

LETTERS

School was right to leave National Honor Society

To the Editor:

I applaud Worthington Kilbourne High School principal Ed Dunaway for taking the gutsy step to do away with the National Honor Society at the high school. Unlike many other local high schools, induction into Kilbourne's NHS chapter was not objective in the way it was administered.

While the academic criteria were clear, the criteria for the other three pillars of membership (leadership, service, character) were ambiguous and arbitrary. Even if a student was deemed to have met all the criteria, he or she might not be invited to join because the student fell below the "logical cut-off" which was determined on a year-to-year basis.

Valedictorians, National Merit scholars, and students nominated to national military academies have failed to "make the cut" at WKHS. Rather than brandishing lists of past inductees, the PTO should research how other high schools administer National Honor Society chapters designed to include, rather than exclude, as many students as possible.

Maybe with some significant re-tooling an adviser could be found and the program reinstated.

Deborah Sullivan, NHS, 1968

District should try to fix program before dropping it

To the Editor:

The decision to disband National Honor Society in the Worthington School District should be reconsidered and reversed.

Recent policies and procedures at Worthington Kilbourne High School were evidently not working. Faculty advisers received complaints from parents of unsuccessful candidates. In an e-mail to parents in October, WKHS principal Ed Dunaway wrote that he was unable to find faculty advisers for this year. The system appears to be broken, but instead of making an attempt to repair it, the program was dropped.

This situation presents administrators, faculty, parents and

students a golden opportunity to work together to examine the problems, difficulties, desires and goals of the school community as they relate to NHS in our district.

Armed with this information, the guidelines and assistance from the national level, our NHS chapter(s) can be rebuilt from the ground up. This is an outstanding opportunity for student leaders to gain knowledge and experience valued by NHS, colleges and employers.

Generally, NHS members are students with the chapter's required GPA, leadership skills and community service that encourage personal growth. Criteria (beyond GPA) for consideration for NHS should be clearly communicated to students and parents beginning early in the freshmen year. Understanding the criteria for NHS membership will help students choose and participate in activities and have realistic expectations prior to the application process.

I urge parents of students of all ages in the district to visit the Web site NHS.us to learn more about the organization, the many opportunities for students, scholarships, resources available to advisers and much more. If you support the return of NHS (or the decision to drop it), call or write your high school principal to request their participation in discussions with interested parents and students to examine the future of NHS in our district.

Jenny Gottesman

District cannot continue to ignore bullying problem

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to the now growing awareness of bullying problems at Worthington Park Elementary. I am amazed and perplexed that evolution and Columbine has brought us to an eye for an eye and a blatant disregard from educators surrounding this bullying problem.

As a father dealing with Worthington Park since 2001 (three sons) this problem is not new. However, the methods seem to remain the same. I have carefully watched Little Vietnam (what we call recess at Worthington Park) escalate to an out of control situation for years now.

Concerning your Dec. 5 letter, David Depaso, it is not surprising to see a known problem child and an educator disregard the circumstance and suspend your son.

Your son is obviously more interested in taking a stand

and picking a side as opposed to indecisive neutrality.

I, too, have instructed my sons to defend themselves as I am not interested in raising a punching bag.

While my heart goes out to all of those children who fear going to school solely because of this issue, it remains an incredible state of affairs to see this problem continually ignored.

Most of us do not enjoy the luxury of ignoring our customers, as if we do they will most certainly not remain my customers. And while the school does benefit from a "semi-captive" audience (I guess you DO have the option to move if all else fails) that should not equate to veiled indifference.

I encourage the school board to actively engage current and former students and parents and take demonstrable steps towards a real solution.

Finally, try this one at home: Sit your children down and simply ask who are the bullies in their school. Chances are, the same names will appear over and over from household to household. This behavior, if allowed at the lower levels, is only exacerbated in middle school and the rule of the day in high school.

Ron Carter