

Mike

FYC 13100

Professor Clauss

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### Fight for Your Right to Lunch

Situation: As a former student at Clear Brook High School, in Friendswood, Texas, I am writing to the current Student Council President and Vice President, Jane Smith and Chuck Morrison. I want Jane and Chuck to address the problem of why the lunch period should be extended back to the length of time it was when I was a freshman. The new lunch period has been met by opposition by the students, but nothing united enough to promote any type of real reconsideration by the administration. As a result of my argument, I hope to convince Jane and Chuck to unite against the issue, force the administration to review the lunch times, and ultimately get lunch periods lengthened once again.

Dear Jane and Chuck:

I have just one question for both of you: Are you going to stand for this? Yes, it does sound very dramatic, but that's only because the situation calls for it to be so. Okay, maybe I have another question (and possibly a few more throughout the course of this essay): Do you realize how ridiculously ripped off students are with lunch period times at Clear Brook? (Hey, now you know what that previous question was referring to.) Anyway, back to important matters. You guys at Clear Brook are getting gypped. Big time. I know that the amount of time they give you is technically within the district guidelines, but you should know that there is some underhandedness afoot in that regard (college words much?). So technically, they work within the common knowledge rule that states that all schools in our school district, CCISD, must have at least thirty minutes a day allotted to lunch. Whether or not that time is enough (it's not even) isn't what I'm here to convince you is the problem. The problem is that your school faculty, starting from the principal down, has worked within loopholes to deprive you, the people they are there to educate and foster growth within, of not only the amount of time a proper lunch

period should be, but even worse, the amount of time that the CCISD board decided that you should be allowed.

Now, I may just be plain wrong (doubtful, but it does happen on the rare occasion), but I'm guessing that the district board was far less lenient on the amount of time it gave for you to be apportioned lunch than you would have liked, unless you made the decision to choose more class time over chill time. This is again doubtful to me because several current students have complained specifically to me about how long and boring your classes are, while I'm busy taking a class called First Year Composition with a professor that would have you asleep before you made it to your desk to sit down. Just kidding, he's awesome. So I'm basically trying to help you out because I feel bad for you. I'm here to help. Anyway, so I'm going to be operating under the assumption that you and your fellow students want as long of a lunch break as possible—otherwise, please stop reading here and ignore this because you have obviously gone insane anyway. So, now we get back to the point of the school cheating you out of that time that you want and deserve. I know some of you may be thinking that the school faculty isn't quite smart enough to pull off something as sinister and elaborate as this, but look at your schedule for a second.

Got it out? Good. As you'll notice, the schedule clearly marks a thirty minute period for each of the three lunch times, A, B and C. Sounds dandy, right? Well, if you'll look a little more closely, you'll notice that, while there is that thirty minutes, there is a total absence of your passing period between the end of class and the start of your lunch period. As soon as the bell rings for your class to let you out for lunch, that thirty minute lunch period starts (Clear). Show of hands: How many Clear Brook students do you know who can teleport? Nobody? Well then, I

guess you all should be allowed more than zero seconds make it from your class, to your locker, to your lunch line, and finally to your table.

Now, what is the result of this? Not enough time to eat lunch. This may not immediately seem to be as big of an issue as it should be. Dr. Arthur Agatston, noted cardiologist and creator of the South Beach Diet, says, “Turning the school lunch into a real sit-down meal, rather than a minutes-long eating frenzy, is just one way to begin improving the health and eating habits of the nation’s children” (qtd. in Slowing). Yes, he said children, but I think that at his age, you all are still considered to be fair game in that classification. One of the big motivators that the school pushes on us for all of our mandatory tutorials and such is to help us pass our standardized tests, yet Agatston asserts, “The kids have to be preparing for standardized tests all the time, but it means they are missing out. The kids will be happier and do better if they can have a somewhat leisurely meal in a positive atmosphere” (qtd. in Slowing). What about everyday school performance effects? Says Laura Oscarson-Wilde, a director of child nutrition, “The length of the lunch break is important because the stomach needs about 20 minutes after eating begins to send a message to the brain that it's getting full” (qtd. in Short). So basically, the amount of time spent in lunch can affect a student’s ability to perform at a high level? Good enough for me.

Do you see what I mean here? It’s absolutely outrageous. I know for a fact (not really, but it sounds more assertive and provocative this way) that the district board was intending for you to get a good half hour to sit down, take a break from your day, relax, and eat a healthy meal while enjoying the stimulating company and conversation of your peers. So, obviously the views and guidelines instituted by the district board have been perverted and are twisting out of control. Okay, maybe not. But, I really do believe that this is an instance of Clear Brook High School playing by the letter of the law as opposed to the spirit of the law. But, of course, there is a way

to find out. Talk to your district board members. Send an e-mail. Write a letter. Schedule a meeting. Go to one of the group meetings. However you do it, remember that information is power (disclaimer: previous sentence is void if lacking information of how to push buttons gets you out of running the washing machine).

Clear Brook relies on students being kept in the dark as to the processes involved in creating their ideal schedule, because if you were more well-informed, you would be more dangerously armed with knowledge. Yes, I am asking you to do a bit of work outside of school. I'm sorry. But, I think it is the first step in getting something done about it (yes, I will be offering suggestions on getting this atrocity changed, but wait for it). What the district board sees and hears from you can be one of the most influential tools that you have. Remember, it's you and your families that get to elect them. You think they aren't willing to listen to what you have to say? But please, just start with asking for clarification. Don't go in all "OH-MY-GOSH-I-CAN'T-BELIEVE-HOW-BAD-OUR-SCHOOL-IS-EVERYBODY-SHOULD-BE-FIRED-I-CAN'T-BELIEVE-I-GO-HERE-I'M-TRANSFERRING," please. Just ask the good ladies and gentlemen what they had in mind when they instituted their policy, and see whether or not Brook is acting within the spirit of that law (if they are, then you need to find some new candidates for the next election).

So, this next part could go one of two ways, soldiers (it's a war, remember that). The first, and more desirable way, is that the district board clarifies that the intent of the rule is not being followed, and either amends their rule or forces Brook to change their schedule to suit this spirit of the law. That would be ideal. But, as I've learned throughout life, stuff happens. So we'll now prepare for the worst. Let's say that the board says either that Brook is acting under the intention of the rule or that, because they are acting within the rules, there is nothing the

board can do about it. Does that mean you stop there? I think not. I would first suggest negotiating a back and forth with the board. They may (and should) be open to a dialogue on the subject, assuming you can keep respectful and mature. If not, they may be more reasonable if they realize that this issue of time could jeopardize their job security. And, if that doesn't even do the job, we move back to good ole Clear Brook.

This doesn't have to turn into a scene from the movie "300" (hopefully you have seen that, or my reference is down the drain). For all of the twisted and cruel jokes I've made about Brook, their faculty can be understanding sometimes. Talk to them. Maybe you didn't even need to try to get the district board to force them into something after all. Their PTA meetings can be a great forum to raise awareness for issues and state concerns in front of a receptive group. Maybe your new principal, Ms. Stanley, will actually be more reasonable than Ms. Lowell was and will listen to your thoughts. Try these things.

Only after you have exhausted your forums for change may you proceed to the next step. Promise me you'll at least make a half-hearted attempt at them? No? Well then whatever. If all else fails, hit 'em where it hurts. Food fights. Every. Single. Day. Epic? I think so. Now, for you cautious and nervous types out there (I know you exist, I was one once upon a time), fret not! Do you really think they can get the entire school in trouble if this happens? I can understand them going after the kids that begin it. But here's the beautiful part. Start the food fights all at once. How can they pinpoint where it starts if it's all completely pre-meditated and everyone starts at exactly the same time? How do they stop this? You have the numbers. You have the advantage. You have the control. So, if they force your hand, stick it to them. This is Sparta! (I really hope you watched "300").

In closing, please don't mistake my slightly sarcastic previous paragraph to mean that this isn't a serious issue, because it is. All Clear Brook students deserve a full thirty minutes of lunch. Please go out and get it for them, but do it wisely. Reach out to the proper people in the proper forums. Be respectful, but don't take no for an answer. Be resilient. Even if you can't get the change done for this year, lay the foundation so that next year will be better, whether it be for you or your younger friends or siblings. Make the school a better place for everyone. You all can do it. I believe in you. Now go out and fight for your right to lunch!

Your fearless leader and rabble-rouser extraordinaire,

Michael ---- (deleted by PClauss)

Clear Brook Class of 2009

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