

# The Case for Senior Privileges

## OPINION: The Challenge of Reinstating Special Senior Rights

By Liam Murray  
Staff Writer

Over the past 10 years, Triton has seen many changes, from schedules to library rules to the addition of cameras... everywhere. Another of the lesser known changes brought about in the past 15 years has been the abolition of senior privileges.

Today at Triton, seniors really have no special privileges. There are no rules or policies made to differentiate a senior from an underclassman. Seniors have the same classes, get to school and leave at the same times, park in the same lots as teachers and underclassmen. However, this hasn't always been the case.

There was a time when senior privileges existed at Triton, when seniors were given certain rules and options that the underclassmen simply didn't have. To learn more about the history of senior privileges at Triton the *Triton Voice* interviewed Triton Principal Secretary Ms. Theresa Karol. Karol is not only a staff member here at Triton, but is also a Triton alumna. Ms. Karol was a member of the graduating class of 2006, which she said was the last class that really partook in senior privileges. Among the policies that were awarded to her class were a senior study hall, the ability to leave school a certain amount of times early, senior parking, and even the ability to leave and get lunch off campus.

Study hall was a completely different concept for seniors in 2006, Karol said. If a student had first or last period study they weren't required to show up. If a student did go to their study, however, they were allowed to spend it in either the cafeteria or if it was a nice day in the courtyard with the animals from the Ark Program. Seniors could be out in the courtyard doing their homework with Pepper the monkey, one of the many animals in the Ark program, while freshman and sophomores were kept in the library for a quiet study.

Recently at Triton, parking and parking fees have been a hot button issue, with many students and some school committee members proposing the fees be reduced or eliminated. Back in 2006, seniors paid nothing to park and were given the entire side lot with nobody else allowed to park there. If they wanted to park elsewhere, they got to pick over underclassmen, but nobody wanted to park in back lot because they only opened the main doors out front. As well as getting premier parking, seniors were allowed to drive themselves to prom and leave school up to 25 times in the year using their agenda book as a "passport" to do so. Unfortunately, however, Karol said her class was the last to have these privileges.

"For prom, we were allowed to drive ourselves. Busses started our senior year, actually, because of our junior year when we were allowed to drive there. But when we were allowed to drive there, it brought down the cost of prom a lot because we didn't have to pay for a bus," said Karol.

Hearing the privileges students had in 2006 may sound like a completely different environment for seniors, and it may make you wonder what happened. Apparently after the privilege of being able to leave campus 25 times and go to get lunch were taken away the rest of senior privileges simply went with them. The rule allowing seniors to leave was taken away with administrators arguing for rules based on what's known as "in loco parentis" which is Latin for "in place of a parent." This rule shoulders teachers with the same level of responsibility over students as a non biological parent while kids are in school. It may sound crazy, but it really just means from you leaving your house in the morning to getting back home after school, your teachers are technically liable for your well-being.

This rule is the reason students need to be dismissed by their parents/guardians and seniors cannot get lunch off campus. Teachers don't want to be responsible for students getting in a car crash. However there's one thing that really doesn't make sense about why this policy prevents us from leaving. How does the time of day we leave affect our probability to get in a car crash? I'd say if anything leaving before 2:13 would lessen the possibility of a crash and slightly relieve the chaotic traffic that occurs after last bell.

If senior privileges were returned they could also be limited and or incentivized to the staff and faculties advantage. Seniors who misbehave or get in trouble could be deprived of their privileges. Additionally, seniors who consistently make the honor roll or high honors could receive more privileges for being good students. Lastly seniors leaving don't necessarily have to go home, they should be provided with options like internships and volunteer positions to leave school to go to.

Many Triton students are required to perform community service hours and are always looking for a place to help whether it's the Pettengill House, a dog shelter, or a nursing home. An internship could provide students an insight into the working world, it's the perfect time to look around for good companies to intern or work with.



A Triton student leaves early from the side lot earlier this year (file photo).

## OP-ED: No Time Wasted

Allow Seniors To Leave Early During Study Halls

By Paige Volpone  
Staff Writer

Ever had so much work on your hands that all you want or need to do is go home and get work or errands done? Well, if you're a senior, some schools might let you leave school during a study. But Triton will not.

Seniors have a lot on their plates with college decisions, scholarships, and applications. They also have a lot of high school work to do, and if they are athletes, sometimes they have late practices, which keep them out late at night. With multiple assignments to do, they need time to get it done. At the same time, seniors sometimes have studies at the beginning or the end of the day. Seniors could use this time to sleep in after staying up all night to study for an exam or to leave early to finish work at home. Many seniors are 18 which makes them legal adults so they should be able to leave school if they have a study to get things done.

This is the senior's last year in high school. After this, they go into the real world and have to make choices. To teach students to make good choices and to use their time wisely, a senior privilege of leaving early or coming in late should be established.

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"Even leaving an hour early, or coming in an hour late would honestly help a lot."  
— Senior Ava Ford

## SPORTS OPINION

### A Matter of Control

How NHL Fights Help Tame the Game

By Jack Niska  
Staff Writer

Growing up around hockey, I loved watching the Big Bad Bruins and the enforcers that backed them up. Fighting and physical play like that played such an important role in hockey — and still does today — that the game wouldn't be the same without it.

In hockey, the common theme is always to have your teammate's back. If there's a cheap hit against a teammate during a game, chances are that player will have to answer for it either during that shift or later in the game. A good hockey team will protect one another, especially star players.

If someone takes a run at Edmonton Oilers Forward Connor McDavid, for instance, the player who is currently leading the league in points, tough guy teammates Milan Lucic or Zack Kassian are always going to have his back. While they are valuable members of the team, Lucic and Kassian's top skills very well might be fighting.

Tough guys are there to answer for smaller teammates who can't defend themselves against the opposing brute. Meanwhile, in a game where a team is down by one, a fight could be all a team needs to shift the momentum. If your team is flat footed this can be a huge energy boost and an



Bruins Gregory Campbell (11), squares off with Capitals Matt Hendricks (26) (Creative Commons photo).

intimidation factor to the opposing team. Fighting is known to spark a surge and tilt the ice in one team's favor.

Of course, we cannot forget about the fans. Avid hockey fans love fighting, and I think they will as long as the NHL allows it. But let's say you aren't a huge hockey fan and don't know the rules. You might be completely lost until you see two players drop their gloves and let off some steam. You don't have to be a fanatic to recognize two big guys exchanging right hooks while grabbing each other by the collar of their jersey. A fight will always get fans on their feet, screaming for their beloved protector to win.

Of course, there remains a lot of fear surrounding CTE, the degenerative disease found in the brains of people with a history of head trauma. Hockey player Derek Boogard, who died of an accidental drug and alcohol overdose, was found to have had an advanced form of CTE. It was farther along than CTE found in most NHL enforcers who died in middle age. While fighting likely played a role in his death, it is not the clear contributor to Boogard's CTE. Playing a contact sport like hockey is bound to involve head trauma as CTE has been found to worsen with each head hit. Boogard was definitely a fighter and an enforcer, but he was still a hockey player.

Some may say fights no longer have a place in hockey, all thanks to new technology, rule changes, and stricter officiating. That is wrong. If fighting were to be removed from the game, it would change hockey drastically. Players would no longer have a controlled way to take off some steam on each other. Instead of squaring off fairly with refs behind each player ready to break it up, players would resort to going for the biggest hits possible with the intent to injure. It's much safer to have a contained fight than to have players trying to take each others heads off with high, cheap hits.

Dropping the gloves will always have its place in hockey, whether the skill across the league is increasing or not. Players will always want to be able to drop the gloves to defend their teammates after a cheap hit or simply to get the building going when the energy feels low.



# Our View: 3 Steps to Improve Student Learning

## End Testing Madness

Standardized tests Don’t Measure Success  
By Sara Winnick, *Staff Writer*

Everyone learns differently, whether it’s in a classroom or work environment. Some learn visually while others prefer the reading. Some people work better in groups while others work better alone. Some are good test takers and don’t even need to study to get an A.

If you are like me, tests are a struggle. Even when you study for hours, you still can’t comprehend the material. But the school system often doesn’t see these academic differences. As stated in the article “Standardized testing Does Not Determine Intelligence,” by *theodysseyonline.com*, “Standardized testing is viewed as a way to measure knowledge of content and intelligence.” However, Standardized testing does not measure your intelligence because your intelligence is not based on just common course subjects.

Standardized tests set up some students to fail. Like the SAT’s and ACT’s, most Standardized tests are timed, which is an issue for some students who are slow readers or are just bad at taking timed tests. According to the article “Standardized testing Does Not Determine Intelligence,” “slow readers miss 10 questions on the test, simply because of lack of time. If these students did not have a time limit, they could have had the possibility to score higher on the test and answer questions they ran out of time.” This is because test providers want some students to pass and some to fail to have fluctuation, but why would anyone want a kid to fail?

Standardized tests do not measure other student activities besides math, English, science and social studies. However, students have so much more to offer. Tests can not measure creativity, passion, personality, talent, work ethic, etc. Tests are supposed to determine intelligence but only knowing the core subjects would not make one intelligent.

Some may think Standardized testing can show individuality in their intelligence. As stated in the article “Do Standardized tests Show an Accurate View of Students’ abilities?” by *education.cu-portland.edu*, “For many students, Standardized testing provides them with a valuable outlet to set themselves apart from their high school. Tests like the SAT and the ACT give students the chance to show that, even if their high school didn’t offer a large number of Advanced Placement courses or extracurricular activities, they’re still bright and motivated students with a lot of potential.”

Although Standardized testing gives an outlet to highly achieving kids, that number is in the minority. Even the most high achieving students may struggle on Standardized tests. In the article “Examining the Pros and Cons of Standardized testing,” by *Thoughco.com* stated, “Some students may excel in the classroom yet not perform well on a standardized test because they’re unfamiliar with the format or develop test anxiety. Family strife, mental and physical health issues, and language barriers can all affect a student’s test score. But Standardized tests don’t allow personal factors to be taken into consideration.” How can Standardized testing show individuality if it doesn’t represent the students character?

Standardized testing is based on memorization and takes up almost 40 percent of the education for just preparation. This takes away a teacher’s time from teaching to learn. Some schools take away art and theater in exchange for test prep. Taking away Standardized tests would give students and schools more extracurricular opportunities, like theater and art. Standardized testing has been hurting the school system for far too long, and should no longer be a prevalent evaluation tool.

## Reconsider Homework

Viewpoints Differ, But Less May be More  
By Derek Cotter, *Staff Writer*

Today, homework is often viewed by students in two ways: useful and beneficial, or a total waste of time. Many students and teachers believe that written homework should not be given out or graded, but others see homework as their main source of grading. Does homework actually benefit a student or is it just punishment? The answer may be both or neither.

Although they might not admit it to their teachers, many students copy homework answers from other classmates. Sometimes, only one person in the class actually does the homework, and everyone else in the class just copies it from the same person. Personally, I admit to copying homework answers from another classmate, later finding out that pretty much everyone else in the class had done the same thing. There is a pressure to do homework, and students want that pressure gone but don’t want to do the work themselves, so we leech off of the student who is willing to do the work for the rest of us.



So, what is the point? Triton guidance counselor, Dr. Erik Champy, attended Austin Preparatory High School and said he had little to no written homework during his high

school experience. He is also not a fan of written homework and instead supports independent reading and studying. Homework, he says, has little effect on a student’s knowledge of a subject.

When Champy went to high school, “If we received an A on one assessment, we did not have written homework until the next assessment, which really motivated the students at that time in the early 80’s to study for the tests and really gain the knowledge,” said Champy. The homework system he had in high school would be beneficial for students, and make them work harder to learn.

Homework is also known to be a contributor to teen stress. A study by Stanford University found 56 percent of students considered homework a primary source of stress. Worrying about the grades from homework is the main thing to stress about. I personally worry about how missing an assignment will effect my grade. Obviously the solution is to just do my homework, but I don’t see the point in the assignment when I already know the subject and just don’t want to do extra work. This is why some homework just shouldn’t be graded, so the students who want the extra practice can do it- maybe even for extra credit- and the students who don’t want to do it will not be punished.

However, math teacher, Ms. Heather Walter, has a very different view of homework to Champy. Walter says that depending on the subject or the difficulty of the class, homework should vary. She gives homework nightly, saying, “Some of the topics are difficult, some of them are easier, but with math, you need to practice the skills. Things might make sense while we’re doing them together at the board but you may not know whether or not you understand it on your own until you get to do it on your own.”

Some may argue that having homework every night will help them practice what they learned in class. However, most cases of homework don’t have answer keys or ways to check for accuracy. Not having a teacher around when you are doing work can lead to mindlessly doing work, bad habits in writing or solving problems, or potentially not learning at all.

## Start School Later

More Sleep, Better Health, Ready to Learn  
Matt O’Neil & Michael Beevers, *Staff Writers*

The American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that middle and high schools should start at 8:30 a.m. or later. That would give students the right amount of sleep to be productive in school and improve their academics. Students will be more ready for school, says the AAP, and more willing to work if they get to school later because they will get more sleep.

Adolescents (teens) are supposed to get around nine hours of sleep per night to be able to be at their best. But most teens get around six hours because of the school work and extracurricular activities schools give them. The average amount of homework a student gets a week is around 10 hours. There are 120 hours in a week, excluding weekends. Students spend 30 hours a week at school and many kids either play a sport or work during the week, which adds another 12 hours. If you get an average of nine hours of sleep, then that’s 45 hours a week of sleep. All together this only allows 33 hours a week where you have time to sit down and be a kid, which seems like a lot but it’s really not when you think about it.

Sleep is vital to your well-being, as important as the air you breathe, the water you drink, and the food you eat. Biological sleep patterns shift toward later times for both sleeping and walking during adolescence, meaning it is

### EFFECTS OF LATER SCHOOL STARTS



A study of high schoolers in Rhode Island by Clearvue Health returned the data above (**Clearvue Health**).

natural to not be able to fall asleep before 11 p.m. Teens need about eight to 10 hours of sleep each night to function best. Most teens do not get enough sleep. One study found that only 15 percent reported sleeping 8 ½ hours on school nights.

With a later school start time, students would also have to stay later in the day, which could affect students jobs or important work they might have to do. And some say it would encourage bad habits because of current school start times being earlier, students might choose to stay up later. But many student’s bosses or coaches could work around the later start times, and although some might take advantage of the later start times, not everyone would.

One thing that we are sure students wouldn’t be happy about if the day started later is staying at school later. Since we start at 7:42 and get out at 2:13, deciding to start an hour later at 8:42 would result in us leaving school at 3:13. However, if we want to start later, we will need to adjust to a later end of school, too.

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In a student’s article on the student newspaper web site of Southmont, Indiana, student and staff writer Jacob Greico wrote about the benefits of leaving early from their school. “I leave school early every day and go to work. I think it’s great I get to leave early everyday; it allows me to save up money for college and other things.” There are plenty of other benefits for seniors such as Greico, including learning to multi-task, but this is just one to help them grow.

Triton might not let us leave early or come in late yet, but there are schools around us that do. Reading Memorial and Masconomet High Schools allow student’s parents to sign a permission slip letting their student come and go. But their grades have to be at least at a 2.0 GPA.

On the Reading Memorial website, the senior release form states all the necessary requirements: if a student comes in late they must be there by second period and can’t be later than five minutes to that class or students risk losing the privilege.

They must also leave through the office.

Senior Ava Ford, a captain on the girl’s basketball team, said that with playing sports, being a member of student council, being a member of community

service, and being a student, this senior privilege could be beneficial.

“I think that it would be a great opportunity for seniors. It gets tiring sometimes doing multiple sports and extra curriculars, so even leaving an hour early, or coming in an hour late would honestly help a lot. It’d be a nice little reward, ya know?” said Ford.

Even though most seniors are 18, we are under school protection during the day. It’s called in Loco Parentis. When the children attend school, parents share some of that responsibility with teachers and administrators. So if seniors leave during the school



Masconomet High School (MHS photo).

hours, we are still under school supervision. If they ever got into an accident or in trouble for something, the school is responsible for the senior.

However, if Triton were to put in this senior privilege there would be rules in place to prevent problems. Many seniors are trustworthy enough to drive safely and stay out of trouble. They know how to use the time wisely and additional freedom will help them grow in maturity with responsibility.

Not everyone can be productive at school and some work better at home with a lot of school work to catch up on. These students could also be sleep-deprived and sometimes they just need a break. This senior privilege could be very helpful to these Triton students.

### SENIOR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Masconomet Senior Internship Program allows graduating senior students to embark on an authentic learning experience that is of interest to them during their final weeks of high school. The Senior Internship Program is available to currently enrolled seniors who meet the eligibility requirements. To be eligible, students must;

- 1) be in good academic and social standing, with sufficient credits/courses to receive a diploma in June and passing all quarter 3 classes;
- 2) complete all community service requirements;
- 3) resolve all outstanding obligations;
- 4) submit the application by the published deadline;
- 5) receive approval from the Senior Internship Program Coordinators and/or Committee
- 6) obtain approval from the Upper House Assistant Principal;
- 7) submit the parental consent form with student and guardian signatures;
- 8) submit a completed Senior Internship Check Out Form with all required signatures before beginning internship;

above, left) offers a senior internship that allows students to leave school early to work in real-world jobs (**Masconomet HS photo, student handbook**).