

Extra credit in many forms offers alternative route to better grades



By Caitlin Bush, Allison Lackner & Bella Lawson
EDITORS & STAFF REPORTER

Grosse Pointe Public School System doesn't have guidelines for extra credit, so it differs from class to class. This allows teachers to have different approaches for the extra credit they offer. Some opportunities involve students going out and purchasing things, like tissue boxes or markers. Or other teachers prefer options like coming in after school for an educational movie, writing essays or test corrections.

Junior Sophie Kehrig thinks that teachers requiring students to buy things for extra credit is unfair for certain students and classes.

"I think there should be an alternative. I don't think it is wrong to be like, 'hey, give me a tissue box, and I'll give you extra credit,' because funding and teachers buying tissues is kind of ridiculous," Kehrig said. "(But) I don't care if it is as cheap as a tissue box. That is just wrong."

Science teacher Andrew Pola is also against extra credit that involves students having to purchase items. He thinks students' grades should reflect their work, not their ability to go out and buy supplies.

"I would want to make sure as a teacher that it is equitable that all students could have that opportunity for learning or growth or credit," Pola said.

Pola doesn't offer extra credit because he doesn't think it represents the student's academic abilities.

"I think all too often it is used artificially and inflates students' grades," Pola said. "If something is truly important to learn or (master) or (understand), then I think it should just be a part of the normal class, not something extra."

Pola has a different approach when it comes to raising his students grades. He prefers to hold reassessments for his tests. He considers this as a second chance for the students to help them comprehend the material better.

On the flip side, social studies teacher Terri Steimer is in favor of extra credit and offers numerous extra credit activities that students can find time for during their busy schedules. These opportunities include bringing in tissues but also include films, take-home essays and conducting research on articles from www.americanheritage.com.

"I think films are very powerful if you choose ones that students are going to get something out of," Steimer said.

Steimer also makes sure the extra credit she offers expands what they have been learning in class.

"If students don't get anything out of it, that personally bothers me because I don't want to waste their time, and I want it as enrichment to advance some of the things we've already looked at," Steimer said. "There is no (time in class) to show something in its entirety, so extra credit is the perfect opportunity to do that."

Like Steimer, Spanish teacher Tamara Shepard has alternative extra credit opportunities she offers her students. Shepard knows

that there are many learning methods that will change them based on the class and students.

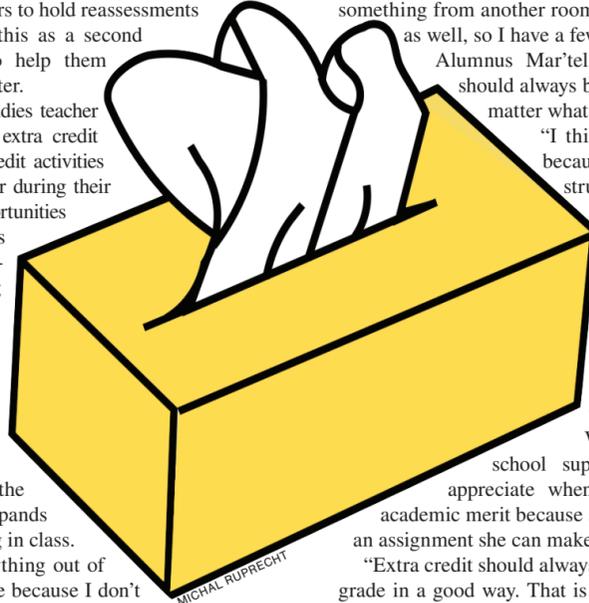
"No system is exactly perfect, so I always have a small opportunity to raise your grade a little bit, and I like it to be available," Shepard said. "Every once in a while, if I hear of something from another room, I might find a way to work that in as well, so I have a few things, but I'm not set in stone."

Alumnus Mar'tel Morgan thinks that extra credit should always be offered for every class there is, no matter what kind of form it is presented as.

"I think it should be a mandatory thing because there's a lot of kids here that struggle with homework. A person could have to go home and babysit immediately meaning they can't do homework, but they have that extra chance to bring in a tissue box," Morgan said. "Not every student needs it, but the requirement should just be a minimum of 15 extra credit points, just to give a kid that push."

While Kehrig is against purchasing school supplies for extra credit, she does appreciate when teachers offer extra credit with academic merit because she knows that if she does poorly on an assignment she can make up the points.

"Extra credit should always be offered. It can really affect your grade in a good way. That is why I think especially working for extra credit is more important than buying things for extra credit because you are actually making up the points you lost," Kehrig said. "You are actually working for them the same way you would on a test or a project instead of going out to the store and being like, 'I am going to buy these markers or tissues and give them to you,' and that's the end of it."



HANDS-ON

Opportunity.

Your hands are a tool by which you explore the world, but most importantly, to show people where you experience hands-on learning in Michigan. At Albion, we create an environment where you're encouraged to dive into the things that you love.



Albion College | albion.edu/hands-on

