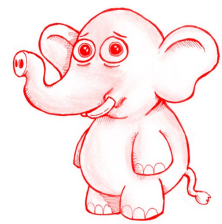


The Tusker Tribune

The Student Newspaper of Somers Middle School



Issue Number 16

<http://somersschools.org/domain/995>

Winter 2018

Later School Start Time Can Help Kids



By Grace Stoner
Tusker Tribune Staff

It is a known fact that one of the hardest things to do is get up in the morning and the only thing worse is getting up on a school morning.

It is one thing on the weekend when you can wake up whenever you want and then stay in bed for a while, but it is a whole different story on a school day. A great solution so that you're not always so tired is to have school start later.

Maybe you could just make school always start an hour later. It would make life easier for many people. Think about it! Kids would be much happier, bus drivers wouldn't have to get up so early for the high school

buses, and parents would have to deal with less complaining coming from their kids.

If school started an hour later, kids would pay way more attention and they would not al-

ways have that tired look on their faces like they are about to fall asleep.

If it only started one hour later, it would still be pretty early. You would still have to wake up fairly early, but it would not be as painful as the 6 o'clock wake up call.

Another idea is to have it start two or even three hours later. Then

kids would have plenty of sleep. Even if it had to go later and it started three hours later, you would have plenty of time in the morning to get things done so you wouldn't need as much time after school.



STAR Test Is Only One Indicator of Performance



By Ezra Weinstein
Tusker Tribune Staff

Every year at school, all students have to take a test called the STAR test. STAR is basically an exam which tests if you are learning what you need to be learning. If you get more questions right, the questions get harder.

The STAR test is also to test the teacher's ability to teach you what you need to know. My parents asked me last year if I felt like I was doing well in school. I replied yes but, they had a puzzled look on their

faces so I asked them what happened. They told me that I got a really bad grade on the STAR math test.

As a lot of students know, you don't get to see your grade so you have to count on your parents to tell you.

My parents knew I was doing well in school but for some reason the grade was below average. When we take the STAR test, remember that it is only one way to tell if you're doing well in school. Don't spend a lot of time worrying about it. Just do the best you can on it.



Weinstein's
Wisdom



Steelheart by Brandon Sanderson

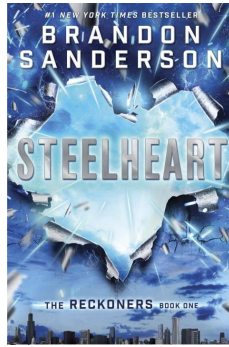


**By Max Harkins
Tusker Tribune Staff**

I recently read a book series called "Steelheart" by Brandon Sanderson. It is in a series that consists of 3 books: Steelheart, Firefight, and Calamity.

Overall, Steelheart is very good. It is science fiction/fantasy, funny, and violent—all key for my "Enjoyable Book" list.

It's about Charles Davidson, a teenage boy who seeks revenge on his enemy, Steelheart, who killed his dad. Steelheart is a "High Epic", which is a human who



has superpowers and is virtually invincible. He had killed David's father, and over the years, David collected information about killing Epics.

He tries to join the famed "Reckoners", a group of people who fight and kill Epics. David unravels a lot more secrets in the Reckoners than is generally known. It is up to David to find out who he can trust: Prof, the leader of the Reckoners, or Megan, David's crush and teammate.

If you like this kind of suspenseful adventure, then you'll love this series!

Why is the School Bus Ride Sooooo Long?



**By Juliana Spano
Tusker Tribune Staff**

It's something kids have complained about for a very long time—the school bus! Not just the bus itself, but the bus rides.

I have years of experience with long bus rides but how long is too long? I know kids whose bus rides are 5 minutes and others whose rides are almost an hour.

Personally, I think kids and teens should only be on the bus for 30 to 40 minutes. That's only my opinion though, so let's look at some things that may make a long bus ride even worse.

Buses are HOT!! Even when the AC is on the buses are always stuffy and hot and being on a hot and stuffy bus for an hour is not fun and can



make you feel pretty gross. What about the kids who get carsick? Even the ones who don't mind being on a bus for that long can get pretty nauseated.

It's also just unfair. Kids are wasting an hour of their time after school on a hot bus. Yes, they might have friends on the bus but the bus isn't a very good hangout spot.

I've heard it a million times, "Well you could get your homework done." Or even worse, "You could read." Do you know how hard it is to do your homework while the bus is turning and on the bumpy streets? Reading just makes me want to throw up when you do it on the bus.

In all I think out school should strive to do something about the long bus rides to make them shorter and more enjoyable.

Do You Have 'Aquarius' Qualities?



**By Shira Sofko
Tusker Tribune Staff**

The Zodiac sign of The Water Bearer is Aquarius, and applies to people whose birthdays are between January 20th and February 18.

Aquarius is the 12th Zodiac sign. Aquarius' element is air, even though her sign name is The Water Bearer. An Aquarius likes having fun with friends, fighting for what is right, helping others, having



intellectual conversation, and is a good listener.

An Aquarius does not like limitations, being lonely, broken promises, dull or boring situations, and people who disagree with them. I know some people who are like their zodiacs and some who are not like their zodiacs at all.

If you are born between January 20th and February 18, you are an Aquarius. Do you recognize any of its qualities in you?

**The Tusker
Tribune Staff**

Ezra Weinstein
Grace Stoner
Juliana Spano
Max Harkins
Shira Sofko
Liam King

The Tusker Tribune is published online and is featured weekly on the Somers Middle School Website. It is entirely student-written by 6th, 7th and 8th grade students from

**Somers Middle School
250 Route 202
Somers, NY, USA.**

Any SMS student is eligible to write stories. If interested, please e-mail Advisor Dean Pappas at
**DPappas
@somersschools.org**

Mr. Paulmeno's Cubelet Experiment Going Strong



**By Liam King
Tusker Tribune Staff**

Cubelets: small wired-filled battery-powered cubes that follow the instructions of the builder. They are really interesting and can easily be programmed to follow certain instructions. As one of our school's beta-testers of these technologically-advanced blocks, I can give some insight on how these three-dimensional, six-sided plastic squares truly work.

One school lunch day, I visited Mr. Paulmeno's room just to hang out and maybe finish the homework. However, Mr. P had something else in mind. He introduced me to these "Cubelets", and I seriously underestimated their power at first.

There are different kinds of Cubelets that do different things. One Cubelet variation has rotating wheels, another is literally a magnetic rotator, and there are two different kinds of sensors that help the machine understand where it is going and how fast it should actually go. All of these Cubelets are magnetically attached to the battery power source, and they all have the same exact shape.

After his explanation on what each of the blocks do, I began to tinker with them, carefully putting them together.

After maybe 10 minutes of random tinkering and testing, I finally figured out how to use them correctly. I started attaching them to make some sort of a vehicle, and created one after about 15 minutes of working.

In the bottom middle sat the power source. Then, at the same height on two opposite sides, were the wheels. Then, above the front wheels was the large sensors and above the back wheels was the Bluetooth sensor (another useful tool, allowing the user to control the machine using their phone, computer or whatever device that worked with Bluetooth).

Connected on the sides of the Bluetooth cube were two smaller sensors facing backwards. Above the large sensor was the flashlight, and above the Bluetooth sensor was the rotating cube, facing upwards. Sitting atop the rotating cube, spinning every time the machine was moving was the red Inverse block, which didn't do much for my machine. Between the rotating cube and the flashlight was the lime green Connector block, which didn't do much for my machine either, but connected the wheels in another place (other than the power source) to ensure balance.

The machine worked kind of like a normal car. It drove neutrally if nothing was in front of it or behind it. Then, if someone put their hand behind it, the machine boosted forward until it lost sight of the hand behind it, which was really quickly (for about two seconds). If someone put their hand in front of it, the machine suddenly came to a halt. Then, once the obstacle was removed, the machine continued driving neutrally, as if nothing had happened before. I toyed with this for about five minutes before remembering Bluetooth was a thing. I hadn't thought to use my tablet, and Mr. P said I could use my phone, so I rushed out of the room and bolted upstairs as fast

as I could so I could test it before the period ended. I quickly unlocked my locker, grabbed my phone, slammed the locker door shut and sprinted back to the room.

Once I turned my phone on, I tapped on the App Store and downloaded the Cubelets App. After the download had completed, I configured the Bluetooth and selected the device to pair with. I then chose the

Cubelets I wished to control and tapped the start button. The application brought me to a screen with five dials: two controlling the smaller sensors, one controlling the large sensor and two controlling the wheels. It gave me the choice between "Read" and "Control". If I chose "Read", it would show, using the dial, how much power a certain Cubelet was using. If I chose "Control", it would allow me to turn the dial myself and set a certain power for that specific Cubelet. I decided that the two wheels should be on "Read", and that the all the sensors should be on "Control".

I grabbed my Cubelet machine and placed it carefully on the floor, facing an open area. Then, I turned all the sensors up to 100% and the Cubelets sped across the room. Every 20 seconds or so, my Cubelet creation would encounter an obstacle. For some reason, the sensor preventing the machine from hitting anything was not functioning, so I had stop all sensors and physically turn it. It was interesting to watch something I spent so long making work, and I continued to create new machines for the next few days.

In conclusion, Cubelets are really cool and fascinating toys that experiment with your logic and creative mindset. My hope is that these toys are regulated throughout the school, because then everyone will be able to enjoy the same experience I had.

