

Exchange students experience new cultures

TERTZANLIS DISCUSSES HER IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA

Lauren Schutter
@schutterlauren

Foreign exchange student Ilyana Tertzanis came to WHS from Dortmund, Germany. Ilyana recently spoke to The Charger about the process of becoming a foreign exchange student, and her observations of school in the U.S.

Where are you originally from?

Dortmund, Germany. I live in a state called Nordrhein-Westfalen, on the Western side of Germany.

What made you decide to be a foreign exchange student?

Movies where you see high school life, and I wanted to improve my English and meet new people.

You mentioned movies where you see high school life, what movies? How does real high school live up to your expectations?

High School Musical is one, but it's obviously not exactly like that. Most of it is the same, except for the singing. The cheerleaders also aren't as much of a group as in the movie. There's definitely a lot of gossip, like in the movie.

What type of music do you enjoy?

Rap, which I guess would be considered German rap to you guys. Juju, SXTM, and Nura are some of my favorites.

What sports do you play? And what activities do you enjoy?

I play volleyball here, but I didn't play in Germany. I also play softball, and it's my favorite sport. I can pitch and play second base, but I'd say that in-field is my strong suit. After doing volleyball and body fitness here, I want to work out more when I return to Germany. No one in Germany does any sports other than soccer.



German exchange student Ilyana Tertzanis makes a presentation about Germany to her English 3 class. She also brought German desserts to share with the class. Photo by Kendyl Bolinder.

What's the process you go through to learn English and to come to America?

In Germany you start learning English in first grade where they just teach you colors, animals and stuff like that. Then in higher grades you learn grammar and how to build sentences. I went on a trip to England with my class in 8th grade, which is pretty common to practice speaking English. Coming to America is a long process and you have to apply about a year before you actually want to go. My teachers and my doctor both had to fill out papers and I had to write a letter to my host family.

Why Wabaunsee? Was it a choice, or did you get assigned our school?

My host family got to pick me so I didn't get to choose my state or school.

What are some major differences between school in Germany and school in America?

The biggest difference is probably that you get to choose your classes and teachers. In Germany you get to choose some classes in

10th Grade. We don't need to collect college credit. We do have to graduate with math, English, German and either another language or two sciences. Our teachers are way stricter and we have an extra pronoun to address them and other adults. Asking about their private life is disrespectful.

Our grades are different too. We have grades from 1 to 6, six being the worst. To actually go to university and study things like law or medical jobs, you need to have a perfect 1,0 or it'd be hard to even get into any class. Our college isn't as expensive. In my school we don't have lunch and you have to do sports outside of school. Most teachers grade in a way where you have to actually participate and answer questions during class and that makes up 50 percent of your grade.

WILLIER JOURNEYS TO COSTA RICA

Austin Henderson
@whscharger

Over the summer Falisha Willier traveled to Costa Rica as an exchange student. She is considered by the district as the first

WHS student to go to a country as a foreign exchange student. Traveling to the country for an entire week, she visited many different locations and learned many new things about Costa Rica.

Why did you decide to study abroad/take the trip?

I wanted to learn a new culture.

What's the process to study abroad?

You have to fill out grades, GPA, etc. You'll also fill out health forms and parent consent forms and send it to the country you want to go to. (fundraising, how much). My program costs \$3500. I had quite a few fundraisers. Spaghetti dinner and t shirt sales along with a dodgeball tournament gave quite a profit.

Why did you decide to go to Costa Rica?

It's warm and I liked the way it looks with all the forests. (did you have any other options). Yes I could have gone to Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, New Zealand, Poland, Spain and a few other countries with the program I used.

What was your living situation?

We stayed at different hotels. My hotels were more culture based. We moved every day.

What did you like the most about the culture there?

I liked how the culture and the people are laid back.

What was your favorite thing to do while at Costa Rica?

Talking to the locals.

Did your opinions of America change because of your trip?

A little. I had a different viewpoint on American stereotypes.

What is your advice to people considering studying abroad?

If you're considering it just go for it. Most programs will help fund it one way or another.

EDITORIAL Schedule increases student stress

After using block schedule for several years, WHS recently switched to a seven period day.

Many staff members were adamant about switching to a seven hour day, thinking it would be beneficial for students in

The editorial is the opinion of the Charger staff. Send letters to the editor to whscharger@gmail.com.

ways, such as retaining information better from having classes daily, students staying on task with shorter class periods, and making it easier to get caught up when you miss class. Teachers also seem to be going through lesson plans more quickly compared to previous years.

Although seeing teachers more often is nice, having seven classes daily comes with difficulties. This means, in core classes, that most assignments are due the day after they are assigned. If you don't understand homework, there is little time before class to get help. You often hand it in with incorrect or incomplete answers, or hand it in late. In previous years, students were able to use a 45-minute advisory period to visit teachers and complete work.

Another potential benefit was that students could maintain focus for the entire class. This is true, but it seems like shortening class periods took time away from working on assignments in class, and has increased the workload students are expected to complete at home. If teachers would provide hands-on learning, students would be more inclined to participate, rather than getting bored having to sit through lectures.

This was also supposed to be helpful for students who miss class for other school activities, but has done the complete opposite. The changes in advisory base have been a huge challenge for students.

Previously, students used this time during the school day to complete assignments and late work, get help from teachers, arrange club meetings, and more. Now that it has been cut in half, there is barely enough time for anything. Once you start to fall behind, it is significantly more difficult to get caught up due to time constraints and lack of opportunities to work independently. Students have to cram all these things into a 20 minute period, that is sometimes taken away due to school assemblies or presentations.

While we realize this change was made with the students' best interest in mind, and that there is no simple solution, we feel like things can be done to help the transition go much smoother. Teachers could adjust their late policy and deadlines on certain assignments so students have a chance to get help outside of class if necessary. Teachers should also reduce the amount of work students are expected to complete at home. They should be more understanding of students who play sports, have jobs, participate in extracurriculars, or, for many students, all of these.

BOARD TO DISCUSS BOND ISSUE

The USD 329 school board will meet Dec. 2 to discuss a potential bond issue. The Charger summarized potential options, including pros and cons of each. Check out our coverage, including links to notes from the facilities committee, at whscharger.com.

7-period schedule benefits core classes, challenges electives

Eleanor Badeker
@ellybadeker

The new WHS schedule caused debate among students and teachers last year. After nearly a semester of the new schedule, opinions are mixed.

WHS introduced a 7-period daily schedule for the 2019-2020 school year, after using a block schedule in previous years.

The Charger polled sophomores, juniors and seniors to gauge the general feeling among the students most affected by the change. Incoming freshmen ran on a 7-period schedule in junior high, so this schedule was not new for them. The majority of students greatly preferred block scheduling, another large portion of students slightly prefer 7-period and 18 percent didn't have an opinion.

According to students, the impact of the new schedule depends on the type of class. Core classes like English, math and science have largely benefited from the change. Students reported that the shorter classes make the day go by

more quickly, and interacting with the teacher and material every day makes it easier to retain information. "I get to see my teachers every single day and don't forget about what we are learning since we are in there for 40 minutes every day," senior Macy Falk said.

The core teachers expressed positive feelings about the change. Science teacher Lisa Hull said that her classes are several weeks ahead of schedule compared to last year. "We all thought it was going to be helpful, but I had no idea it was going to be this helpful," Hull said. Hull reports that her class averages and grades are higher than in previous years, and she is sending fewer students to ZAP.

Math teacher Roger Alderman said he sees trends towards improvement. "I find that I will get more covered this first semester and it doesn't feel as rushed," Alderman said. Of the 15 tests Alderman has given so far this year, 9 have had higher averages than they did on block scheduling.

Elective classes and those with more hands-on content have suf-

fered due to time constraints and the loss of an elective in a student's schedule. Screen printing teacher Amy Cassel said that enrollment in her classes is down this year. "I have approximately 12 screen printing students in my three classes when last year I had over 20," Cassel said.

The schedule has also affected woodworking teacher Lyle Strait's classes. "It's not long enough for my classes," Strait said, "kids don't have time to do anything."

The polling also reflected this opinion. Many students listed electives such as art, body fit, ag classes and wood shop as subjects that did not benefit educationally from the 7-period schedule.

Art teacher Caroline Smith said it has had mixed results for her classes. "I like the 7-period for the intro classes where people who don't really like art but they're here for their humanities credit. For the intermediate and advanced I prefer the 90-minute classes because people can actually get more done. They don't have to just get their stuff out and then

put it away."

One of the main issues emerging with the new schedule is that students may feel more stressed and overloaded with every class happening every day. "It's harder to keep up and stay on task with so many things going on," sophomore Sarah Vanstory said.

Several students responded that homework for some classes needs to be done every day, and this can build up and put stress on students. "It's a lot of homework and it's very tiring mentally," junior Justice Houston said, "If you miss 1-2 days of school you have to make up lots of homework and it's a lot for people who are really active." Houston said it feels like you never have a break from school.

Principal Jan Hutley has been observing the schedule throughout the semester. Hutley feels the schedule has had a positive impact. "I think it's better for students because they have significantly more time in front of teachers providing instruction," Hutley said.