

Shepherd's Staff



Social Media vs. Homework

By: Grace C.

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Is social media preventing junior high students from getting their homework done?

Over the years, the amount of teens using social media has increased greatly. Today, over 41% of teens in America have social media. It has

been proven that social media is a distraction to teens, but is it keeping them from doing their homework?

Today, teenagers from ages 13-17 are spending up to nine hours a day just on social media websites. Not only is this habit unhealthy, it is also very time consuming. With all this time spent on their phone, how are they completing their homework? Olivia Keeton, an eighth grader from Good

Shepherd Lutheran, says, "I do feel that social media is a big distraction when I am do-



ing my homework and that it makes finishing the work harder. Even though I tend to finish everything, I get done at a later time."

Now the real question is, "Why is social media a distraction when doing homework?" Luke R., a seventh grader at Good Shepherd Lutheran, says, "I guess I get bored of my homework and go on social media because it is entertaining."

Although this habit of checking social media while doing homework is challenging, there are some strategies to prevent them. Morgan Overby, an eighth grader explains, "To keep myself from staying up late with homework, I do not use my phone at all until I am finished with my work. This has helped me a lot,

especially when I have loads of homework." Evan Wilkinson also states, "To keep from checking my phone while working, I like to put it in a different room." These are both simple ways to prevent students from getting distracted by social media.

All in all, social media is not a bad thing. People just need to understand how to balance their time with it.

Digital Homework, Is it Worth It?

By: Clara R.

Homework has been part of school since the beginning of education. But since our culture has improved and moved forward in technology, there have been some major changes in the way we do things. Classes people could come to in person have moved to online only, and homework has switched from paper to digital. These changes have a negative and positive effect on our society today.

There are many different views on paper homework and digital homework. Fifteen of twenty-three 8th grade students at Good Shepherd Lutheran School prefer paper over digital homework. In an interview with Timothy Rainey, an adjunct professor at Lindenwood University, he said, "Written homework is better for the future of education because you can type faster than you can write, and it requires more thought, and creates a higher understand-

ing." On the flip side, he said, "I believe that digital home-



work makes it easier to access your homework and teachers can easily amend homework assignments."

Digital homework has its pros and cons along with paper homework. For example, if the internet crashed and everything was lost, having a paper copy would be a lot better because you can continue to learn even though you don't have internet access. A Good Shepherd student, Adam Broekemeier, said that even though he liked digital better, he likes to have a paper copy as a backup.

This year and many

more years to come, digital homework use will have increased in schools all around the country. But one problem that comes with the increased use of digital homework is this: Children who work better with an actual hardback book and paper homework, will they be forced to use a digital copy? Will their grades go down because of it? These questions were answered in the interview with Timothy Rainey. He said, "Absolutely not! All students learn in different ways and teachers need to accommodate students and not vice versa. We cannot force all students into the same learning patterns."

Digital homework is becoming more popular because of the advances in technology. The next generation of kids will grow up in a technology-filled world and to them digital homework will just be normal. They will find it easier to have a digital assignment.

"Absolutely not! All students learn in different ways and teachers need to accommodate students and not vice versa. We cannot force all students into the same learning patterns."

Touch Screen Active Boards, Are They Better?

By: Tim R.

This year, at Good Shepherd Lutheran School, in Collinsville Illinois, teachers are getting different types of active boards, but are they better?

The teacher, Melissa Hasamear, got a touch screen active board this year. The reason is that she had one of the oldest active boards. The opinions of these active boards vary from teacher to teacher. Mrs. Krause said that the new one is more interactive, but the old one is less easy to mess up. Mrs. Streuter

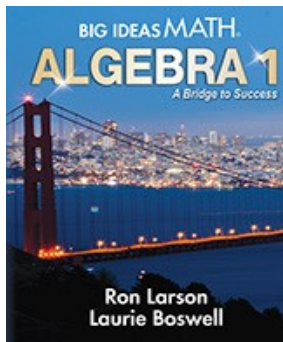
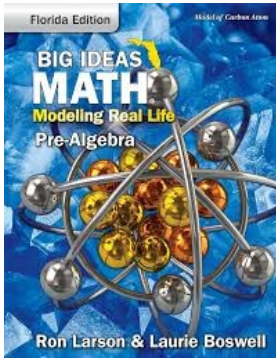
said that the new active board doesn't always allow her to



zoom in because of the new Windows 10 update, but the old one is slower. Mrs. Hasamear said that the new one is more convenient but the old one had little to no

glitches. On a scale of 1-10 Mrs. Streuter gave the new active board a 9 and the old one a 6. On a scale of 1-10, Mrs. Krause rated the new active board an 8 and the old one a 7. On a scale of 1-10, Mrs. Hasamear rated the new active board a 6 and the old one a 5.

Are they better? It is up to you to decide.



Big Ideas Math

By: Meghan S.

Over the years, there have been a lot of math programs. This year, Good Shepherd switched to a new math program called *Big Ideas Math*. This change has affected grades 5-8. Last year there was a math program called *Saxon Math*. “*Saxon* was challenging, but once I got to really know how *Saxon* taught, I got used to it,” said Clara, an eighth grade student.

The new math

program messed up some students because they had gotten used to how *Saxon* taught math. Then, they switched to a whole new math program and a whole different way of teaching.

Saxon was challenging for some students because it switched topics too often to actually understand how to do them well. “*Big Ideas* was hard at first until I actually understood how it was taught, and then it

became easier for me,” said Nyah, another eighth grade student.

Big Ideas is easier for some students because you actually go through a chapter and every section builds on one concept. Overall, this new math program has been a better change for the school and the students, and it will probably last a long time.

No More Block Schedule

By: Addie L.

After three years of a block schedule (90 minutes per class), Good Shepherd has switched back to a regular schedule (45 minutes per class). The question is, “Which schedule is better?”

There are benefits to both. Some benefits of shorter classes are that you have more time in other classes, which can further learning. Another pro of short classes is that you have a variety of classes, which helps people to not get very bored in class. You also are able to get up and switch classes more, so you get to move around more often. Sometimes for teachers, it is easier for them to fill up the entire 45-minute class versus a 90-minute

class. During a 45-minute class, you tend to have more of the class filled with lessons and learning, rather than just learning for part of the class and the rest of the class time being filled up with working on homework.

There are still some pros to block classes, like students have longer classes, giving them time to finish their work in class. Other benefits include teachers having more time to answer students’ questions. There are also cons to block scheduling, like easily getting bored. Once you finish your homework, there is nothing to do.

Another question is, “Which one is preferred by student?” Olivia said, “Block schedule, because I get to finish my homework

in the class.”

Which one do you think is better? For those who thought block schedule was better, with so few pros and multiple cons, a normal schedule is actually better because there are many ways to learn more with less time in a day.

“Block schedule (is better) because I get to finish my homework in the class.”

-Olivia S.

Online or Textbook: Which Is Better?

By: Maddie Z.

Well, judging from the two interviews, Kate and Catrina, two junior high students would most definitely prefer Chromebooks over textbooks; however, there were negative thoughts on the Chromebooks and positive on the textbooks.

Kate said, “The Chromebooks break way too easily.”

Catrina said, “I didn’t think either one was easier.”

Kate said, “I think the online work is much easier.” Kate had mentioned, “I like the Chromebooks, but I would much prefer iPads.”

Judging from these interviews, it would be easier to get rid of the textbooks altogether. First, it would be easier because students can never forget textbooks again. Second, students would never have

to search through endless pages when information could be easily looked up in the search bar. Students also wouldn’t have to pay for book covers ever again.



This is why lots of students would prefer digital textbooks.

There are pros and cons of both of these aspects. Pros of online textbooks would be that there would be not as many books to lug around, and there

would be a lot more digital homework compared to paper, which isn’t necessarily a bad thing. Cons of online textbooks would be that students would become even more connected to electronics; it would be more expensive for families; and it would encourage students to do wrong things on the computer even more.

The pros of textbooks are that there is nothing to distract you, and you will not get hooked on electronics all the time. The cons of textbooks are that they rip very easily, and if students were to spill something on the page, it would probably never come off.

From observations and interviews, the final say is that more students would prefer to have an online curriculum.

Passing Period

By: Morgan O.

Good Shepherd Lutheran School used to have a three minute passing period between classes; however, this year they have switched to a two minute passing period. Mr. Mayhew was asked why, and it is simply because he thought students could get to classes in two minutes because it is not a very far distance. Plus, it also allows students to have shorter, rather than longer, days. Because Good Shepherd changed back to a nonblock schedule, there are more subjects in a day, which means there is less time for passing between classes. If Mr. Mayhew didn’t



shorten the passing time by a minute, he would have had to extend the school day. Grace C., an eighth grader at Good Shepherd, said, “The shorter passing period is worse; with three minutes you feel

more prepared and have time to get your stuff; however, with two minutes, we get more time in class.” Grayson, a fifth grader, says he didn’t even know we changed the passing time because he just started switching classes. He also said he gets to class on time.

The local junior high school has three minutes for passing between classes. We have heard both pros and cons about the two minutes verses three minutes passing time. What are your thoughts?

Youth Group

By: Catrina L.

Youth group is a fun activity that kids 5th-12th grade can enjoy. Our youth group here has different days and times for different grades. All grades are divided up into groups: 5th-6th graders, 7th-8th graders, and high schoolers. Youth group at our church is for everyone. Students can bring friends, family members, or neighbors. Olivia S., a seventh grade student here, said, “Even though I’ve never gone, I think it would be a good place for people to learn about God if they don’t know about

Him.” I also talked to Emma H. who said, “It would be a great place for kids to learn about God while having fun.”



We have Bible study, and sometimes we go places. If you have a favorite Bible story, you

could learn about it at youth group. With this being fun to some kids, other kids don’t go. Maddie Z. said, “I’ve never gone because what I hear from some people is that it can be boring.”

Overall, youth group is fun for kids from 5th-12th grade. If students want to learn more about Jesus and have fun at the same time, then they should think about going to the G.S. youth group.

How Did Having No Lunch Program Affect Students?

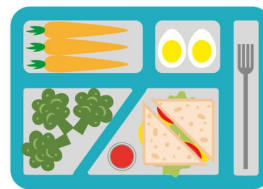
By Olivia S.

At the beginning of this school year, there was no hot lunch program at Good Shepherd. This affected some students more than others. Catrina L., Addie L., and Chloe W., three jr. high students at Good Shepherd, were interviewed for this article. They were affected in different ways and had different things to say.

Chloe stated that she always brings her lunch to school. So, the absence of a lunch program did not affect her in any way. She stated, “It wasn’t an inconvenience for me.”

Addie also stated that she brings her lunch

to school. Since she usually packs her lunch, it also didn’t affect her



morning routine. So, she was not affected.

On the other hand, Catrina was affected by the absence of a lunch program because she often buys school lunch. Having to pack her lunch made her morning

routine much more hectic. She also stated that she could’ve forgotten her lunch because she wasn’t used to bringing it.

In conclusion, the absence of a lunch program affected those students who regularly bought hot lunch more than those who brought their lunch. Based on the interviews, students are happy to have a hot lunch program again.

What Is Going on with the Baseball Field?

By: Luke R.

The Good Shepherd baseball field had rocks, wire, and glass, and the outfield did not have enough grass. Volunteers have to plant more grass in the right and center field because the grass is thin. They also need to build a fence in left and center because of the ditch. Mr. Mayhew, the principal, ordered lots of dirt, trying to fix the field; he purchased 15-20 truckloads of dirt which was about 12,000 dollars worth.

The dirt is called

baseball dirt, and it is 70% dirt and 30% sand. They got this dirt from Collinsville Ice and Fuel. They are using dirt, sand, grass seed, and fencing along the foul line.

Mr. Mayhew is in charge of the work, along with help from Mark Robinson, Clint Phelps, Chad Harrington, Aaron Kober, John McDaniel, Ken Kober, and Pat Adle. They started the project in 2017.

Mark Robinson said, "It is taking longer

because it is an expensive project, and the athletic budget will not allow it." Mr. Mayhew is hoping to have the field completed by next season, but potentially it will take two years. The volunteers aren't going to work on it over the winter; they will resume in the spring. They couldn't finish it all at once because they do not have enough money in the athletic funds. The field is going to be better because there won't be injury risk involving the

*"It is taking longer because it is an expensive project, and the athletic budget will not allow it."
—Mark Robinson*

Recess Time Is Important to Kids

By: Evan W.

Recess comes from the Latin word recessus, meaning "a going back, retreat." Retreat means a quiet and secluded place to rest and relax. In elementary school, kids do relax during recess, but they also like playing. An article from Scholastic says, "Play is essential to children's development and cautions against decreased time in school for recess."

Good Shepherd Lutheran School still offers one recess in junior high. Five students in an interview were asked to express their thoughts about recess time. Some students like to play football, a game much like tag, and walking and talking with each other. Catrina L., a seventh grader,

said, "(I like) having fun at recess."



Most students like to have recess before lunch. Some reasons students do not like recess is because it's too short. One student said, "hotness", another said, "I get very hungry." Everyone believes recess should be longer,

because they want more time to play and talk. What most students say about recess is that it helps them do better in school. One student said, "Yes, because it gives us a break." Another said, "Yes, you let out energy." Also, another one said, "Yes, it lets your brain unwind." Some suggestions from students for making recess more fun are having a longer recess time, having a volleyball net outside, and having a swing set. In conclusion, it's important for students to have recess or a break to keep them happy and stress free.

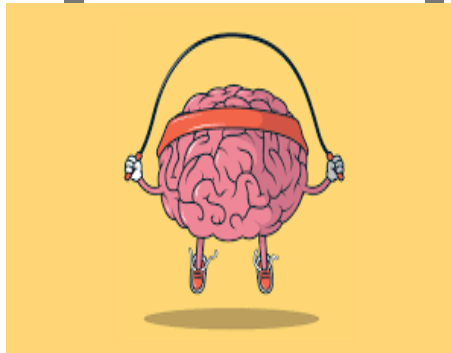
Brain Breaks—Good or Bad?

By: Adam B.

Brain Breaks have been used a lot more frequently in schools. They range from dancing to reviews, to not having any at all. Christian is an 8th grader who goes to Good Shepherd, and he says that it depends on how long they are.

An article by Judy Ward explains the positive affect of these breaks for her students and what the proper time to do them is.

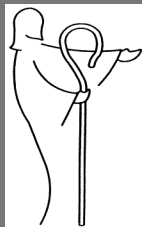
She says they should be done before long periods of class time where boredom will



set in.

Brain Breaks can also have negative effects. For instance, imagine you are in class studying for a test when your teacher says that it is time for a brain

break. When it is over, you can't remember your train of thought! That is why timing is important.



About *Shepherd's Staff* Writers

This edition of *Shepherd's Staff* was written, edited and published by Good Shepherd Lutheran School's Journalism 101 class, which is composed of seventh and eighth grade students. The newspaper is a culminating project of this semester-long course. During this class, students analyzed many local and national news articles. They learned the key components of a news story, the importance of a good lead, and the value of citizen interviews.

Students were involved in every step of producing and publishing this newspaper. In addition to writing the stories, they also determined the newspaper layout and the arrangement of the articles.