

[perspectives]

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Scan this QR code to view the Program of Studies and see the points earned for participation in different activities.

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Staff Perspective

Distinguished Grad selection process should take into account time, effort

Since its introduction to CHS in 2008, the Distinguished Graduate program has either distinguished or commended over 400 graduates. The program was originally set in place to distinguish seniors at graduation who had served in leadership, volunteer and extracurricular activities throughout their years at CHS. In addition to identifying a group of students for recognition, it also replaces the honor of "valedictorian," instead allowing the student with the greatest amount of allotted points to serve as the "distinguished graduate" for his or her specific class.

In taking into account factors of service outside of academics, the Distinguished Grad program was a step in the right direction toward a holistic evaluation of a student's high school achievement. However the administration has yet to find a balance between the points allotted to various activities over others.

In the editorial titled "Administration should reconsider Distinguished Grad" released in the March issue of 2011, the *Hilite* editorial board suggested that the program encouraged breadth over depth. We as a staff felt as if the point system encouraged students' participation in a multitude of activities rather than commitment and exploration in one or two activities. In addition the editorial argued that the point value for an activity should be based off of the number of hours dedicated to that activity.

This draws to attention a new question that is especially important given the upcoming deadlines for the Distinguished Grad applications in February. With activities such as the

performing arts receiving up to 50 points for students who participate in advanced performing arts groups for at least three years and athletes who can earn up to 30 points for participating in a sport for three years, why is it that others such as industrial technology, visual arts students and communications, just to name a few, who put in an equal amount of time into their work, be "valued" with a lesser point value? While the excellence of both athletics and performing arts at this school warrants such value, what happens to those students who invest their time in other community enriching activities? Another issue with the current point system is the lack of diversity in the section labeled "club officers." Most club officers of the over 100 clubs at this school are not recognized for their valid efforts through this point system.

As we mentioned in the past editorial, one method through which these issues could be solved is that of a review of all activities that are deemed to require the amount of time and effort put into those activities that are currently recognized such as athletics and performing arts. The administration itself could evaluate the outreach of the activity in the community and school. The administration took a step in the right direction by qualifying clubs in which "students... complete 40 competition hours or community service hours each year..." for points; however as we mentioned earlier

this does not include other activities in the school that require a similar amount of time commitment as the ones listed under the "Extra-curricular and co-curricular category" of the Distinguished Graduate program.

Students are discouraged from pursuing the activities that they find to match their passions and interests.

One avenue through which students may voice their opinions is through that of the Principal's Advisory Committee. Directly contacting representatives on the committee is one way to voice student concerns directly to the administration. Students who have ideas for change may also post to the "CHS PAC 2013-14" group on Facebook. Students must take an active role in advocating for their respective activities or groups if they hope to see change in the Distinguished Grad program.

In the current system, students who are not involved in activities such as performing arts or athletics may not be recognized for the other ways in which they promote the community of this school. In short, students

are discouraged from pursuing the activities they find to match their passions and interests. While the Performing Arts and athletic students deserve recognition for all their hard work and accomplishments, it only seems fair to include other students who participate in activities with similar time and effort requirements. It is up to both the students and the administration to evaluate and create this balanced system. ■

Speak Up!

COACHES & STUDENTS

Do you agree with the Distinguished Grad selection process? Why?

Freshman
Mitchell Adzema

Yes, I would say I do agree. It seems like a good way for students to be able to choose and decide to get points ... It seems fair to me from what I understand.

Sophomore
Patrick Fallon

I think it seems pretty fair because if they do more activities, then they're more busy sometimes, and if they can still do all the activities and get good grades, then they did pretty well.

Junior
Ari Roberts

I think it definitely has some merit because there's so many things people can be involved in at this school, and it's got to be hard to put all of them together and figure out who is the best student.

Senior
Vinnie Anderson

It's probably really difficult. It seems like if they're trying to distinguish one person, then that's all they're going to get—one person.

Counselor
David Mikesell

If they are going to have distinguished graduates, they do have to have a format. Teachers and administrators have worked hard creating a fair and equitable format.

Assistant Principal
Bradley Sever

It's a really good process. I think there's a lot of thought that goes into that process. It's been refined, so I think we do a good job of being fair in acknowledging student accomplishments.