



## **NDP STUDENTS SPEAK**

### **CO-ED vs. SINGLE-SEX**

Like many current 8<sup>th</sup> graders, a great number of NDP students have parents who allowed them to select their high school. Of course, some parents made and will make this decision on behalf of their child. Judging by our strong retention rate, the great majority made the right decision off the bat. Some, however, transferred to Notre Dame after previously attending all-boys or all-girls Catholic schools. Recently we asked these students why they first opted for single-sex schools, what prompted their decision to transfer, and what differences they have observed between their old and new environments. A sampling of their responses follows. When not clear, we have noted in parentheses the type of school the student previously attended.

#### ***What ultimately led you to choose a single-sex school for 9<sup>th</sup> grade?***

- “I really determined that academics were fairly equal across most private schools, but I chose a single-sex school to be with some of my closest friends, play on an exceptional lacrosse team, and most of all because of the promise that the school (fostered) a brotherhood with bonds that would last a lifetime.”
- “I thought there would be brotherhood, as the school claimed.”
- “Convenience.” (all-girls)
- “The idea of a fresh start at a new school was exciting. When I shadowed at (my all-boys school) I found the environment enjoyable and new. Everything seemed much more chill and less strict than my grade school. Everyone was very friendly, including the workers, and I felt very welcomed.”
- “I chose a single-sex school because my brother was already at the school. When I shadowed, the community seemed so much closer than I had had in the past. (I was at the same grade school for nine years.) It also seemed like everyone talked to everyone without separating into groups.”

#### ***While you were a student in an all-boys or all-girls environment, what did you think were the benefits?***

- “While I was at my previous school, I thought that being all-boys meant that many would not be afraid to express themselves because there weren’t girls to ‘impress.’”
- “You didn’t have to try to look good for school.” (all-girls)
- “The benefits were being able to connect with people. I got to meet friends that I still keep in touch with today. I also noticed that when I transferred to NDP, my social skills with people was much better. It was an experience that helped me mature and become a better, more humble person.” (all-boys)
- “One benefit that I had while at an all-boys school is I didn’t need to try to look good. It was also very easy to talk to almost everyone. I don’t know why it was so much easier, but it was.”

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***What did you think were the drawbacks?***

- “While being a good thing, (having) no girls was also a major drawback. The school prided (itself) on Christian values, but behind closed doors I saw many kids get horribly bullied. Maturity was oftentimes not present, making focusing in school very difficult.”
- “There was zero brotherhood.”
- “Too much drama.” (all-girls)
- “For me, the drawbacks were how people behaved. At my all-boys school, people would joke around and not be serious at all. It made learning much harder and gave me a difficult time thinking. Another drawback was not being able to connect to both genders. In real life, we'll eventually have to know how to talk with everyone, and for me I was not comfortable with it after my year at a single-sex school.”
- “One drawback of a single-sex school is you don't have an opportunity to meet or talk to many people of the opposite sex.” (all-boys)

***Did being in an all-boys or all-girls school affect your decision to transfer to a co-ed school, or did you transfer for unrelated reasons?***

- “Being at an all-boys school definitely affected my decision to go to a co-ed school.”
- “More or so unrelated, but I thought about it in the process.” (all-girls)
- “Yes, it somewhat affected my choice in the aspect of what I felt more comfortable with. I knew from my long experience through grade school that co-ed was much more comfortable for me. From the memories I had over the years, I felt much happier when I was at a co-ed school compared to an all-boys school. So, I was hoping to go back to the nice co-ed experience I remembered.”
- “I transferred for unrelated reasons. However, it slightly did affect my decision because I didn't want to leave the community that I was in.” (all-boys)

***Now that you are in a co-ed school, what do you perceive as the most notable differences from your previous all-boys or all-girls environment?***

- “Notre Dame is really different from any other school I've been to or shadowed. Everyone here is just nice, all the time. I came mid-year and was accepted with open arms. No one questioned why I came, they just included me. One of the biggest differences is respect. Everyone here respects everyone: teachers, coaches, and students. That was not the case at my previous single-sex school.” (all-boys)
- “There is not like a top-dog leader, and you do not have to be ‘cool’ to fit in. It is much easier to be yourself.” (all-boys)
- “Less drama. And it's nice having guy friends as well as girl friends.” (all-girls)
- “Everyone has friends at a co-ed school. No matter who you have classes with, or who you spend time with, co-ed has people for you to connect and make friends with. Speaking for myself, I found my group of friends much earlier than I did at my all-boys school. People at NDP always have been welcoming and nice, making the environment much more enjoyable. I feel much more included and involved here.”
- “One difference is people care more about how they look or act because they might be embarrassed in front of the opposite sex.” (all-boys)

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***What are the benefits of learning in a co-ed school?***

- “The biggest benefit to me is preparation for the real world. Developing social skills to be able to communicate well with the opposite sex is extremely important. I’ve also noticed that people seem more inclined to join in on in-class discussions, and everyone seems much more engaged in what’s being taught.” (all-boys)
- “You learn to work with all different kinds of people, which prepares you for life.” (all-girls)
- “Not only can you have people to talk to, but you can focus much easier. I noticed a lot of people here are mature and have a passion to learn. It's not all about whoever's the funniest or who can make someone laugh. Here you can get right to focusing and get work done, especially in Honors and AP courses! Everyone has a group of people that they can get along with, making the classroom a much more positive and enjoyable learning environment.” (all-boys)
- “Some benefits of learning at a co-ed school is that you learn how to work, act, and communicate with anyone no matter who they are.” (all-boys)

***What advice would you give to a student who is deciding between a co-ed and single-sex high school?***

- “Come to a co-ed school. I promise you won’t regret it. It’s a thousand times better than any single-sex school.” (all-boys)
- “Follow what you think will be best, but (co-ed offers) a bigger mix and a greater chance for more friends.” (all-boys)
- “It’s not a huge difference, so don’t let it be a deciding factor in choosing a school.” (all-girls)
- “Absolutely follow who you want to be. Focus on the bigger picture. Look into details of what courses are offered, what electives you can take, what sports/clubs you can get involved with. From there you can find your group and make friends. Know the environment of the school, whether it's serious or laid back. You want to have the best chance to improve your education and advance yourself to get ready for college and the real world.” (all-boys)
- “Some advice for a student choosing between co-ed and single-sex is don't be afraid of either because both are very good. Both have benefits, and both have drawbacks. Whichever you feel is the fit for you, just go for it.”

We hope this wisdom from NDP students who have experienced both co-ed and single-sex educational environments will help you as you research our school. As always, we invite you to call our Office of Admissions at 248-373-1061, or e-mail [admissions@ndpma.org](mailto:admissions@ndpma.org) if you have more questions on this or any other topic.

We also hope you will join us for an upcoming session of our **Virtual Admissions Series**, which continues with a **Topic Tuesday: Academics on November 10**. Mark your calendars for future Topic Tuesdays on **Athletics (November 17)**, **Arts (November 24)**, and **Activities (December 1)**. All Topic Tuesdays start at **7 p.m.**

We look forward to engaging with you!

Notre Dame Office of Admissions