

Dear Mr. Porcello,

As a student who has attended Perry Local Schools my entire life, I have to say that I have been given many life changing opportunities. I am very grateful that our school provides world-class arts programs as well as top tier core courses, but it has become evident that some students receive special or preferred treatment by teachers and administrators. Favoritism is a fact of life it can and must be avoided in schools. This type of special treatment towards one student or a group of students can cause many problems in the classroom environment.

Favoritism is evident in many different clubs, sports, and classes at Perry Local Schools. Specifically, the criteria for National Honors Society holds world-class standards so that only the best of the best are accepted. The acceptance into National Honors Society is a great achievement, but the issue with favoritism comes after the acceptance. In our chapter of National Honors Society we were told that meetings are mandatory and service projects are required, this is also mentioned on the National Honors Society website: "Students who accept membership and are inducted into the chapter should be aware of the time and commitment involved with this honor. For example, there will be chapter meetings. The chapter bylaws should articulate the yearly meeting schedule and member attendance obligations. Members also must participate in chapter and individual service projects to benefit the school and community." However, only nine members participated in the "mandatory" volunteer opportunity and only about 10 members showed up to the meetings consistently. This lack of accountability diminishes the value of being a part of the National Honors Society chapter at Perry High School. The students are not being held responsible for their actions or lack thereof.

Favoritism is not only seen in the classroom, but it is also seen in our athletics. The requirements to earn a varsity letter are set up in a specific manner, but can also be up to the coach's discretion which leads to the favorites of the team receiving a letter they did not necessarily earn. That also diminishes the work of those athletes who legitimately earned their varsity letter. I understand that we are a small school and that means we need athletes in many different sports, but I fail to see how it is fair to allow students to play multiple sports at once. This discourages other students from trying to get involved because they know those spots will go to the preferred student. What the administration may see as encouraging one student is in reality discouraging many others along the way because of the way it is gone about. For example, why is one student expected to show up every day to practice and not receive playing time while another student can not put their full effort into that sport and still get the starting position?

To reform Perry Local School there should be mandated self-evaluations for administrators every nine weeks. Along with self-evaluations, there should be an evaluation sent to the student body to help administrators fix problems they did not know were happening. Without reform students will resent their teachers and administrators for "affording special privileges or attention for some and not others" and they will "simmer with resentment" according to Micheal Linsin from his article *Why Playing Favorites Is Bad For Classroom Management*. Linsin also goes on to explain how to avoid playing favorites and it is quite simple "be the same consistently pleasant teacher day in and day out" and yes I know teachers and administrators are human as well and have good days and bad days, but that should not be taken out on the students. Some may say that there is no favoritism in our school system, but according to a study done by Brown and Dobbins "subtle cues include nonverbal behavior that conveys preference (or dislike) toward another person (e.g., facial expressions, length of eye contact, body movements). A teacher may not even be aware of giving preference or investing more in one student and slighting others". This is the exact reason that self and student evaluations would be extremely useful to fixing this issue. Teachers and administrators may not realize they are playing favorites and causing "those who are favored [to] adopt a sense of privilege" according to a paper written by Hamre, Pianta, Bear, and Minke from UCLA.

In conclusion, Perry Local Schools provides amazing opportunities for their students. However, some students may feel discouraged because of the favoritism in our school district. Favoritism is a problem with a simple solution, reflect on what has happened, and use that to move forward. Reflection is the key to reforming the Perry Local Schools and that can be done by requiring self-evaluations for all teachers and administrators every nine weeks. Another key component to this reform is getting feedback from students. The students have a better perspective of the school environment than any teacher or administrator could simply because it is part of their daily

life. The student evaluation will allow more insight for teachers and administrators to learn about problems they may not have known about. We should not accept favoritism in our school district because it leads to an entitled and toxic environment for students. Not only will these evaluations benefit teachers and administrators, but also the students because this gives them a chance to look at how their actions may have impacted the Perry Local Schools environment and reflect on what they have done well and what they could do better.

Sincerely,

A PSL Student