



By Isabella Boedeker & Kate Kasuba
SECTION EDITOR & INTERN
PHOTOS | Isabella Boedeker & Kate Kasuba

WRITER'S BLOCK | The former Creative Writing classroom sits empty since the course is not running during the 2023-2024 school year. English department chair Kristen Alles has empathy for the students who weren't able to take the class, and wishes for its return future. "Having a class solely dedicated to Creative Writing is fun and I think it really helps foster that for students who really like Creative Writing," Alles said. "I do feel bad for students who really want that [creative] outlet and art, but hopefully we can see it again maybe next year hopefully it's not cut for good."

Last spring, the Grosse Pointe Public Schools School Board implemented a budget cut that drastically reduced North's full-time equivalent (FTE) by 5.1. As a result, certain course offerings had to be removed for the 2023-2024 school year. Along with that, student interest in certain courses has diminished. Despite the cut of 17 courses, Principal Dr. Kate Murray hopes they will be able to return in the future.

Unfortunately, the absence of courses has been considered a disadvantage for many students. The reduction of these classes is holding students back from opportunities and learning experiences, according to Murray.

"Our students' transcripts won't be as varied," Murray said. "They won't have as much access perhaps to the classes and passions that they love, and they might not have some of the more advanced classes that only run one time per day."

With the budget cuts, Explorations in Reading and Expository Writing were removed from the English course offerings. The elimination of these courses will negatively impact the students who need the extra assistance and practice, in the opinion of Advanced Placement English Language and Composition teacher Kristen Alles. As a result, Alles emphasizes that she may need to take a different approach in teaching her AP Language students.

"I think the lack of the class will affect some of our students, particularly ones who maybe needed a little

bit more support or maybe struggled a little bit with Honors American Literature or even perhaps came from traditional American Literature and wanted the challenge into AP," Alles said. "I think Mr. Byrne and I might have to scaffold the lessons maybe a little bit more. I think we will try to pay attention even more to our students who might be struggling."

In contrast, some classes simply couldn't run due to the lack of class enrollment. Junior Ashlei

“Our students’ transcripts won’t be as varied. They won’t have as much access perhaps to the classes and passions that they love, and they might not have some of the more advanced classes that only run one time per day.”

DR. KATE MURRAY
PRINCIPAL

Anatalio-Williams was upset when she wasn't able to take AP French after numerous years of practicing the language.

"I feel kind of disappointed since I've been taking French since sixth grade, and the opportunity to take AP French 5 was taken right away when I was about to take it," Anatalio-Williams said.

Also, some students are worried about whether these classes will remain cut next year. For sophomore Katie McLeod, she is anxious about whether or not she can take AP French next year to earn her college credit.

"I would feel very sad because I have been taking French since I was in sixth grade," McLeod said. "So, it's just become a norm in my school schedule and I want to be able to finish that out into an AP credit."

Moreover, these significant adjustments have also affected the teachers' day to day schedule. Dr. Murray states that many teachers have to instruct more classes than normal, which can become mentally draining for educators.

"When you start to run fewer sections of each course that means each teacher has to teach more courses," Murray said. "So sometimes teachers, only in the past, would teach two different classes during the span of the day and now we have more and more teachers teaching three to four to five different classes."

Even though North's students and teachers have been faced with adversity, our counselors have worked to accommodate their students' schedules. Junior Ashlei Anatalio-Williams successfully found two semester courses to replace AP French.

"Computer Graphics is fun so far and a nice break from my other classes," Anatlio-Williams said. "I'm excited to take Anthropology next semester because it seems interesting."

17

Courses cut
across

5

departments:

1 Science

2 World Language

3 Math

5 English

6 CTE

Q&A with assistant principal Catherine Vernier

Q: How many students need to be enrolled in a class for it to run?

A: There is not a set number for me to share with you. Usually we are looking for more than 20 student requests to run a course. There are exceptions to this.

Q: Will the classes that were cut return in the future?

A: Classes that did not run this year or last year can still return in the future. If we have significant interest in a course, then we would run it.

Q: What is the process like for starting a new class?

A: In the past, teachers and departments have come to administration when there is interest in creating a new course. There is a process when a staff member wants to develop a pilot course through the District's EPLC (Educational Programs Leadership Council).

Q: Why do you think there was a major lack of participation this year?

A: I think that is mainly enrollment and a lot of course options that affect low course request numbers.

Q: How does the lack of classes affect the teachers?

A: Enrollment affects teachers. North is given a number from the District that is based on enrollment. We call it our FTE (full-time equivalent). This number reflects the amount of full time teachers we have at North. Administration then uses that number in addition to the student course requests to determine which classes will run and then build a schedule from there. With less enrollment and fewer sections of classes running, teachers can see more preps (the number of different classes each teacher teaches) in their schedule or less collaboration opportunities because not as many teachers are teaching the same course.



"I always communicate with those teachers [Explorations in Reading/Expository Writing] each year and connect with those particular students," Alles said. "Even just from surveys and from even looking at improvement in scores students definitely were impacted positively by that class."

Kristen Alles

"I am thinking of going into business as a major in college, and now I can't do an accounting class," McLeod said.

Katie McLeod

"I think there's a lack of participation in this class because there's not a ton of people in French 4 to begin with," Anatalio-Williams said. "Also, less people sign up for the higher levels as they go on, so as the levels get up to five, participation eventually gets pretty low."

Ashlei Anatalio-Williams

