

The ARHS cafeteria needs to straighten up and perform.

By Cyrus Copen

The lack of chairs, lunch staff and the elimination of option to eat outside has had a negative effect on how students feel about being required to eat lunch on campus. The ARPS district has been hit hard with budget cuts, and those cutbacks are becoming more and more noticeable in the high school cafeteria. Certain aspects for those who buy school lunch, and those who eat in the cafeteria have become extremely frustrating. Can you eat your lunch in under 10 minutes on a day-to-day basis? You'd better hope so if you plan to buy food from "Healthy Choices," the lunch provider for Amherst Regional High School, which also needs reform.

The lines to be served food have become preposterously long and crowded. This is an ongoing problem because many students cannot even move safely with their tray of food. Trays are constantly being

knocked over.

The longest of the lunch lines has to be awarded to the Great American Sandwich bar and the burrito/nacho line. While 20 to 30 kids wait anxiously in line for their meal, only one member of staff attempts to prepare every student's sandwich or burrito. On any given day there is about a 5 to 15 minute wait to acquire a sandwich or burrito depending on where you stand in line. That wait is just to obtain your food; students then have to wait in a separate line to pay for their food.

After students have paid and are out of line the wait continues. Many students, especially those who were last in line have become accustomed to the tedious rummage from table to

table just to find a chair. This can also be anywhere from a 2 to 5 minute process and lessens student's time to eat lunch in a civilized manner. Combine all the waiting in lines and the

search for a chair with the 5 minute walk to the lunch room, how much time do we have to eat? Enough time to chow our food down like starved barbarians before the bell rings to get back to class. In other words it boils down to 8 to 10 minutes.

The most frustrating component about lunch does not pertain to the long lines. What I find most annoying is the trifling rules and regulations

that most all members of lunch staff enforce with great persistence. Day after day I have been quarrelling with a different member of lunch staff as to how unreasonable some of these rules are, yet not one of them ever seems to budge. The consequences of my actions only grow worse, yet the punishment never seems to fit the crime. I was issued a disciplinary report and a detention for the simple act of adding cheese to my salad. "All I am trying to do is make healthy choices! Isn't that the name of the company you work for?" I exclaimed, after being harassed by several lunch staff over the same topic.

"The cheese is only for kids buying pasta for that day. It's an inventory control matter." - said one of the lunch staff.

"Then explain to me why students in the pasta line are free to load up their bowls with as much cheese as they can fit onto their trays, where as I am only asking for one scoop equivalent to about a teaspoon?" I asked.

The lunch lady's face grew flabbergasted, then angry. "The lines are separate for a reason. If you are getting a sandwich, you can't get extra cheese with your meal," she said.

"All I'm trying to do is make healthier choices. The brown and soggy salad is hard enough to eat as it is so write me up, charge me extra, do what you gotta do, but from now on I will be putting cheese on my salad," I said as I walked away. Three days later, sure enough, came the detention slip. My parents and friends sure got a good laugh out of that. The school lunch program needs much liberation, and I am going to start with constructive reform before anarchy ensues.

fast enough we will continue to lose programs and people and are going to end up in a very unfortunate situation. In a society that claims to be always learning, we should be focusing on improving the public learning institutions.

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The less than perfect economy intensifies Amherst's struggle to maintain the best education for its' students

By Kira Gallagher

As the daughter of a schoolteacher and a school administrator I have seen the effects of pay cuts in schools. Everyone is affected by the

less than perfect economy but public schools across the United States

have taken hard hits. Teachers, classes, and clubs in schools are slowly being taken away because the state can no longer supply steady funds, and the community cannot give extra money.

We are always hearing about the big car companies that are being bailed out, or

the big businesses that need more money to stay afloat. Why are these corporate machines receiving the precious money in our country while education takes a seat on the sidelines?

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Throughout the history of the world education has been constant. To keep on succeeding we need to keep learning, though in the modern day, education is not valued the way it should be. Instead, the public schools in the U.S. are subjected to the use of old worn textbooks, overworked teachers, and fewer

or no electives at all.

During a time when being educated is so important, the schools are taking a back seat financially. When teachers get cut, other teachers are expected

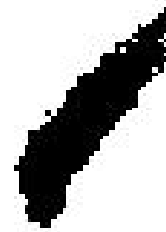
to take on an extra workload. They are also asked to teach a new subject sometimes, so their actual teaching of the class is not exceptional. The student is then left with an education that could have been better.

Additionally, the lower pay and insecurity of teaching is scaring away future teachers. The younger generations are looking

to high paying jobs that will pay the bills.

Amherst has been fortunate enough to sustain most cuts and fund-raise among the community to keep programs alive. I worry though that if the economy doesn't recover

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