everyone who applied, at least at the state schools," said Zehren.

Over the years the admission process to most schools has become more and more selective, and the pressure on entrance exams such as the ACT has increased dramatically.

"Admission to selective schools has become much harder now, but there are also many more schools available to choose from," said ACHS assistant principle John Whitehurst.

The societal obsession with the connection between higher education and commercial success has exploded during the 30 years Whitehurst has been working at ACHS.

"That cultural perception wasn't there thirty years ago, the pressure to get good test scores and go to college didn't exist as dramatically as it does today," said Whitehurst.

Not only has the push to go to college changed but he reasons to go have as well.

"Women either went to school to become a nurse or a teacher or to find a husband. That was all that they were expected to do," said Zehren.

Zehren also remarked upon how the courses of studies are much more open today, giving students more diverse opportunities.

It comes down to the fact that higher education used to be a personal choice instead of an expected path.

College graduation rates have become stagnant as more and more students attend college because they don't know what else to do.

"If you look at it, in the last decade changes have been made to make college the next step after high school. The state of Illinois chose the ACT as its second mandatory standardized test and the ACT is a college entrance exam," said Whitehurst.

The pressure that the individuals themselves are putting on a college education has become a hypercritical fascination.

The stereotype that one cannot be successful without a degree is becoming a common belief.

"It is sometimes frightening, the amount of pressure students feel to go to college, it is tragic when students believe themselves to be failures because college wasn't the path for them," said Whitehurst.

The truth to the matter is that society needs to take a step back from this college craze and realize that not every career needs a college education.

It is important that people realize that success does not come after paying tuition and that there are many non-degree careers we could not live without.

"The societal obsession with the connection between higher education and commercial success has exploded..."

Survey of 50 ACHS students by Lisbeth Wennstrom

- 66% of students had 1 parent that went to college
- 20% had both parents go to college
- 34% had NO parents go to college

Timeline of ACHS!

1915	1925	1926	1935	1941	1962	1966	1974	1983	1998	2004
Antioch Township High School is established	Boys basketball and baseball introduced	First yearbook is published	School newspaper is first published	Boys track introduced	Science labs, cafeteria, and library are added	School literary magazine created	School dance team introduced as "Pom Pons"	Boys and girls soccer introduced	The existing first building is demolished a new addition is added	Second high school, Lakes Community high school is built and opens