

Headline: Raise Your Voice

Subhead: New policies impact high school art programs

After the district removed the “wheel” at the middle school level — a system where sixth-graders to cycle through all the electives — many voiced worries about the future of arts. Director of choirs **Taryn Gervais** said these new policies might affect future enrollment in ensembles.

“Taking that [wheel] requirement away impacts those students who just weren't going to give [choir] a chance, but if they had, they would have experienced something that they really loved,” Gervais said. “My fear is losing those kids that would have really excelled.”

Gervais said ensemble directors will have to make a greater effort to recruit and expose students to the classes to counteract the potential number losses.

“Making [choir] numbers smaller cuts off opportunity to sing literature that's been written specifically for that ensemble,” Gervais said. “The rigor of literature in which we can sing diminishes when you take kids out of [the] ensemble.”

Sophomore Katelyn Seyl said these policies could threaten the growth of various programs like choir. Seyl said the arts — and ensembles — are advantageous.

“Arts are so fun, and everyone should do them because they help you find friends and you meet really cool teachers like Gervais,” Seyl said. “[Arts] help you think more creatively and more outside of the box, and helps you become a part of something.”

Fellow chorale member, senior **Barrett Dupree**, said choir made him more involved and has many benefits that could appeal to younger students.

“I was a freshman who did nothing; I was not involved in a single activity,” Dupree said. “And ever since [I joined choir], I have felt a part of the school and felt like I am loved.”

Dupree said arts make up life and having an understanding of art is fantastic.

“[I'm] being praised for talent that I didn't even know I had at the time,” Dupree said. “Choir, personally, has saved my life.”