



RITON VOICE

Triton High School

Triton's Student-Produced Newspaper

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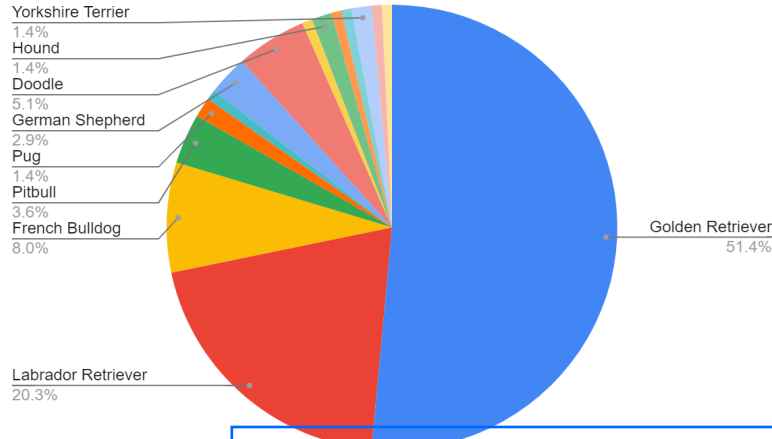
The Lab Report Triton's Most Popular Dog Breeds

By Xander Averill
Staff Editor

Four paws and a wagging tail. That's typically all people need to be 'sold' on the dog they want. But for others, they may look into traits and prefer one over another. So what determines the perfect dog? What determines the most popular dog? And why is it that way?

In a survey sent out by the *Triton Voice*, 130 responses were recorded, answering the following questions regarding dogs: If the interviewee owned a dog, what breed they own, why they owned that dog breed, and what breed they believed to be most popular and why.

A total 76.7 percent of Triton students and faculty who answered owned a dog. Out of the dog breeds mentioned by their owners, the top three at Triton were: Pit Bulls, with 9.8 percent; Labrador Retrievers, with 8.7 percent; and Golden Retrievers, with 6.6 percent (who are also tied with the Golden Retrievers, Labradors, Poodles, a designer mutt known as the "Golden Doodle," as well as Boxers). These numbers were as expected, for the most part based on a question of what students thought were most popular breeds.



Most popular dog breeds at THS (Averill Image).

The top three dogs believed to be most popular were Golden Retrievers (51.4 percent), Labrador Retrievers (20.3 percent) and French Bulldogs (8 percent). These numbers relatively match up with the percentages of their owners within Triton.

Environmental science teacher and dog owner Mr. Thomas Horsley said he searched for specific traits for his personal pup.

"I wanted a dog that could climb any mountain..."

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Lost in Their Screens

THS Student Phone Use Remains High Despite Rules Against Them

By Gennes Packer & Cassidy Beebe
Staff Writers

Inside a Triton classroom recently, heads were down with bright screens glaring on faces. Few paid attention to the teacher's lesson and most did not pay attention to directions.

Mindlessly scrolling through TikTok or Instagram reels, responding to text messages or Snapchats, students did not seem to care about what information they were learning that day.

While there are different opinions formed on phones and their use in a school environment, this issue tends to make people question whether phones are harmful to educations.

Two *Triton Voice* reporters wanted to see first-hand how many students truly were on their phones during class time. Over the span of three school days, two reporters counted the number of students who picked up their phones in a class period. On day one, one reporter observed six classes and found there were 66 total phone pick-ups. This did not include those who snuck looks throughout the day without their screen time being seen. Additionally, a majority of students were noticed walking into class staring at their phones. Others picked them up right as they sat down but did not proceed to use them during class. It was also noted that at the end of nearly every period of each class, students would line up by the door and then begin staring at their phone while waiting for the bell.

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Investigation: Student Sleep Habits Remain Poor at THS

By Sophia Chapman & Luke Sullivan
Staff Writers

How many hours of sleep does your average THS student get? Many Triton students say sleep takes a back seat to social activities, academic pressures, and digital distractions.

After talking to eight Triton High School students, it was clear that at least these teens are not getting enough sleep. The *Triton Voice* conducted research and discovered the average hours of sleep of these students is six, which is unhealthy compared to the number teens are supposed to be getting.

"I usually get around four to six hours of sleep a night," said Triton senior Josh Penney, whose average is similar to many students at Triton. However, according to the Australian Health Department, teens should be getting around 8-10 hours of sleep as their bodies are still developing. So if students are only getting six hours, what does this mean for their health?

In a recent interview with Ms. Jillian Lewis, the Triton psychology teacher said, "not getting enough sleep, short term, can lead to decreased mood, the inability to focus, and affects memory and the ability to retain information."

A recent national sleep study by the National Sleep Foundation showed that in Massachusetts, 79 percent of students say they lack sleep, which means more than three of four kids come to school feeling tired.

A similar study showed most kids reported sleeping fewer than six hours a night, which is extremely unhealthy for the adolescent student brain. Without getting the correct amount of sleep students' mental health takes a huge risk. The risk of developing depression skyrockets, and self-esteem levels plummet. But what is it that makes these kids sleep deprived?

When asked what factors affect how much sleep they get a night, students voiced similar answers.

"I'm up all night playing Minecraft and watching TikToks," said Triton junior Greg Muse.

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Thrifting to Save the Planet

Getting the Scoop on Prices, Brands, and Upcycled Clothing

Ava Johnson & Peighton Hertigan
Staff Writers

Goodwill is a local thrift store with very low prices, including expensive name brands. It is a great place to shop if you're looking to save some money, be a good Samaritan, and save the environment while you're at it.

Across the nation, thrifting has been rising in popularity, emerging as a sustainable way of living and as a money saver. Shopping at stores such as Goodwill offers benefits that stretch beyond just finding unique items at affordable prices. The Triton High School community has hopped on the trend and some have indulged in this lifestyle.

"I really enjoy thrifting," said science teacher Mr. Tom Horsley. "One of the locations I go to is Billie's Thrift Shop in Amesbury. My favorite jacket in the universe came from that store, and I wear it all the time."

Horsley is known for his sustainable lifestyle, as he also ran a clothing drive called "Swap, Don't Shop," in the Triton library which was successful and helped Triton to recognize the importance of recycling clothes. Afterwards, many students realized they don't need to spend loads of money, or support high amounts of production, to find something they can wear every day.

Purchasing second-hand products helps to reduce the need for new production. Goodwill is a second-hand chain and international nonprofit organization that uses its donations to help fund job training, employment services, and other community programs, according to the Goodwill website. This benefits the buyer of the product and individuals with disabilities, veterans, and those who are facing economic troubles.

Some might think Goodwill is just an upcycled clothing store, but this business also offers a variety of items ranging from clothing, to furniture, electronics, and more. To the surprise of two *Triton Voice* reporters, while shopping around the Seabrook Goodwill, we spotted a TV, for the low price of \$15. Obviously it wasn't in pristine shape, but after examining the product, we noticed there were barely any scuffs or scratches. Unless you're a movie fanatic, why buy a \$900+ television, that might rarely get used, when you can save money, as well as the environment?

First-time thrifters might not realize the number of name brands that fill the aisles in thrift stores, offering style, but not breaking the bank.

"I go with my girlfriend and I've found a few good t-shirts at Goodwill," substitute teacher Brandon Baletsa said. In the store, there is a huge variety of clothing. To our surprise, name brands such as Kate Spade, Vineyard Vines, Hollister, Pacsun, American Eagle, Michael Kors, and more filled the hangers.

Some students have chosen to thrift, whether it is for fun, a new experience, or to simply save money.

"Sometimes I go with my mom just for something to do. We went to Plato's Closet in Waltham once and it was really cool because I found some Lululemon for like

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Inside the Seabrook Goodwill, there are many treasures, name brands, and unbelievable prices to be had (Hertigan/Johnson photos)

What Does a Teachers Union Do?

Conversations with Two of Triton's Union Representatives

By Sadie Deveau & Nancy Arias
Staff Writer

There are many unions across the country that represent a variety of workers. The Triton Regional School Committee has an agreement with the Triton Regional Teachers Association (TRTA) for teachers and students rights, better wages, pensions, and other benefits.

With the contract for Triton's teachers coming to an end in 2026, some of the *Triton Voice* staff wished to know more about what a teacher's union does, what the contract says, and educate others about how it can not only affects teachers but the students as well.

As recently as November, several teachers unions in Massachusetts went on strike, including nearby in Gloucester, Beverly, Marblehead, and Haverhill for a variety of reasons.

Here are some common questions and answers regarding teachers unions:

What is the Teachers Union?

English teacher and building representative for the Triton Regional Teachers Association, Margaret Flaherty spoke about what the teachers union at Triton is. "Locally at Triton, the (TRTA), is like a subset of the Massachusetts Teachers Association so it's just districtwide. We will defend the contract here."

Flaherty also addressed the end of the teacher's contract next year.

"We (will) go through negotiations," said Flaherty. "We have separate teams to negotiate, and a lot of the time it's things like pay, but sometimes it's about how we spend our time." The union even negotiates about things you wouldn't even think teachers would have to do. "In the past we negotiated with the school community about teachers' dress code, and it has been something we negotiated down because we don't want that at all."

Why are some against Teacher Unions?

According to *Education Next*, teachers in unions use their political power to improve America's public schools. Some accuse unions of putting themselves before

students, but unions are made not only to protect teachers but students too.

The Union's Contract Work

The TRTA operates with the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) and the National Education Association (NEA), with each contract usually lasting for three years before negotiations resume and a new one is signed.

If a new contract isn't made and agreed on soon, it can be described as "disastrous." Teachers will continue to work under the same salary, benefits, and working conditions as the previous contract. If negotiations continue to stall, teachers may decide to only do what's explicitly stated in their contracts, which is typically much less than what their job calls for. This may mean they do not do extra duties such as extra after school time with students, clubs run by teachers, and extracurricular activities

In more extreme times, in some states, teachers can go on strikes legally, which may shut down schools. In states such as Massachusetts, where striking is illegal, it can lead to union penalties, though the union may still strike. If strikes do not happen, then protests could be a possibility that happens. These can be such things as rallies, walk-outs, or sick-outs to pressure school boards and the public.

School teachers in Gloucester, Beverly, Marblehead, and Haverhill went on strike for smaller class sizes, longer paid parental leave, pay increases for paraprofessionals, safer conditions in schools and more prep time for elementary school teachers.

Not only do strikes and protests become a problem for teachers, but students eventually get affected over time. At first there may not be any changes to the students but without a new contract for teachers to work under it is possible their morale and class engagement can lower, as perhaps they may feel underappreciated or unseen.

Would Abolishing the DOE Affect Teachers & Students?

President Donald Trump has been working to uphold his promise to abolish the U.S. Education Department, affecting students'

access to higher education grants and loans.

"It would definitely make me more hesitant to get a loan, but I really want to go to college, so it's kind of necessary to pay for that," stated Adam White, a senior.

White said he is looking forward to going to college, but the threat of not receiving help from the DOE has become an issue.

Mrs. Sarah Scruton, the president of the TRTA, said that "unions operate outside the Department of Education, but that doesn't mean we aren't concerned about what is happening," said Scruton. "Dismantling the Department of Education will have a significant impact on funding (and) students will bear the brunt of the cuts. We have students who benefit from things like free lunch, Title I services, and student loans, to name a few services in jeopardy.

"The impetus behind the dismantling of the Department of Education stems from the belief that the Department of Education is responsible for curriculum, but a little research would show people that curriculum is under local control and not mandated by the federal government," said Scruton.

"Additionally, there is a push to privatize education, which will negatively impact public schools, especially schools in underserved areas," said Scruton. "Teachers are willing to work hard to educate the public about the impact of reductions in the Department of Education on education at the state level, and that is a role the union may play



Teachers on strike in November in Beverly (WBUR photo).

concerning this issue. Teachers think you are worth investing in."

Positives of the Teachers Union

Flaherty addressed the schools in Massachusetts who went on strike

"It's hard to know how I feel because when reading in the press they talk about how strikes are an issue and an inconvenience but not the teachers pointing out an issue," said Flaherty. "So just as a general rule, if somebody is striking, I tend to be on their side. With teachers, it's very important that teachers have unions because you will always 'hear do it for the kids,' but you can only do so much for the kids. We are human beings, too."

Looking Ahead to a New Contract

"At the end of this school year, we will put together a team to represent the teachers at each school," said Scruton of the next steps for Triton's teachers.

"In September, we will meet with (Superintendent) Mr. (Brian) Forget and the members of the school committee and each group will bring their proposals to the table."

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be as active as I am... and good with our cats," he said.

Horsley elaborated that he wanted an active dog but one that was good around small animals such as his cats as well as children. Looking for these traits led him to the result of his current dog, Brandi, an Australian Shepherd.



At left, Mr. Horsley's dog, Brandi, enjoying the snow while Belgian Malamut, Siku, at right, pauses to pay attention (Averill photo).

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\$20, which is a good deal for that brand." Sophomore Maggie Rennick said.

It's clear that thrifting offers a multitude of benefits extending beyond just finding stylish items at affordable prices.

By making the switch to thrifting, students and teachers at Triton have helped to contribute to environmental sustainability, by both reducing waste and lowering the demands for production of brand new products.

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During the observations, students tended to look at, pick up, or use their phones quickly to check the time, look at notifications, or take a mental break.

Some Triton teachers heavily dislike the prevalence of phones and think it distracts from their students' education. One of their solutions to this are phone slots, where students place their phones at the beginning of class and grab it at the end, or when they are all caught up with assignments. Some teachers, however, don't mind their students having their phones out, being used, or kept on them. Other teachers let students use their phones during assignments.

Assistant Principal Mrs. Elizabeth Pacheco explained the numerous write-ups students are getting lately involving their phones: "From past years to this year (there has been a) significant decline" in write-ups, she said, "17 students have been written up to date for breaking the actual cell phone policy. In total there have been 189 formal

write ups, (and) 83 of them have incorporated the cell phone as secondary behavior."

This school year, parents have picked up their child's phone at least twice per week, Pacheco said. She said that parents play an integral part in reinforcing the policy that Triton has set for phone use: Phones should be away at the start of every class and should not be taken out unless a teacher allows it. Students stuck on their phones are simply missing opportunities to connect with their peers, she said. "It's as simple as looking up from their phone and saying hi or good morning, even just a smile can change someone's day," states Pacheco.

Pacheco made it clear that the majority of the write-ups that involve phone use also have a secondary write up cause, such as behavior or language. A student may fight back or refuse to do work and therefore the teacher will write up that student for both their phone and actions in the classroom.

Senior Ashley Sabino admits that she is on her phone during school and usually scrolls if she is bored or all her work has been finished.

"You should be able to keep your phone on you in case of a family emergency, or you need to use your phone in class, for example if your computer dies you can just use your phone," said Sabino.

Junior Sydney Champagne said that while she does not often use her phone, her teachers are forgiving regarding the cell phone policy.

"I do not often use my phone in class, but mostly before class starts, after I complete all of my work, or if I need to write a reminder or something on my phone," Champagne said. "I feel like using my phone isn't a bad thing during class, or having it on me in general, what if there's an emergency at home or at school? I would want my phone on me."

Champagne explained that, "my teachers are not very strict within my classes, but mostly because we haven't had any issues

immune systems so they get sick less often, and getting enough sleep helps improve heart health and metabolism. Proper amounts of sleep can also decrease stress, help to improve attention and focus, and improve mood."

By seeing how little sleep students are actually getting, some may assume it is not important to them. And for the most part, that is correct. However, one student was very adamant on how vital sleep really is. "Sleep is very important to me," said senior Lucas Tinkham. "If I don't get enough sleep I'm definitely tired and my eyes will water. So it's something I definitely need."

Similarly Triton junior Adeline Stapleton said "sleep is extremely important to me. It's my favorite part of my day. I wish I could always sleep in till like 8."

On the other side of the spectrum, many students believe sleep really isn't that important. "No, it should be important to me but it's not because staying awake there's more things I can do," said junior Mike Taylor. Added junior Jason Merrill: "I don't

as I am in smaller honors or AP classes, which could be different for other students in different leveled classes."

While many students in her class tend to stay off their phones or put them away the first time they are asked, social studies teacher Ms. Jillian Lewis is still aware of the overuse of phones. Lewis believes that the amount of phone use stems a lot from the lack of consequences students are receiving from being on their phones at an inappropriate time during class. Students do not receive punishment and therefore believe they are immune to rules and can use it whenever they please, she said. But they are also distracted from learning.

"People just generally have a hard time multitasking, so having that distraction is not going to allow them to properly encode and store the information they are supposed to be learning," said Lewis.