

Take a look at new policies that the Echo editors suggest for the new campus on page 4.



the Echo)))

For inspiring stories about Black-Owned Businesses,



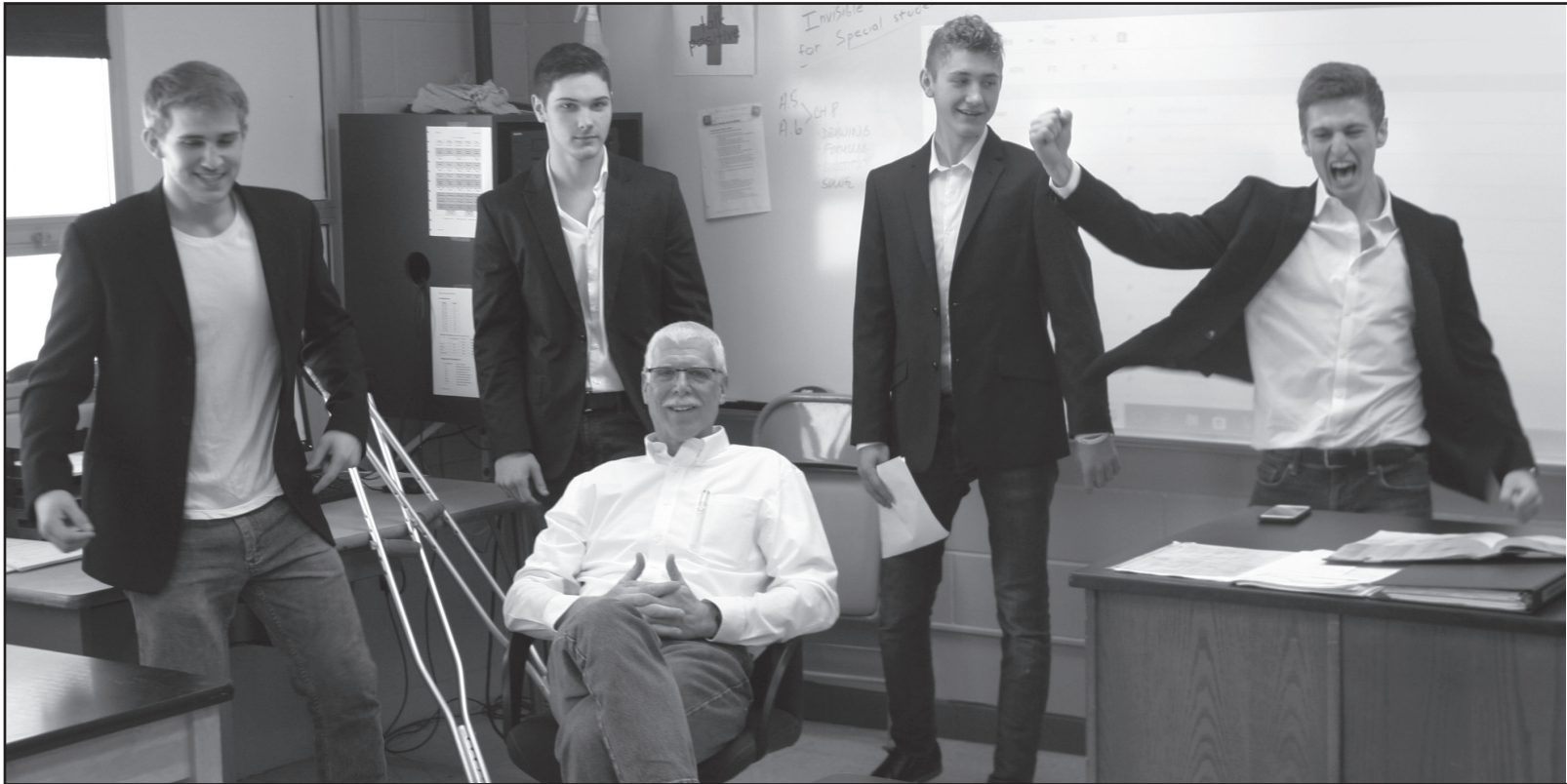
look no further than page 6.

Illiana Christian High School

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Lansing, Illinois



A group of junior boys serenade Mr. Kuipers with the song, "I'm Gonna Be" by The Proclaimers during a Physics class.

Photo by Cate Peerbolte

Belting out love for others through tradition

Jaden Denton
Reporter

On Valentine's Day Illiana students sang, sent, and received singing telegrams.

These gifts are delivered by organized groups of students who plan a singing routine for students to purchase for their classmates' entertainment or embarrassment.

Seniors Austin Clark, Ben Fabrizius, Matthew Rietveld, Payton Smit, Garret Vanderzee, Patrick Wang, Josh DeYoung, and Jason Schutt donned varsity or leather

jackets and sang Hooked on a Feeling, Careless Whisper (with an actual saxophone), and Never Gonna Give You Up.

"It's lots of fun and really

embarrassing for the kids being sung to," said Clark.

Senior Jordan Miller had the fortune of being in a group and being sung to.

"The groups are fun in a creative way and they really know how to put on a good show," said Miller. "I really enjoyed singing to everyone and there's always lots of laughs."

Ms. Johnson, an English teacher, got a chance to see juniors Alex Wondaal, Colton DeJong, Andrew Smits, and Alex Eenigenburg sing in her class and said, "I thought they were fantastic; they really applied energy and commitment."

Six groups of students volunteered for this opportunity providing sixteen different, some funny, some serious, some Spanish, some solo.

Singing telegrams could be purchased for five dollars from Student Council going towards their funds. Suckers and carnations were also available to buy for others and be delivered during homeroom with a special note.

Talk Positive Campaign implements resolution

Kylie Boss
Reporter

Posters and coffee cups have been taking space on desks, whiteboards and chalkboards in halls of Illiana in the past month for the Talk Positive campaign. The campaign is run by Illiana's Faculty Council, whose president is Spiritual Director Mr. Lance Davids.

Davids brought up the idea to the Faculty Council because he felt he needed to be more positive in his life. It was almost like a New Year's resolution to him, said Davids.

"Talking positive is a choice you make," said Davids. "You can't always control the things that happen to you in life, but you can control how you deal with them."

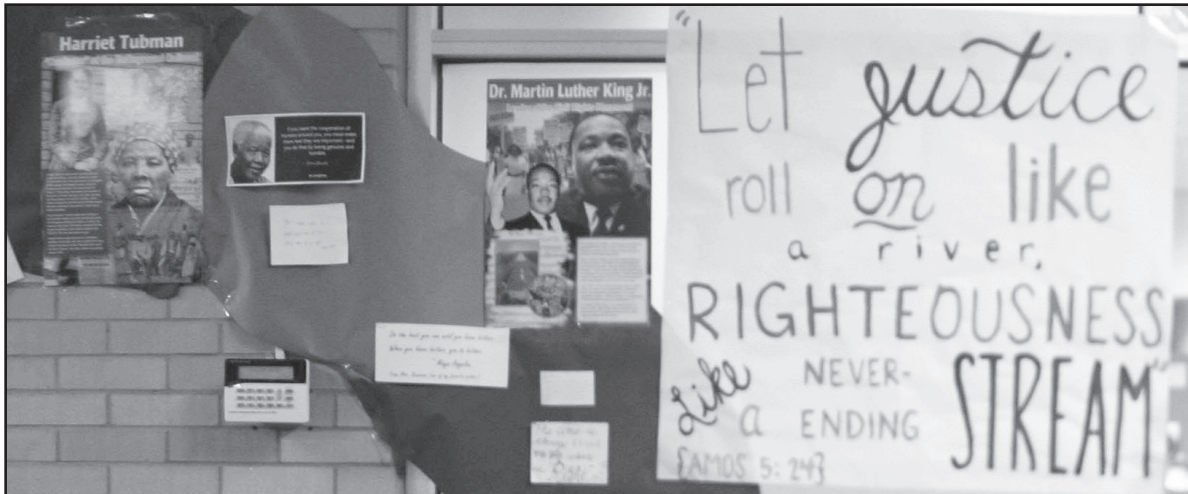
Talking positive, according to Mr. Davids needs to be constantly be put in front of people. "It's not going to magically happen," said Davids. "[Talking Positive] needs to

be emphasized. It needs to be constantly put in front of people because you're changing a mindset that we have, and it takes time."

According to teacher Ms. Sharon Bultema, the campaign focuses on spreading the Talk Positive message to teachers mainly, but the message definitely should extend to students.

"We just want to try to talk more positive among ourselves and then in our classrooms and hopefully set an example," said Bultema. With everything that's going on, said Bultema, it's easy to complain and look at the negative side of things, but people just need to look in the good and give encouragement and compliments.

The coffee mugs and posters are meant to remind people to talk positive, according to Bultema. They started off as an idea to spread the campaign around school, said Bultema, and by January Davids had gotten those things for school.



Students celebrate Black History Month by contributing to this collage outside the office.

Photo by Jeff Devries

Collage embraces Black History

Jordan Bivins
Reporter

This year Student Council partnered with Better Illiana Through Better Understanding to put up a collage outside the main office for Black History Month.

The collage contains posters and quotes from famous athletes, politicians, writers, and activists in the Black community on a blue spread of paper symbolizing Martin Luther King Junior's reference to Amos 5:24 which says, "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

Better Illiana sponsor Mr. Rob Lagerwey explained that Illiana has done events for Black History Month in the past but such events have been

inconsistent. He hopes that Illiana continues to make the celebration a yearly occurrence.

Lagerwey added that he wants Illiana students to gain "an awareness of contributions of African Americans and other under-recognized groups and an appreciation for the richness that we have in having a variety of people from all different backgrounds." He also explained that Black History Month is for everyone to realize how many difficulties Blacks had to experience in the past.

Many students are happy to see that Illiana is finally recognizing the achievements of Blacks in American History. Senior Johnathan Lightfoot said, "I appreciate it because I've been here four years now and haven't no-

ticed any celebration of Black History Month.... It's really nice that part of your culture gets embraced."

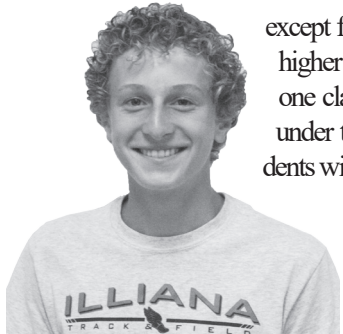
Some students, however, aren't particularly excited about the gesture Illiana showed. Junior Benjie Winn said, "There's so much more behind our history.... Our history has never been peaceful. We've been beat up." He also felt the school's administration didn't really care and that they just didn't want a repeat of last year's events, where several Illiana students tore down posters Black students put on their lockers. "They only put the mural up to quiet us."

Better Illiana Through Better Understanding plans to have a Black-History-Month-inspired chapel at the end of February.

Inconvenient truth: vouchers are toxic

Stay away from me, said Haleigh, local sick student. *I'm sick.* Nobody wants to hear that at school. Nobody should. Why? Life shouldn't work like that.

One reason keeps many of us attending school when sick: the exam voucher, the flawed system in which nothing good ensues except for maybe a slightly higher semester grade in one class. It's a given that under this policy, sick students will still attend school.



Grant Gibson
Co-Feature Editor

Don't get me wrong; the voucher incentivizes me to come to school as well. I don't have to stress over or deal with an-

other exam, preferably my hardest one, if I miss less than two full days of school. I fall to its tricks too, even if my parents are really the ones enforcing the rule.

But that doesn't change the fact that nobody wants sickness spreading with ease around their school. People are constantly catching colds during the late fall and early spring especially. Those times are important to everyone: ACT takers wanting to get the most out of their tests, runners going for the gold in the 3A State competition, or a student preparing to take the stage in a musical.

A snuffle will distract a student in the middle of his math portion, a cough will ruin any runner's chances of placing in the top ten, and a lingering virus will infect half the cast if given a chance.

But students don't think about those things. All they consider is if they get to skip the Algebra II exam. Meanwhile, they infect others along their path with the flu. That's the sort of selfishness our current exam voucher policy encourages.

Preventing illness aside, some other practical benefits actually accompany the ditching of our beloved-by-most voucher. If we're all obliged to take our seven (or, depending on one's schedule, six) exams, we'd be expected to study for one more exam. On top of that, would-be vouched exams are usually more difficult tests. Illiana's teachers are observant enough to know that a few more hours of their students' studying for their hardest exams are prone to overload us too much. So, many will make their exams easier in light of the extra test. A grade-point average won't go down because of one hard test from one hard subject; most test scores reflect semester grades.

And if they don't reflect grades, well, by golly, they reflect knowledge. That's the point of every single test: to assess the student's learning. Boiled-down grades are just your effort (homework) and the retention of that effort (tests). Taking an exam helps students, and teachers more importantly, know what they know and need to know or work on.

Administration should learn a thing or two here as well. Said Mr. Boonstra, "I have never heard of a more effective method of rewarding good attendance" than the exam voucher policy. This begs the question: If good attendance results in sick students causing a nightmare for themselves and others, what does the top of the Illiana pyramid really care about?

I'll answer for you. High attendance numbers will make Illiana look good on paper. Coming to school and being just another student, sick or not, is extremely rewarding for both Illiana's administration, looking to show the school's greatness through statistics, and voucher-hungry students. Getting rest and staying healthy is poorly advocated, if advocated at all, in this building. Once you get past the numbers and actually view the sickness-ridden school as it is, is the bottom line really worth it? More importantly, as Christians, do we care about our student body's overall healthiness, or do we care about the bottom line, the deceiving stats of high attendance?



Photo courtesy of Beth Boonstra

Seniors Max Men, Paul Kamp, Jordan Miller, Payton Smit, Matthew Haak, and Johnathan Lightfoot take their seat at "The Yard," Chicago Shakespeare Theatre's new space, where they visited to see "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Seniors visit Chicago Shakespeare Theatre

On cold winter morning, students enjoy laughs at 'Midsummer Night's Dream'

Beth Boonstra
Co-Editor in Chief

On Friday, Feb. 2 seniors attended Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater on Navy Pier. Students also stayed for a question and answer session and lunch on the pier.

Seniors are currently reading "Hamlet" in English classes. English Teacher Miss Sara Johnson said, "I love that Chicago Shakespeare makes Shakespeare accessible to students of all ages - I think they do a great job of "overacting" in a way that helps everyone understand what's happening."

Johnson and others said their favorite part of the performance was Puck's closing

scene when he pretended to pull an invisible light switch and the entire theater went pitch black.

Senior Nascha Hladek appreciated the cool effects and having fun with friends on the pier for lunch.

AP English teacher Mr. Jeff DeVries said, "We read Shakespeare because as much as if not more than any other writer Shakespeare sees into human nature. He gets people. He gets people in a variety of contexts. He gets different kinds of people. He gets people in different situations. He tells stories in a way that reveals us to ourselves, which is what stories are supposed to do." Many of these deeper insights of Shakespeare were touched on in the question and answer session and in classes.

As only 70 tickets were available, seniors woke up early on Jan. 24 to purchase them before others. Some students were slowed by the ice-covered streets that morning and lost their spots on the trip.



www.chicagoshakes.com

Titiana falls in love with Nick Bottom after waking from her slumber.

Math team holds positive, negative outlooks on progress

Cassie Laninga
Co-News Editor

Illiana's math team traveled an hour away to Lemont High School on Wednesday, Jan. 31, and competed against larger schools and college prep schools.

"Despite having only 4 people on the 5 person calculator team, we still [did well] out of the 20 teams," said senior Esther

Lagerwey.

In spite of Lagerwey's positive outlook on the math team's efforts, other team members had different things to say.

"All of us did poorly except for Matthew Haak and I, and maybe Austin Clark," said senior Andrew Feikema. "I did very well on the individual portion."

Senior Matthew Haak said, "Andrew and I didn't

practice together before the event. We were supposed to do the practice problems together, but he did them on his own. So we didn't work as well together in the actual event."

Senior Austin Clark said, "Normally we've done better, except for this year. I don't know what happened. I'm proud of us, but we just haven't had success like in years past."

"The freshmen and

sophomores are not performing as well as the juniors and seniors which is pulling us down," said Haak. "They need more time to get used to the contest format."

Freshmen Simon Molenaar said Haak's statement was true.

"It's been a struggle to perform at a higher level. We don't have as many people as the other grades," said Molenaar.

Go Club feeds hungry with Night Ministries in Chicago

Maddie Holesinger
Co-Editor in Chief

On Thursday, February 8, four of Illiana’s faculty and seven students, including one alumnus, braved the cold to help serve with Night Ministries.

Night Ministries is a Chicago-based organization that provides health care, housing, and human connection through a network of shelters, a youth outreach van, and a health outreach bus.

Illiana’s Go Club partners with the bus by providing a warm meal for those waiting for their checkup along with those who just need a meal to fill their stomachs.

“If you can help, you should help,” said Max Men, an Illiana senior.

Right after school, students who weren’t able to come to Chicago along with those who could, gathered to help make soup, salads, and a variety of sandwiches to serve.

“I loved tasting how great the food was,” said junior Parish Towns, “because that meant that the people we served got great food that night.”

“We [volunteers] do a lot of work, but I like that

we get to have time as an Illiana community in the kitchen where we are all cooking together,” said Sara Johnson, sponsor of Go Club. “I love the conversations that spring out of that, and I love that then we get to take that community that we’ve built small here at Illiana to a bigger part of the community.”

Illiana has partnered with Night Ministries for over five years, and for the last three years Go Club has been volunteering in the same location.

“We are hands on in the community [where we serve] and I know they're recognizing us. That to me shows that we are building relationships, and that, to me, is what community service should always be about,” said Johnson.

At the stop, the bus provides check-ups, warm clothes, and drinks, while Illiana students set up tables to serve food. Any extras go back to Night Ministries because they stop several places.

“Seeing how happy one of the little boys got when we gave him and his family food, and realizing that this actually makes a difference in their lives, made it all worth it,” said Emma West, a senior who had never served with Night Ministries before.

Gorter, students prepare to explore Colorado



Photo courtesy of Doug Gorter
Two of Gorter’s former students take in the view from Mt. St. Helens.

Dominic Turkstra
Reporter

Mr. Gorter will be bringing eight Illiana students to Colorado this summer from July 16-20. The Students will be tent camping near Buena Vista and exploring the mountainous region together.

Mr. Gorter is planning on taking the students hiking to the bottom of Black Canyon of the Gunnison. Then the students will go whitewater rafting.

The next day the students will climb a mountain, which Mr. Gorter explained was called a 14er, since the elevation of the mountain is above 14,000 feet.

Earlier in Mr. Gorter’s life, he had taken students from a different school and climbed Mt. St. Helens in Washington.

Sophomore Dontreal Butler said that he was excited to sign up and thought it would be a good chance for him to meet new people and make new friendships.



An unfinished hallway greets visitors at the new campus.

www.illianachristian.org

Davids leads tours of new campus

Kade Bouwer
Co-Sports Editor

Lance Davids, ICHS teacher and spiritual director, is now offering tours of the new campus. The first tour happened in January.

Davids said, “We want to let people see the building. There has been so many people a part of this who helped fund it, so we want to show them what they have been a part of. We have been showing the

outside of the new campus through videos, but you can't really see the inside, and that is where everything is going to happen. The tours also allows us to answer questions that people have. Sometimes there is a lot of misinformation out there and there is always a time during the tour where they can ask questions and I can answer them.”

“I think everyone should go to see what is going on,” said Brian Sylvester, sci-

ence teacher at Illiana and someone who took a tour. “They can see the progress inside because [on the outside] it doesn’t look like much is getting done, so going inside you look at it and go, ‘Yeah, this is really going to get done. This is really going to happen on time.’”

The tours will continue until the building is complete. The next tour is on February 24. Contact the school office for more information.

Praise Crowd leads worship at Crossroads

Alex Wondaal
Co-Sports Editor

On February 11, Illiana’s Praise Crowd attended Crossroads Community Church, (at the 9:00 and 10:30 services) leading worship and preaching about the word “sorry.”

Seniors Payton Smit, Valerie Swets, Jonathan Lightfoot, and Emma West led with singing. Seniors

Jeff Kroll and Ashton Wilson played acoustic and electric guitars respectively while junior Hannah Last played drums. They played five songs. Praise Crowd members who weren’t leading worship attended either one of the two services.

Director of Spiritual Development and Praise Crowd Sponsor Lance Davids preached about how apologizing should not only

be saying the word “sorry” but also an action. At the time, Crossroads Community Church was in the midst of a sermon series focused on specific words.

Wilson said he enjoyed “playing in a new setting with familiar people and leading as high schoolers.”

“I liked how terrible we sounded rehearsing and then how it eventually sounded great,” said Lightfoot.

New year, new campus, new policies

Policy change #1:
A one period absense should not be counted as a half day absence.

Cassie Laninga
Co-News Editor

Rationale: Trying to schedule dentist and doctor appointments around busy school schedules can be difficult. Sometimes our only option is to schedule them during school hours. Leaving 25 minutes before the day ends or arriving late to first period should not count as a half day absence because it is nowhere near a half day of school. If we count 3 periods as a half day, a student can miss up to 12 periods and still have their voucher. Therefore, when a student misses a period, whether it be in the middle of a day or the end, the record can say they missed just one period. Once it adds up to 13 periods, the student’s voucher can be taken away. This will not encourage a student to skip out at the end of the day because missing 12 periods of one class will only hurt their grade. This system is much more equal and fair and can be easily calculated in a student’s attendance records.

Policy change #2:
Allow responsible students to leave campus during lunch period.

Haleigh Olthof
Co-News Editor

Rationale: Every time Illiana has a half day, many students meet with friends and go out to lunch. In Indiana, ICHS won’t be able to let out earlier than 2pm, but that doesn’t mean students shouldn’t have the same opportunity for a fun, social meal. An open campus lunch policy would also give students more options for lunch than those offered by Illiana. Students could opt for some healthier options at nearby restaurants like Jimmy John’s (4 minutes from the new campus) or Subway (6 min), or could treat themselves to McDonald’s (6 min) or Taco Bell (9 min). The competition with the school lunch system might even inspire improvement to that system. As a precaution, students would need a parent’s permission and might even have to earn the privilege with good behavior or attendance. Of course, any students who abused this privilege would lose it.

Policy change #3:
Change the exam voucher policy to allow three absences for a death in the immediate family.

Lauren Curtis
Co-Arts Editor

Rationale: Losing a loved one can be difficult. It can be a struggle for some to get back to school after losing a loved because of the overwhelmingness of it all (classes, school work, crowds etc.). Others aren’t ready to go back because they haven’t had enough time to mourn. And with only day allowed for absences, students aren’t able to attend their loved one’s wake. Students should be allowed up to three days off for funeral and mourning time of a loved one. That way, they have had a little time to grieve at home without having to worry about a voucher. With life and its uncertainties, it wouldn’t be fair to take a voucher away from a grieving student who just lost their loved one.



Policy change #6:
All textbooks should be electronic and post all assignments on Google Classroom.

Liz VanDrunen
Co-Feature Editor

Rationale: In 2017, 3.58 billion people worldwide used the internet according to Statista Inc. Never before have we had so much information at our fingertips, yet we still have to bring home our books at the end of the day. With all students to have Chromebooks starting fall 2018, all students will have access to the internet. Books can move now to electronic editions so that students won’t have to bring home any books. And if teachers post all assignments, students who happen to forget their homework at home will not be penalized the next day since they would be able to retrieve all their assignments.

Policy change #7:
Allow phone use during passing periods and lunch.

Kade Bouwer
Co-Sports Editor

Rationale: Changing the phone rules to match actual current use of phones is something Illiana should consider. The rules, though rarely followed, state that phones can only be used during break, lunch, and before or after school. Even these limited free times have geographic restrictions. Students are only supposed to use phones while standing by outside doors. While walking through the halls in between periods, many students go on their phones for a couple of minutes, a freedom that is not allowed according to the handbook, but few teachers enforce this rule. Eliminating all of these inconsistencies in the handbook will clear out a lot of outdated rules that are no longer followed or enforced by anyone. If a phone rule is not being consistently enforced, then it should probably be abolished.

Policy change #8
Scrap online ordering and allow students to pay for hot lunch with cash or prepaid punch cards.

Cate Peerbolte
Co-Feature Editor

Rationale: Online ordering was supposed to streamline operations and reduce waste. But this has not been the case. Some days there is not enough food and students receive something they didn’t want and didn’t pay for; other days still have extra food, defeating the entire purpose of online ordering. Another problem with our current system is absences. If a student is not at school to claim his or her food because of sickness, field trip, or a COP appointment, all occasions typically unknown a month in advance, families are still charged for the food. By going back to a cash system, students are able to decide if they would like to purchase food at lunch time. This is more convenient for students and their families because if there isn’t food for lunch in the house they are able to purchase one. Also if a student forgets a lunch, he or she can purchase a meal instead of having to fill up on unhealthy vending machine snacks.

As we countdown the days until the opening of Illiana’s new campus, The Echo staff has suggestions for a few new policies for the school.

Policy change #4:

Start school earlier in August so that first semester exams fall before Christmas break.

Maddie Holesinger

Co-Editor in Chief

Rationale: Exam week is stressful without a doubt. Dreading the exams we have to take when we get back to school weighs us down throughout the entire two weeks of Christmas break. Even if we don’t study, in the back of our mind some part of us is thinking about what exam we want to vouch and what review packets we still need to fill out.

Most students would agree that holding finals before Christmas break, like most schools, would reduce stress, but what most of us don’t realize is that it would mean starting the school year earlier in August. In our current building starting earlier was not tenable because of the summer heat.

The new building, however, will have air conditioning, so starting earlier in August is no longer a problem. Moving exams earlier will likely result in better grades because students are in their school routine, and vacation would be a true break from our studies.

Policy change #5:

Create a Student Activities Club that would plan fun events for students.

Beth Boonstra

Co-Editor in Chief

Rationale: Student Council, Go Club, and the PIE Board provide several fun events for the student body, but it social planning not their primary purpose, so they don’t and shouldn’t focus on that. A club created specifically for planning and hosting fun student activities for community and entertainment would be able to do a lot more for the students. Illiana used to have a lot more activities in its past and could create some new ones as well. Students could enjoy new activities such as a Jeopardy trivia night, a talent show, an improv night, teacher vs. student games, amazing race scavenger hunt, tailgate party, acknowledge student birthdays, Christmas caroling, and more. The club could also help with other events such as school dances, Donkey Basketball, Dodgeball, The Show, or spirit week as needed.



Policy change #9

Start school at 7:00a.m.

Alex Wondaal

Co-Sports Editor

Rationale: “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.” That’s a quote from Ben Franklin Illiana should take to heart. Waking up earlier sounds awful to plenty of students, but getting out of school earlier, making better use of our stronger morning creativity, and saving gas and travel time by staying out of rush hour traffic would make the rough mornings worth it.

This change would encourage longer practices after school resulting in better musicians, actors, and athletes. Sports teams wouldn’t be late for events. Finally, according to The Canadian Institutes of Health Research, earlier bedtimes and morning alarms lead to a better overall well-being. Rise and shine Illiana!

Policy change #10

Allow students to go outside for a “recess” to let them stretch their legs and get a breath of fresh air.

Jo Mulder

Co-Photo Editor

Rationale: The new school should come with a new policy regarding outdoor time. According to a study done by the German Fraunhofer Institute for Building Physics IBP, going outside for fresh air and sunlight keeps up productivity in the classroom. The “recess” would allow students to get said fresh air and stretch their legs outside. This privilege should be given to students who can prove to be responsible and mature in this outdoor time; if not, the privilege can be taken away until they can prove otherwise. The time might also be beneficial to retrieve items from vehicles without needing a pass to get back in from the office.

Policy change #11

Drop club periods and have clubs meet at different times outside of the daily schedule throughout the week.

Natalie Togtman

Co-Arts Editor

Rationale: Clubs meeting at different times would be beneficial to students because it allows students to be a part of multiple clubs and to meet in clubs longer.

Illiana offers an overwhelming variety of clubs to choose from making it very difficult to decide which club to join. If clubs met at multiple times students could choose to join more than one club

Clubs currently only meet for a twenty-five minute time period giving very little time to accomplish almost anything. If clubs met at different times, groups would be able to get more done.

Our policy change also gives the possibility of an early dismissal twice a week giving students more free time outside of school, or students would have the option to stay at school to participate in activities that meet at that time.

‘Black Panther’ gives hero for our times

Beth Boonstra
Co-Editor in Chief

With a 90% black cast and the its message of empowerment for those who’ve been ignored, Black Panther, more than any other Marvel film, powerfully captures the zeitgeist of its time.

With plenty of action for all the diehard superhero fans, Director Ryan Coogler’s Black Panther had many on the edges of their seats. This film is set in land of Wakanda, home to four ancient tribes and ruled by the Black Panther. The nation of Wakanda is an inspiring mix of the old and the new, the ancient tribal culture of Africa and the modern age of technology and discovery. As the Black Panther takes his role as king at the beginning of the movie, he encounters several difficulties, the most notable of which is a challenge for the throne from a long-lost cousin, an outsider, who has his own vision for Wakanda. Their struggle for power fills this movie with twists, turns, and laughs.

Let’s talk cast. Sure there’s been plenty of movies with a black lead, and there have even been movies consisting of entirely black casts,

but never has there been such a large scale movie made up of a largely black cast. Chadwick Boseman starred as the protagonist T’Challa, or more lovingly known as the Black Panther. As if his wonderful performance wasn’t enough, he was surrounded by many more talented actors and actresses such as Michael B. Jordan as Erik the antagonist, Lupita Nyong’o as the brainy Nakia, Danai Gurira as the warrior Okoye, and Forest Whitaker as the tribal priest just to name a few.

After being released on Feb. 16, Black Panther was the biggest opening weekend and the highest grossing North American film that has ever been directed by a black filmmaker. It broke records as the biggest opening weekend for any non-sequel movie.

What stirred crowds and hearts more than any plot ever could was what this movie meant. This movie was one of the first that was able to show some kids a superhero that looked like them. This movie was empowering to Blacks, and it respectfully embraced their culture. Women were featured as the strongest warriors and sharpest minds. Okoye, a strong, bald African woman, was eas-

ily the most skilled and savage warrior. The Black Panther’s little sister Nakia was no typical princess. She was the one who was able to harness the power of Vibranium through her groundbreaking inventions.

The battling philosophies within this movie as the Black Panther and his alter-ego fought for power mirrored ideas of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. Erik wanted to use the power and technology of Wakanda to weaponize all those around the world who wish for freedom. The Black Panther on the other hand opposed this idea and favored empowering the weak through education and equipping the needy with the opportunity

that Wakanda had to offer.

This movie is rated PG-13 and is a great movie for all, black or white, male or female. What a great message for our nation and especially within Black History



Photo courtesy of Denofgeek.com

Showcasing Black-owned businesses

Popper-Razzi popping strong in East Hazel Crest

Beth Boonstra
Co-Editor in Chief

Mike Jones started Popper-Razzi Gourmet Popcorn in 2005. This business is in the heart of East Hazel Crest and provides ten unique flavors to its loyal customers.

As the owner of a black business, Jones spoke of the tremendous support he has gotten from the community, especially from other African-Americans. The same loyal customers have been with him from the beginning, supported him through the recession, and are still coming back for more today.

The secret to the popcorn, according to Jones, is that it is popped fresh everyday. Popper-Razzi uses the highest quality ingredients, doesn’t skimp on the flavor, and avoids additives. “That’s how we do it, and that’s how we’ve been successful,” said Jones.

Jones spoke to some of the struggles of running a Black-Owned Business, saying, “You do have more to prove and you have to make sure your product stands out among any other products because I do think you’re scrutinized a little more for being a Black-Owned Business.”

Jones first got the idea to go into popcorn when he was working downtown as an IT guy and a corporate manager. He’d walk past Garrett’s Popcorn and saw the long lines and high demand. He thought that gourmet popcorn should also be available for his own community. “[Garrett’s Popcorn] just had a fifty year head start on me,” said Jones. “That’s it.”

Beside the East Hazel Crest location, the popcorn can be purchased at www.popper-razzi.com. Jones said, “I ship popcorn all over the world.”

Jones plans to expand the business in the future. “You never know where we may POP up next,” he said with a laugh.



Owner Mike Jones serves behind the counter at his gourmet popcorn shop.



www.instagram.com

Amazcakes posts a few of their unique treats on their instagram.

Amazcakes dazzles with pastry panache

Lauren Curtis
Co-Arts Editor

Amazcakes is a bakery in downtown Chicago that specializes in custom made pastries. They make yummy desserts such as cakes, cupcakes, cakepops, pretzels, chocolate covered strawberries and cookies.

Lesha Williams started Amazecakes in 2013 at the age of 22. Williams discovered her passion for baking while working at Mariano’s as a bakery clerk. As time went on, she slowly learned how to decorate cakes and saw that she was good at it. This made her want to start a business of her own, even though she had no schooling and knew little to nothing about running a small business. She had to work hard to get customers to buy her pastries because she was working out of her house, but now she has a shop.

Today, her industry has paid off. Amazcakes began to really take off in 2015 and now they have over 17.8 thousand followers on Instagram. On average the bakery fulfills about 15 big orders a day. Williams stressed that the main goal of the business is to keep expanding while continuing to keep customers satisfied.

Daisy’s Catering Cafe features vegan delights

Natalie Togtman
Co-Arts Editor

Daisy’s Catering Cafe is a vegan and vegetarian restaurant located in Phoenix, Illinois.

The restaurant is owned Robert Well who decided to open the business in Feb. 2010.

Wells said, “I decided to start this business because when my father was younger he had a cancer scare due to the unhealthy lifestyle he had been living. I didn’t want anyone else to go through anything like that so we opened

this restaurant to inspire others to eat healthier.”

The restaurant serves items such as lentil tacos, avocado wraps, spaghetti, bean curds, and desserts such as banana pudding.

Wells said, “All my life I’ve always wanted to own something that I could call my own so owning this restaurant is a big deal because when I see this restaurant, I see success. I didn’t just want to be a successful business owner I wanted to be a successful human being and owning this restaurant completed the goal

of being a successful human being.”

Being an African American Business owner has its fair share of challenges though. Wells said, “It was hard enough owning a small business, but it becomes twice as hard when you’re an African American business owner because we are not given the same opportunities as other ethnic groups in the sense that most other ethnic groups are just given opportunities but we have to take them. A lot of people doubted me, but I thank God everyday for allowing me to own this business.”

Illiana basketball honors former coaches, players, athletic directors

Lauren Curtis
Co-Arts Editor

On Tuesday, Feb 6, JV and Varsity boys played Wheaton Academy at their last home game of the season. The event was also the last home game at the Lansing campus. Before the game, the athletic department commemorated the basketball Alumni; around 30-40 former players, coaches and athletic directors as far back as the 1960s attended.

Boys varsity coach Grant Sikkema said, “I wanted to make sure that we didn’t overlook the significance this

place has had for all those who had a part in our basketball program. This place has been special to a lot of people over the course of decades, and we wanted to give all those who could make it a chance to enjoy one more nostalgic moment. It was nice as well for our current players to see that they are a part of a greater community, and how special this experience has been to so many others before them.”

Basketball alumnus, Brad Doktor, said “I think it is very nice that they dedicated the last game of the season to us. It really makes me feel very appreciated.”



Photo courtesy of Lauren Curtis
Former Illiana basketball players receive recognition.

Best memories from Illiana basketball games

Chuck Zandstra: “I loved the Chicago Christian games too, coaching in them and playing in them. I specifically remember being dunked on by Derrick Sanders... I just looked up and he was dunkin’ on me.”

Brad Doktor: “ The Chicago Christian games were always fun. It was fun to watch because we didn’t really care on the floor, but we look up at the stands and it was always kind of funny to watch them.”

Suzanne Jonkman: “Junior Year, we had an incredible fan base. We went all the way to super sectionals that year and we had three yellow buses full of students to cheer us on. In fact, they would come to many of our games and we would just pack the gym. It was a lot of school spirit and camaraderie.”

Darren DeBoer: “Best moments were playing with my friends at practice and playing in front of a huge crowd at Homecoming.”

Sports Catch-ups

Boys Basketball

Kade Bouwer
Co-Sports Editor

After a promising 3-0 start, the boys basketball season careened off course, losing their last 8 games and 11 out of their last 12. They ended up at the bottom of their conference with a conference record of 1-12. The record for their

season was 8-18.

Junior Isaac Gibson said, “I think it was partially because the competition got a little harder, but partially our fault. We were making dumb mistakes at the wrong time.”

“We were very streaky. I feel like some games we came out to play and some games we didn’t,” said junior forward Colton DeJong. “We lost against Fenton, which is

one of the worst teams in our conference, and the next night we came very close to beating one of the best teams in our conference, [IC Catholic Prep].”

Senior guard Payton Smit said, “I think it came down to our practice level. It is tough with a long season to constantly practice at 100 percent intensity. I think that was the reason for our streakiness.”

Girls Basketball

Cate Peerbolte
Co-Feature Editor

The varsity girls basketball season came to a close on February 7, when they lost against Harlan in the regional game. Senior Emma West said, “We could’ve played better in the last game, but the other team deserved to move on.

Throughout the season we learned to trust each other on defense and to have patience on offense.”

Senior Lauren DeYoung said, “We definitely improved from the first few games. Our turnovers improved a lot and we worked hard running our offensive plays.”

Despite of the team’s 3-26 record, West said, “I

don’t think the record reflected how hard we worked or how we played. This was the most encouraging team I’ve been on and the setbacks helped us grow as players and as teammates.”

Junior Mickey Boss said, “I am looking forward to playing new schools next year. I am also excited to play in a new gym with the incoming juniors.”

Cheerleading

Liz VanDrunen
Co-Feature Editor

The cheerleading team finished its season on Feb. 19 when the boys’ varsity basketball team had its last game at the Regional Tournament.

The cheerleaders had their Sectional Competition on Jan. 27, and got 10th place.

Senior Gracie Bultema said, “The season was amazing. We did really well in our games and competitions, and we gave our best efforts.”

With Illiana’s move to Indiana, the cheerleading team will no longer be an official sporting team because the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) recognizes cheerleading only as an

activity. However, through the Indiana Association of School Principals (IASP), they will still be allowed to compete in competitions, on both the state and regular levels, and in sporting events.

Bultema, giving advice for the next year’s team, said, “They just need to keep giving 110% and pushing themselves, and they’ll do great.”

Wrestling

Jo Mulder
Co-Sports Editor

Illiana wrestling finished their season this month by sending senior Isaac Lyzenga and sophomore Brandon Schutt to state but losing in team sectionals. Coach Dean

Bosman said that the team had come a long way since the beginning of the season.

“We’re beating teams that beat us earlier in the season,” said Bosman. He added that wrestlers like sophomores Dante Sullivan and junior Connor

Robertson had gone from having no experience to being one of the best on the team in a single season.

The team also said a bittersweet goodbye to Lyzenga and according to Schutt he will be missed next season.

Male Athlete of the Month

Senior guard Payton Smit gave a spark to the basketball team this year. Smit was active on the defensive and offensive ends. He was the team’s best defender and was the third highest scorer on the team.

“[Smit] has a lot of energy. He is quick on defense; he is all over the place. He comes to play everyday,” said junior forward Colton DeJong. “He is one of the leaders on our team. He is always positive in the locker room and he is never getting on us and never blaming us.”



Female Athlete of the Month

Emma West recently finished her fourth year of Illiana basketball and her second wyear on the varsity squad.

She said her favorite parts were playing in Super Sectionals her junior year and growing closer to great friends. She hopes to continue playing intramural basketball at Hope College next year.

“I’ll miss pushing myself every day and playing with my teammates,” said West.

Junior teammate Mickey Boss said of West: “She was a great leader; she pushed us through the entire season. She always had a great attitude and was an awesome example for younger players.”

Editorial

Leave comfort zone of self segregation

Students fill the tables in the cafeteria and the lobby, talking with their friends between bites of sandwiches. They sit in these same seats every day and spend break time with many of the same people. These are the friends who know them best. Often, they like the same music and movies, they dress similarly, they take the same classes, and they agree on important issues. One other thing they have in common? Their race. Anyone who pays attention knows lunch tables and break groups are, for the most part, color-coded.

This self-segregation isn't as evident at other times of the day. In class, on sports teams, in drama productions, and at lockers, many students interact with people of different races, and some even form friendships. Somehow, though, these friendships don't quite fit into our "go-to" groups, the people we choose to hang out with. We huddle in our comfortable circles, following some twisted guideline that tells us where we belong during

breaks and on weekends.

We are not talking here about some kind of overt racism on anyone's part. We acknowledge that Illiana has occasionally had such problems in the past, but right now we aren't talking about a fringe element that sometimes does or says ugly things. We're talking about the whole student body--black and white,

students continue to segregate ourselves?

Maybe it's because we are superficial and judge by outward appearances. We never get close enough to see beyond differences.

Or maybe it's because we don't like being uncomfortable. Inviting someone who's different from us into our friend group feels a little weird, so we just don't

look, talk, act and think just like we do, we miss out on the knowledge of other cultures and perspectives, not to mention the potential friendships with so many awesome people.

What would it take for us to change?

It might take asking a friend, a locker buddy, or a teammate to sit with you at lunch. It might take sitting at his or her lunch table. It might take merging both of your tables into one. Some of us might scoff at that idea, some might think it's impossible, but what would happen if one person took that crazy step into the unknown? After any ruffled feathers settled, we'd probably be a better school.

If we are to be the body of Christ, we can't isolate ourselves from each other. Revelation 7:9 says that one day we will praise God together as believers "from every nation, tribe, people and language." As Christians, we should be working toward that unity here on Earth. It will take work, but with God's help we can tear down the walls that divide us, even at our lunch tables.

"If we are to be the body of Christ, we can't isolate ourselves from each other."

Hispanic and Asian, all of us. ICHS has by policy officially pursued increasing the diversity of its student body over the last five to ten years, and we believe that the vast majority of the students at this school--students of any color--also want to see that diversity get embraced.

So all of this begs the question: why then do we

do it.

Or maybe we're scared. No one likes feeling rejected, and so we don't risk reaching out to people of different races or ethnic groups because we're afraid we'll be snubbed.

Why do we self-segregate? We really don't know. But we do know it matters.

By spending all of our free time with people who

End of search for caring church

We've all been in situations where we've felt uncomfortable or unwelcomed. The worst place to feel this way is at church. I've heard horror stories from people that have gone to a new church and felt unwelcome or unwanted. It completely turned them off from all other churches.

Personally, I've never experienced this feeling because I attend a wonderful church. Bias? Maybe. Accurate?

Definitely. My church's old slogan was "The end of your search for a caring church." And, boy, was that spot on.



Riley Goodwin
Co-News Editor

Recently my church has gone through a lot of changes including getting a new pastor and merging two churches together. Usually things like this don't work and can even result in the church splitting apart, but the exact opposite happened. Sauk Village Church of God and The Crossroads Church of God came together, kept the name 'The Crossroads' and welcomed our new pastor, James Schulker. Since then we have done nothing but love each other and the community.

"[The Crossroads] has made me feel more welcomed and appreciated than any other church I've been to," said senior Emily Montalvo.

"Warm, very welcoming church family!" said guest Carol Ervins. "So much love and support. I thank God for the wonderful people he has placed in my life."

"The warmest and most family-oriented church ever," said church member Joyce Gaston. "Loving God and loving people!"

Like I said, I may be a little biased, but my opinion is not uncommon.

"Becoming a loving/welcoming church means changing the churches DNA, their culture, from exclusive to inclusive," said Pastor James Schulker. "Most churches start out loving in nature—why go to a church that you don't like everyone?—but after time people become so comfortable with their church they begin to close off to others."

The Bible calls us to be loving, accepting, and welcoming people, and that is exactly what my church strives to be. As a family, we lift each other up, whether that be someone we've gone to church with for years, or someone who just walked through the doors. We greet everyone with a hug and a handshake, and it resonates with people. When I hear people talking about their churches and how they walk in, listen to the Word, and walk out without talking to anyone, it makes me think, "Wow, they'd be in for a real treat if they came to my church." Something like that is unheard of at The Crossroads.

"What I would say to a church that wants to change their DNA/Culture is first the Pastor needs to remember why he/she is there," said Schulker. "If they don't have a passion for the people, then the church will never become loving/welcoming to the fullest. Then the leader needs to get the message out to his/her leaders until they demonstrate it and finally to everyone in the congregation... It's part of our Vision statement: Loving God, Loving People and Intersecting Lives with Christ."

If your church isn't one that shakes peoples' hands or gives them a hug when they walk in, maybe you could be the first to change that. Maybe you could start creating a sense of acceptance or a welcoming feeling at your church if there isn't one already there. Trust me, it'll make a difference. It may take some time, but sooner or later you'll notice a sense of joy radiating from your congregation.

the Echo)))

Editors-in-chief

Beth Boonstra
Maddie Holesinger

News

Haleigh Othof
Cassie Laninga
Riley Goodwin

Feature

Grant Gibson
Liz VanDrunen
Cate Peerbolte

Arts

Natalie Togtman
Lauren Curtis

Sports

Alex Wondaal
Kade Bouwer
Jo Mulder

Photos

Cassie Laninga
Grant Gibson
Jo Mulder
Cate Peerbolte

Advisor

Jeff DeVries

Editorials, unless otherwise stated, have been written by an editor and reflect the opinion of the majority of the Echo staff. Opinions expressed are not necessarily that of the administration, faculty, or student organizations.

Letters to the editor can be submitted to the advisor or sent to the school. All letters must be signed and must not exceed 250 words. They will be printed provided there is enough room and content is not offensive to the general public. Names will not be wfor doing so.

Please remember to go to one of the Culver's in Highland, Merrillville, Schererville, or Crown Point, IN on Wednesday, Feb. 28 to help raise funds for the DR and Uganda mission trips. Go to Illiana's website to print off a flyer.

Match the Echo Editor's favorite love song:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. You and Me
by Edwin McCain | A. Beth |
| 2. The Things You do for Love
by 10cc | B. Maddie |
| 3. You're the Best Thing About Me
by U2 | C. Haleigh |
| 4. Love Sory
by Taylor Swift | D. Cassie |
| 5. Crazy in Love
by Beyonce featuring JAY-Z | E. Riley |
| 6. I Don't Dance
by Lee Brice | F. Grant |
| 7. Man Who Can't be Moved
by The Script | G. Liz |
| 8. Put Your Head on my Shoulder
by Paul Anka | H. Cate |
| 9. Just the Way You Are
by Bruno Mars | I. Natalie |
| 10. The Way - Spanglish version
by Arianna Grande | J. Lauren |
| 11. Crash my Party
by Luke Bryan | K. Jo |
| 12. Roselita
by Bruce Springsteen | M. Mr. DeVris |
| 13. Africa by Toto
by Toto | N. Kade |
| 14. Summer by Calvin Harris | O. Alex |

I-E, 2-, 3-M, 4-C, 5-N, 6-K, 7-G, 8-D, 9-A, 10-J, 11-I, 12-O, 13-F, 14-H

The newspaper is a forum for expression; therefore, we encourage feedback or commentary. Please contact us at echo@illianaweb.org