

# WestWord

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## Administration to implement new policies

**Zoe Ljubic**  
Editor in Chief

Three new policies initiated by District 219 administration have affected or will soon impact students significantly. The administration recently announced changes regarding lunch purchasing, detention serving and homeroom attendance monitoring.

Students who enter the lunchroom and purchase cafeteria food are required to swipe their identification card (ID) with each purchase, even if they are paying with cash.

According to Aramark Food Services Manager Joshua Wenger, the mandatory ID swipes are enforced so that parents may "see what their students are eating."

Wenger explained that a directive from Superintendent Nanciann Gatta initiated a system in which District 219 schools monitor what students are purchasing in the cafeteria. The new system especially benefits those parents who have children on free and reduced lunch (FRL) plans, Wenger said, adding that having students show their IDs also ensures that the student producing the ID is the student purchasing the food. This limits the chances of a student using another student's ID, with or without permission.

According to Wenger, he and Gatta received a number of phone calls from parents of FRL students regarding additional charges on what their children had purchased.

"If a student comes home and tells [his/her] parents [(s)he] had pizza for lunch, and [(s)he] really had two slices, that is not covered in the meal plan," Wenger said. "The meal plan includes only one slice of pizza, so parents are [charged for the second one]."

When parents call and complain about the extra charge, the administration can "pull the records and show the parents exactly what their [children] are eating," he said.

The fact that students are required to show their IDs when entering the cafeteria had made the transition easier, Wenger said.

"Students need to keep their IDs with them at all times [while in the cafeteria]," he said.

Nevertheless, the change took some students by surprise.

Senior Medha Patel believes the administration failed by not notifying the student body about the new policy.

"I had no idea that we had to show our IDs when purchasing food, so I didn't have my ID with me the first time I bought food, and I was [reprimanded]," she said. "Although I do not think it is a hassle for students to carry their IDs with them while in lunch, I strongly believe the [administration] should have made it clear that they were going to do this."

Freshman Viki Tomic agreed with Patel.

"The only reason I knew about [the ID swipes] was because I

was told the first week of school when I bought my lunch," Tomic said. "If I didn't have a lunch, I would not have known. The school should have made it clear because many students don't have a lunch and are shocked when they first buy something."

Wenger said that "just like any new policy or procedure, it takes 30 days to create a new habit to break an old habit."

So far, Wenger believes the ID swipe system during lunch has been successful. Parents are still calling, but this way the administration has proof of what the students are purchasing, he said. Currently, the district is working on creating software to allow parents to check online to see what their children are eating.

"The data is available; it is just a matter of putting it out there for [parents] to see," Wenger said.

Another new lunchtime procedure offers students the opportunity to serve 20 or 40-minute detentions during their lunch periods. The detention policy has been under discussion since the past school year and finally took effect on Oct. 15.

Dean Mark Rigby explained that the philosophy behind the additional detention serving periods is simple:

"We want kids to be in class," he said.

He presented a scenario: a student receives a 40-minute detention for his/her third tardy to class. If the student fails to serve the detention in the allotted time, the detention becomes a Saturday morning detention. If the student fails to serve the Saturday detention, the consequence is an in-school suspension in the Behavior Adjustment Center (BAC).

"What started as a 40-minute [detention] turns into an in-school suspension [in which the student] misses a whole day of class," Rigby said.

Rigby added that "all we want is for the students to serve the [first] detention," but failure to serve builds to a point in which "students are missing eight periods" in the BAC.

According to Rigby, the lunchtime detention provides an alternative.

"We tried to come up with another way for [students] to serve their time, and we thought lunch was an option because it

is 42 minutes long, and it is another option besides before or after school," he said.

Rigby added that the system has a residual benefit.

"Taking [lunch] away from students is a punishment, and it is a way to preclude kids' getting in-school suspensions by letting students serve detentions during lunch," he said.

Freshman Mario Sivric likes the idea of lunchtime detention.

"I have after school activities, so if I were to get a detention, I would be able to serve it during lunch," he said. However, he recognizes the punitive aspect of the policy.

"I love lunch, so I know that serving a detention during lunch would be a punishment," Sivric said.

Junior Ryan Marohn agreed, saying that "it is a good idea to have students serve detentions during lunch periods because students are very busy before and after school. By giving [students] the option to serve their detention during lunch, they won't have to go extra early to school or miss after school activities," he said.

However, Marohn does see one problem with the system.

"This does strike an issue for very involved students that might not even have a lunch and only a study hall," Marohn said, adding that he believes the "actions should go further to [allow students to] serve detentions during study halls if possible."

Students can serve their lunchtime detentions in room 1755 during periods three, four, six and seven. Students who have lunch during period five can serve their detentions in room 2010.

Principal Kaine Osburn said that "the administration has worked very hard to respond to teacher feedback

regarding tardies and attendance; this response is one that enables students to not have to miss after school activities and other obligations after school."

Another new policy aimed at maintaining discipline will begin in the near future, with the addition of a second tardy swipe during homeroom, identical to the first period tardy swipe system, in which students who arrive late to first period receive an automatic detention.

"Once the bell rings, teachers will shut their doors, and students who are in the hallway and not in class will have to go to

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## The Sparrow expected to draw large audience for interesting plot

**Mary Basic**  
Business Manager

The theatre department will perform its winter production of *The Sparrow* Thursday, Dec. 10-Saturday, Dec. 12 in the Black Box Theater.

The troupe will perform for the community Dec. 10 at 10 a.m., with other performances on Dec. 11 at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 12 at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

According to <http://chicagotheaterblog.com>, the play, written and originally produced by Chicago's House Theatre troupe, follows the exploits of Emily Book (senior Ani Poladian), who has the unexplained power of flight, earning her the nickname of "Sparrow." Book was the lone survivor of a school bus crash in the town of Spring Farms, IL when she was four, after which she was sent to a Catholic boarding school.

At the outset of the play, Book, now 17, has come back to Spring Farms, where she has been taken in by Joyce (senior Alyssa Jutovsky) and Albert (senior David Fisch) McGuckin, whose daughter had been killed in the same bus accident.

At Emily's new school, counselor Dan Christopher (senior Dan Machalinski) takes Emily under his wing, introducing her to all of the students, including the school's class president and cheerleading captain, Jenny McGrath (senior Dominique Forte). Emily's powers are discovered at a basketball game when Jenny

during a cheerleading stunt, ends up precariously hanging from a banner high above the gym. Emily flies up and saves her.

The feat thrusts Emily into the spotlight, and Jenny must readjust to her position of not being the most popular girl in school. She will do anything she can to regain her status—even if it means bringing down Emily and exposing her hidden past.

Director Andrew Sinclair expressed enthusiasm about the production.

"[The play] is amazingly contemporary and inventive. This show was written less than three years ago, and it feels modern," Sinclair said. "This show is realistic, while still being a fantasy. It is written like a screenplay, so it gives the actors, technicians and directors a chance to create special effects."

In addition to the principals, other cast members include seniors Sean Buckley (Principal Skor), Ned McElfresh (Coach Adams/Stuart), Olivia Coss (Margaret Rosenthal/Evy), Jeremy Berman (Sheriff Rosenthal/Louie), David Schwartz (Gerald Adams/Brad Gomer), Ashley Alexander (Elizabeth Gilbert/Phoebe) and Alicia Peake (Tammy Adams/Michelle); juniors Leah Hummel (Allison McGrath/Shannon) and Aleks Krapivkin (Driver/Announcer/Ensemble); sophomores include Aaron Ruderman (Mark Gilbert/Skye), Lauren Langer (Grandma/Carol), Quinn Lawson-Hall (Jonathan Simpson/Ensemble) and Kyle Resurrecion (Charley McGuckin). The Ensemble includes seniors Morgan Quilici and Jin Park and freshman Danny Morrison.

"I think this play is a wonderful show. It is like real high school with a little bit of extra to make it really interesting," Forte said. "I think every age group can respond to it because the message is targeted to all people."

According to Sinclair, the play has been performed only three times outside its original production at the House Theatre.

"It was a smash hit in Chicago for two years, and now we are lucky enough to produce it," Sinclair said. "Plus, as it is a class project for the play production class, the students must test all of their knowledge to create a very complex show."

Sinclair said he chose this play because he saw the production four times in its original Chicago run and vowed that he would direct it as soon as it became available.

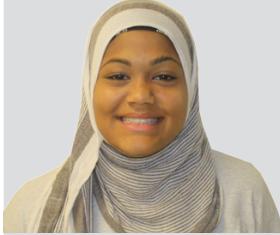
According to Sinclair, it took a lot of work to get the rights to the play, but he feels honored that the playwrights trusted Niles West Theatre with their work.

"The show isn't even published yet—each cast member received [a script] that was written in Microsoft Word™," Sinclair said. "There are a ton of errors and inconsistencies that would probably be ironed out in the publishing process. It is really cool to get our hands on unpolished work."

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# WESTWIRE



An open letter  
to senior  
teachers

**Uzma Ahmad**  
News/Wire Editor

Dear Senior Teachers:

So far throughout senior year, college and career counselor Daniel Gin, our guidance counselors and others have stressed (overstressed?) the importance of completing and sending in all our college applications as early as possible. Some seniors have been on the ball, submitting their forms and letters much earlier than even the early action cutoff dates. However, most seniors—including this columnist—struggled to complete college admissions materials in the face of the inevitable, crushing weight of end-of-quarter assignments.

The problem is that the end of the first quarter coincides with the Nov. 1 early decision deadline. In my experience, teachers increase assessments near the end of the grading period in an effort to provide additional grades to boost averages.

Note to those teachers: thanks but no thanks.

During the week leading up to Nov. 1—a common deadline for most early decision applications—some senior students, ironically, those motivated to apply early—felt overwhelmed by an incredibly heavy course workload. It seemed as though many teachers, apparently oblivious to the approaching deadline, continued to pile on homework throughout the last two weeks of the quarter.

I had hoped that at least during the two weekends before the deadline, I could finish my early decision applications. However, as the two weeks prior to zero hour rolled on, I felt drowned under all the homework I received in my classes. I was so overwhelmed by all my homework that I did not even have a chance to touch any of my applications.

A few teachers apparently own calendars and tried to adjust their homework schedules and shuffle assignments so that their students would have a lighter load during the application crunch, but majority of senior teachers did not, perhaps assuming that applicants had ample time to complete applications.

I understand that it is the student's responsibility to manage his/her time properly—such as beginning to work on applications early—so that he/she can balance both academic work and applications. Yet, sometimes teachers may forget that students are forced daily to prioritize all responsibilities based on homework deadlines. If I have to submit a paper and study for a test on the same day, I have no other choice but push back my application work for another day and work on that day's assignments.

Because students need to keep their grade point averages high to be accepted to colleges, when push comes to shove, the applications are pushed to the back burner, with current assignments demanding a higher priority, as they are usually due the next day. Thus, those last two weeks leading up to the application deadlines become extremely stressful.

As a public service to senior teachers, following is a calendar of all major college deadlines for the remainder of the school year:

Dec. 1: Loyola University priority admission  
Jan. 1: regular admission for most universities  
Jan. 2: University of Illinois regular admission  
Jan. 15: University of Illinois—Chicago regular admission  
Feb. 1: Universities of Michigan and Wisconsin-Madison and DePaul University regular admission  
Feb. 15: financial aid for most universities

I am not asking teachers to put their entire curriculum on hold and to base all of their lesson and assignment scheduling on these days. It would be extremely helpful if students could spend a little less time on homework and a little more time on college applications during these busy time periods.

## Discipline policies, from page 1

the closest computer to swipe their ID and receive an automatic detention,” Assistant Principal of Operations Ryan McTague said.

If students receive a detention for being late to homeroom, they can easily serve it during their lunch period, according to McTague.

“When you do something like this, we want to make sure that students have the opportunity to serve the detentions,” he said.

McTague, Rigby and dean Elizabeth Gomez agreed that all policies are enforced to ensure that each student is on time to class.

Regarding the homeroom tardy system, McTague said that as soon as the logistics of lunchtime detentions are “solidified” and students are aware that they are an option, the tardy system will be implemented.

## A Day in the Life...

Szczepaniak reaches out to inform community on school activities

**Morgan Quilici**  
Copy Editor

Students are often unaware of the individuals that help Niles Township District 219 run smoothly. District 219's Community Relations Director Jim Szczepaniak is one of those people. He ensures the community is positively involved with the school district. Szczepaniak oversees the community-based projects that involve the community members, students and faculty of District 219. After spending a day with Szczepaniak, this reporter has come to realize how the community benefits from the school district through the efforts of the man in charge.

Szczepaniak began his day at 8:15 a.m. at Niles West. His first order of business was to meet with foreign language and English Language Learner director Ed Murphy and a potential employee for the Family Liaison program. This newly developed program will benefit foreign language students and parents by having translators at important school events. After the brief meeting, Szczepaniak led the prospective employee on a tour throughout the school, greeting administrators, faculty members and students.

Szczepaniak continued his day at his district office. In his office, he began by checking his email and voicemails and prepared for his 9 a.m. meeting with Superintendent Nanciann Gatta, Representative for the Village of Skokie Susan Van Dusen, Executive Director of the Skokie Public Library Carolyn Anthony, President of the Indian Community of Niles Township Usha Kamaria, Professor of Library Services at Oakton Community College Rose Novil, Niles West IRC director Penny Swartz and the Director of the Niles North IRC Linda Moore. At the meeting, the individuals discussed the “Coming Together in Skokie” project—a program based on Chicago’s “One Book, One Chicago” that promotes literacy in the District 219 community. The book chosen for “Coming Together in Skokie” is *Motherland* by Vineeta Vijayaghavan. At the meeting, Szczepaniak, as well as many other individuals, discussed the details for the program’s events to take place in early 2010.

Although Szczepaniak runs to and from his office and the two schools, he says he “loves the fact that [he does] something different everyday.”

“I can have what I think is going to be my day planned, and then the phone rings, and [my entire] day is different,” he added.

Szczepaniak graduated from Northwestern University with a bachelor’s degree in political science and German studies. He started his career as a stringer for the *Daily Calumet*. After he earned his master’s degree in communications from National Louis University, he became a reporter for the *Skokie Review* covering District 219 and the Village of Skokie. After three years as a reporter, he became the public information officer for the Village of Skokie for eight years. He then went to work

for Ameritech™, negotiating franchises for the company. After freelancing for a while, he received the job at District 219. He has been working for the district for three and a half years.

“Out of all my jobs this is my favorite, because I feel like I am actually making a difference,” Szczepaniak said.

Part of Szczepaniak’s position involves producing community newsletters. On the day of *West Word*’s visit, Szczepaniak traveled to Niles North for an 11:20 a.m. meeting with community public relations technical assistant Karyn Malench. The two discussed the timeline for the *West Watch*, the *Viking Voice*, the *Welcome Back Newsletter* (alumni newsletter) and the school boards five-year goal publication.



Szczepaniak meets with community public relations technical assistant Karyn Malench.

Photo by Morgan Quilici

“It is important [to let the community] know what [the district] is doing to provide a quality education so that when [the taxpayers] get their tax bills, [the taxpayers] know what their money is going towards,” he said.

After lunch at 12:50 p.m., in which Szczepaniak and Malench dined in North’s cafeteria, he went back to West to meet with English teacher Dana DesJardins and science teacher Neil Koreman. At this meeting the Alliance for Climate Education (ACE) members created a presentation to encourage the schools involvement with their program. The members also developed plans for ACE’s involvement with the Green Counsel for School Improvement. As co-chairman of this organization, Szczepaniak is trying to create an active recycling program at the district offices and at Niles Central.

While the management aspect of Szczepaniak’s job is crucial, he still finds ways to branch out into the community and school buildings. He was involved in the intergovernmental agreement with the Skokie Park District, Morton Grove Park District and Village of Lincolnwood about the use of the district’s facilities such as the pools. Along with others, Szczepaniak also represented the district at meetings about the Skokie Swift expansion.

Szczepaniak’s busy day came to an end as he headed home to spend time with his wife and dog.

## Orchestra to perform holiday melodies

**Kathryn Booker**  
Staff Writer

The annual winter orchestra concert will take place Sunday, Dec. 13 at 3 p.m. in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium.

The symphonic orchestra will perform “A Christmas Festival,” by Leroy Anderson, “New World Symphony,” by Antonin Dvorak and “Blackberry Winter,” by Connie Ellison.

Stephen Seifert, a soloist from Nashville, TN, will accompany the symphonic orchestra.

The philharmonic orchestra will perform “Brevard Sketches,” by Elliot Del Borgo, “Concerto in D Major,” by J.S. Bach and “White Christmas” by Irving Berlin.

The concert orchestra will perform “Concerto in D Major,” by J.S. Bach and “Dumfries Place,” by Robert D. McCashin.

Senior president of the orchestra board Jennifer Wong believes the musical selections will appeal to all audiences.

“Hopefully they will enjoy it. They will have fun in the Christmas songs, [because] they are more upbeat,” she said.

Junior orchestra member Sandra Gonzales concurs, noting that Christmas music is most entertaining.

“I think [the audience] will enjoy the Christmas Festival,”

she said.

According to Wong, the symphonic, philharmonic and concert orchestras have been preparing for the concert by working with the full orchestra.

“I think the most important thing is that [the audience] will see how we are progressing,” Wong said.

Gonzales echoed Wong’s sentiments, adding that the musicians have “worked really hard.”

For senior orchestra member Alfred Hegyes, this has meant “practicing with the orchestra during their [in-school] practices and rehearsals outside of school.”

Orchestra director Steven Katz agreed that the orchestra has been diligent.

“For the past month or so we have been rehearsing daily in class,” he said.

Hegyes and Wong predict that the audience will not be disappointed.

“[The audience should expect] a great performance, good music and very exciting pieces,” Hegyes said.

Katz seconds Hegyes’ notion.

“The kids sound wonderful,” Katz said. “It should be an exciting concert.”

# WestWord

## Short Circuit Cultural Round Table

**Sofiya Pershteyn**  
Staff Writer

The next Cultural Round Table will be held in the student activity center on Tuesday, Dec. 8, at 3:45 p.m. The question that will be discussed in this meeting is "How does your cultural identity affect your academic achievement?"

Principal Kaine Osburn will be the moderator of the event. Osburn said that he believes that these discussions provide students a place to talk about any problems they might have and find appropriate solutions.

"Addressing subjects directly and together is better than ignoring difficult topics and possibly responding to problems in an unhealthy or disrespectful way," he said.

The event is organized by the international relations council, chaired by Niles West math teachers Jasmina Jukic and Margaret Glaubke. The council plans and holds discussions three times a year.

"I hope that through this discussion, students will be able to share how their culture has obstructed their academic success, and talk about how the school can help them improve their grades," Glaubke said.

Osburn acknowledges that the goal of the meetings is to discuss negative aspects students may feel about diversity.

"Rather than focus on the celebratory aspects of diversity at Niles West, which is very important, we want here to focus on the more difficult aspects of it, so we understand how important it is to have a dialogue about these matters," he said.

## Band to display unexpected surprise

**Daniel Friedman**  
Staff Writer

The band will hold its annual holiday concert on Tuesday, Dec. 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium.

According to band director William Koch, the concert will feature a variety of holiday themed-songs and carols. He added that the selections for this year's program will include both traditional holiday music and some pieces that put a twist on the notions of "typical" holiday music.

"If we just do a concert they will accept that. We try to do a little bit to make it a little more like they are going to something more special than just a concert," Koch said.

The concert will open with the concert band performing a medley called "The Angels Mix," arranged by Patrick Roszell. This piece puts a rock-and-roll spin on three traditional Christmas carols: "Angels We Have Heard on High," "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" and "Angels from the Realms of Glory."

Of the medley, Koch said, "It is not what the people are going to expect. People expect to come to an 'Oh, it is cute holiday concert,' [but] we are going to bust out with a rock version right off the bat."

"The Angels Mix" will be followed a by piece called "Dreidel Variations," written by Robert Hirsch, a resident of Lincolnwood who has composed for the band in the past. This particular piece begins with the popular Chanukah song "Dreidel, Dreidel,

Dreidel" and then transforms the song, filtering it through several international styles. The concert band will conclude its program with the Christmas favorite "I'll Be Home for Christmas," by Eric Morales and Michael Story's "Holiday Grand Finale," which takes themes from the traditional carol "Good King Wenceslas."

The symphonic band will play four pieces as well. Selections include "Wonderful Christmastime," by Paul McCartney (arranged by Jay Dawson), "Shalom!" by Phillip Sparke, "Baby It's Cold Outside," by Frank Loesser (arranged by John Moss) and "Clash of the Carolers," a medley of traditional holiday songs arranged by Matt Conaway.

The symphonic wind ensemble will open with "Holiday Piece," by David Foster, who, according to Koch, has composed music for some of the biggest names in the industry. They also will play "The Eighth Candle," by Steve Reister, and a piece arranged by Tom Wallace called "Pat-a-pan." The program will conclude with a piece written by Serge Prokofiev and arranged by Tom Wallace titled "Midnight Sleigh."

Senior percussionist Ned McElfresh feels that the selection of music has the potential to make the concert very entertaining.

"I am pretty excited about this upcoming holiday concert because we are playing some pretty challenging pieces that are entertaining for all, no matter what religion," McElfresh said.

Senior trumpeter Dylan Lovering echoes McElfresh's sentiments.

"It will be exciting to play one of the most important concerts of the year as a senior," Lovering said.

Koch shares his students' enthusiasm.

"The energy is building," Koch said. "I just hope people come out to hear the holiday spectacle that we [will present]."

## Choir performances to sing traditional holiday arrangements

**Mary Basic**  
Staff Writer

The choir will hold its annual holiday concert on Sunday, Dec. 6 at 3 p.m. in the Robert L. Johnson Auditorium.

The women's choir and the men's choir will sing "One Minute Madrigal," by Donald Moore and "Gate Gate," by Brian Tate together. The chamber choir will sing "A Holiday Jazz Trio," arranged by Michele Weir and "Fulemule," by Gyorgy Orban. Master singers will perform "New Dance for the Sugar Plum Fairy," by Mannheim Steamroller and "Go Where I Send Thee," arranged by Nick Page.

Men's choir will sing "Ose Shalom," by John Leavitt. Women's

choir will sing, "Dream a Little Dream of Me," arranged by Mac Huff. Everyone in the concert will be singing the finale piece, "Let There Be Peace on Earth," by Jill Jackson and Sy Miller.

Guys & Dolls, High Fidelity and Echo Effect will be performing for the first time this year in the winter concert.

Choir director Amy Branahl said, "it is going to be a really good concert and the students have been working very hard on their music."

Sophomore chamber choir member Nicole Ostro agreed, saying that the concert is going to be enjoyable.

"[The difference between] the fall concert and the winter concert is that [at] the fall concert, all kinds of songs were performed and at the winter concert, [we will perform] holiday spirit songs."

Junior masters singers member Adam Gruemo will sing a solo in the song "Go Where I Send Thee."

Gruemo said, "the songs that will be performed at the concert are fun and the audience will greatly enjoy the whole concert."

Senior Master Singers member Alicia Peake says this is her second favorite concert of the year. Her first favorite is the Voices Only concert in late spring.

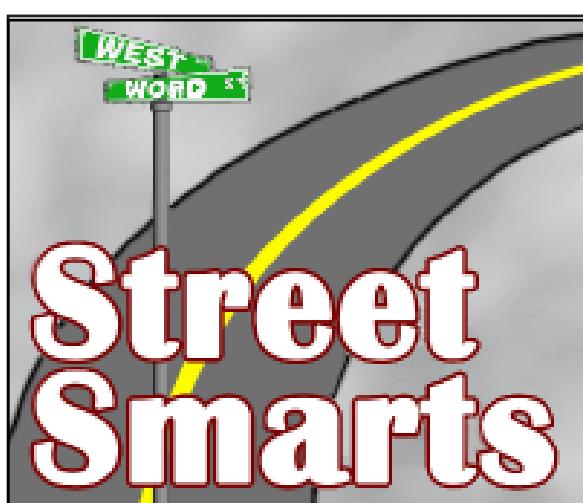
According to Peake, this concert is the liveliest and will get the biggest crowd. "The hype of the holiday season brings in more people," Peake said.

Peake says she loves doing this concert not just because of the snacks afterwards, but also because of the crowd.

"I am the girl who is counting down until the Christmas carols start on the radio," Peake said. "So any time I know we are working on holiday music, I go crazy."

According to Peake, the difference between this concert and the fall concert is that the choir "focuses mainly on holiday music. It is the more polished of the two. There is more professionalism since the holiday season is buzzing."

"The fall concert [was] more of an introduction for our year to come," Peake said.



1. Traditionally, when is Thanksgiving?

- A. Nov. 25
- B. Nov. 25
- C. Last Thursday of November
- D. Nov. 25
- E. Nov. 26

2. Where was the first Thanksgiving held?

- A. I don't know
- B. United States
- C. Plymouth Rock
- D. Plymouth Rock
- E. Plymouth, MA

3. What official function does the President of the U.S. perform every Thanksgiving day?

- A. Cuts a turkey
- B. Kills a turkey
- C. I don't know
- D. Shoots a turkey
- E. Eats turkey

4. What is the vegetarian alternative Thanksgiving dinner called?

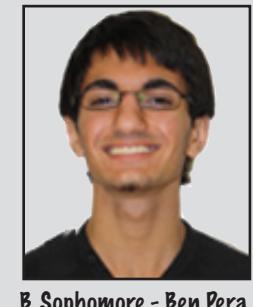
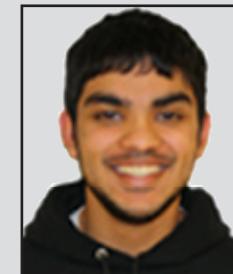
- A. Green bean casserole
- B. Tofu
- C. Tofurkey
- D. Tofu
- E. Tofurkey

5. What is the day after Thanksgiving called?

- A. I don't know
- B. Black Friday
- C. Black Thursday
- D. Black Friday
- E. Black Friday



A. Freshman - Demonte Hill



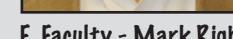
B. Sophomore - Ben Pera



C. Junior - Ankush Verma



D. Senior - Ainee Fatima



E. Faculty - Mark Rigby