

think

Tell students what's going on at school

■ Teen view: Better communication would help students and faculty at Southside High.

In recent months at Southside High School many students have been ill-informed on several topics around the school. Many students blame the faculty, many members of the faculty believe it is the fault of students. Southside Principal Arline Ely suggests the problem is apathy among students.

Students at Southside recently reacted to a proposed change in class schedules with petitions and threats of walkouts. The proposal would have replaced 80-minute classes with 40-minute classes.

Ely points out that surveys were sent to students and their parents, asking their opinions on the schedules. Although the students had no direct effect on the scheduling, the surveys were looked over very closely by Southside's building planning team.

But when the students were sent the surveys, they did not realize that the scheduling, and in many ways the chances of many students graduating on time, were in jeopardy. Students have been sent similar surveys before, and they appeared to have no effect. So, when students had the power to help keep their scheduling, they did not realize they had this power.

But compared with the situation involving current and former Southside students who were diagnosed with cancer, scheduling conflicts became very insignificant.

The "cancer scare," as it was known around Southside, was a very unsettling time for students, who relied on sources of information such as newspapers, radio, television, and individual teachers.

It took several weeks before the administration addressed the students and answered their questions. Although they probably couldn't have answered all the questions, with a limited amount of information, they still should have told students what they did know.

As it turns out, most of those students likely developed cancer in the pre-Southside years of their life. Also all testing so far has not turned up any connection to the cancer reports.

The scheduling was revoked upon and Southside will remain under 80-minute block scheduling, so in both cases there was no harm done. But the students need a direct source of information.

Whether it is the students' fault or the administration's, something needs to be done.

Southside does not currently have a homeroom in its schedule. If there was one, students could possibly be informed through messages or possibly in a school newspaper.

Although many students may not attend homeroom in schools that have it, those who are concerned about what's going on and do not have time for after-school meetings should still be given an opportunity to be informed.

— JIMMY KEEFE

talkback!

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