



COURAGEOUS

▶ **LET'S TALK.** *Polar Bear Crew is a student leadership group that meets during Polar Bear Time every day to break into committees to enforce positive leadership around North. This day, there was a special guest, Principal Ben Graeber, who wanted to hear concerns straight from the mouths of students. Photo Credit: Jasmine Inthabounh*



PASSIONATE

▶ **INTERACTION.** *It is important to Ben Graeber as a principal to interact and have a relationship with the students. He often roams the halls during passing time and lunch to not only make sure everyone gets to class, but to say hello and be a familiar face to the students. Photo Credit: Jasmine Inthabounh*



RELENTLESS

▶ **THE GOOD STUFF.** *(Right) Most Wednesday afternoons, teachers spend time at a professional development meeting. Ben Graeber starts the meeting by celebrating the good things happening at North and expresses that anything the teachers are seeing should be highlighted on the website. Photo Credit: Megan Bohall*



DAY 30: HERE YOU GO. *At Freshmen Orientation, ninth graders gave their sizes to an organization called Shoes That Fit, which provides shoes for students throughout the U.S. Months later, all freshmen collect their new pair of shoes. (@NorthHighOracle)*



BILL BILL BILL. *English teacher, Joe VanHaecke dresses up as Bill Nye the Science Guy for Celebrity Wednesday. (@InspireMeMrV)*





Ben Graeber:

A Dream Come True for North's New Principal

Over the years, we have created a contagious culture that accepts the differences among people and focuses on core values like courageous, passionate and relentless. In the beginning of the year, we welcomed our new principal and former teacher, school improvement leader, Ben Graeber. This culture will continue to thrive and blossom with our school in his hands.

As some of us walked fresh into the halls of North High, for some of us, North High has been our stomping grounds for the past four years. But just like Graeber, we all know what it's like to step into crowded hallways, the hot sauna of the gym, but most importantly we all know what it means to be a Polar Bear.

Prior to this year, Graeber had spent eight years in total inside the walls of North High. Even after all those years, something kept Graeber here. That was this position. He expressed that when the principal position opened, it was a complete surprise, but he knew it was something he had to take a shot at. He was able to convey his growing passion about North in his interview, in a way that showed how fitting he was for the job as principal. His passion for helping and changing norms to make sure that students become successful as a teacher and administrator stood out.

"As a teacher for 15 years, five of them in this building, I understand teaching and I understand the grind, the day-to-day grind. The why did I apply is because I couldn't live with myself if I wouldn't have applied, truly. It was something I had to do," Graeber said.

When an opportunity arises, take it and run. That's exactly what Graeber did. This is his dream job. North has everything to offer him, which is why at 40 years old, being the principal at North is his last stop. In his eyes, he made it to his destination. Graeber could've been a teacher his whole career and would've been just as happy, but he strived for more, he said. He wanted to be a change in the world of school administration and coach teachers on how to motivate students to be more than just average inside and outside of school.

Community is a large factor in why North is such a tight

knit family environment. This is why Graeber wants to make sure that the community is aware of everything that is going on at our school, in all departments. He wants to focus on supporting the fine arts and give them outlets in order for them to continue creating their magic.

"I think we have some of the best teachers we could possibly have in those areas. Rooms keep growing. I just want to support that with time, energy and money as much as we can," Graeber said.

With all the increasingly great things happening it's hard to keep track sometimes. Although, after years and years, North was always labeled an underdog in comparison to our surrounding schools. This is something Graeber found important to the culture of North and honestly, was one of his favorite parts of this school. Being the so-called, "underdog" and then rising to the top in activities like robotics or sports like basketball, remixed the culture and views from the outside world about North.

Graeber goes on to explain, "There are so many examples of programs that are some of the best in the city. Sometimes, the best in the state. Going through that transformation from underdog to champion, from perceived underdog to, 'Oh my gosh, what's going on over there at North?' That's really fun."

Ultimately as principal, Graeber's major concern is the students' success. What the students strive to be is what he strives to make happen and focus on. The outside world still goes on and life still goes on, but when at North, Graeber wants students to know that it's about them and how they're doing.

"I think the fact that students can be challenging at North, but as soon as you show that you truly care about them and you want to help and you want to challenge them, it's the fact that they step up to the plate. I think that's what is the most fun about being at North," Graeber said.

At the end of the day, North is where Graeber wants to be. Many students weren't very fond of the idea of having a new principal, especially when this year is the last for some. But excitement and relief exploded when it was announced that Graeber was the new principal of North, someone who truly represents the Polar Bear Way.



I'M MYSELF. *Instead of dressing as a celebrity, students also had the choice of just dressing up in their best red carpet outfit for the day. Junior, Ngoc Deo wears a white lace dress, as her own version of a celebrity.*



DAY 30: SPOTLIGHT. *Students, Kid Carry and OG Rockko get the chance to showcase their music in the auditorium after school. (@DM_North)*

