

The Wildcat Chronicles

Durant High School

September 30, 2021

Masks optional, but some still wear them

By Kiyah Daily

As the first month of school is wrapping up, some staff and students continue to wear a mask even though the Durant School District has made wearing a mask an optional preference.

Back in May, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds signed a law stating that school districts could not require anyone on school grounds to wear a mask.

A recent court ruling struck down that mandate, leaving the decision to require masks up to the individual school districts.

Durant Superintendent Joe Burnett said that he will be leaving the decision to wear masks up to parents because “everyone’s situation is a little different.”

“If there were families that were uncomfortable sending their kids to school, that’s why we offered the Edgenuity route,” Mr. Burnett said.

“We’ll just take it a day at a time, and if we have a severe outbreak, or something along those lines,” Mr. Burnett stated, “we have that ability to put masks on if we have to.”

Randy Carpenter’s parents, Ronda and Mel Carpenter of Durant, have struggled with the decision to send their son to school with a mask or not.

Randy is a five-year-old in kindergarten, and Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter left the decision up to Randy on the first day of school.

“As he was lining up to enter the school, he stated, ‘Oh, I forgot my mask!’” Mrs. Carpenter explained. “I asked him if he wanted to wear it, and he said, ‘Yes, Mom, I need it, so I don’t get sick.’”

Randy’s mom fully supports his decision to wear a mask and encourages him to do so.

This is so that he can stay in school and get his education while still being safe and healthy about it.

“Last year, Randy missed school twice both due to quarantine for exposure to COVID-19,” Mrs. Carpenter said. “The beginning years of school are the most fundamental and allow for a strong foundation for future success.”

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Girls’ weights class back by popular demand

By Zachary Pearlman

With the 2021-22 school year, Durant High School reintroduced the girls’-only weights class after not having it for three years.

Girls-only weights is taught by Mr. Casey Strub, one of two high school fitness instructors at Durant. Mr. Strub said he has a total of 29 girls signed up for the class this school year.

“I think some of the girls were kind of pushing for a girls-only weights class,” said Mr. Strub because they felt more comfortable than they would in the co-ed classes.

Mr. Strub is seeing the girls try harder in the girls-only weight class as well.

“I think they are pushing them-



Photo by Zachary Pearlman

Members of the girls’ weights class taught by Mr. Casey Strub stretch before lifting. Almost 30 girls are signed up for the class.

selves more than they would,” said Mr.

Strub. “Just because they aren’t really as scared to fail in this class because there is no one really in their mind watching them or judging them.” The students in the girls-only weight class are also more on task.

“For the majority of the girls here, I would say it’s a lot more productive,” said Mr. Strub. “We get a lot more done with just girls in the class than with a mixed class.”

Mr. Strub said the students are satisfied with being in the girls-only class.

“They are more comfortable and

more themselves,” said Mr. Strub.

“It makes it pretty fun for me because I get to know them better if they are not worried about the other guys in their class really.”

Senior Addysen Clark, like most of the students in girls-only weights, is there because the class fits into her schedule.

“It just worked with my schedule, and it seemed better than regular weights,” said Clark.

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Out-of-district family of 5 children chooses Durant

By Kennedy Schumacher

A family who lives in the Muscatine School District has chosen Durant as the district to educate its children.

Mrs. Noelle Hahn, mother of five, believes Durant is the best option for her family and said she likes the small-town feel.

A few years after moving to Iowa in 2008, the Hahns decided to homeschool the oldest three children before enrolling the siblings into Blue Grass Elementary School in the Davenport School District.

However in 2017, the Hahns transferred their children to Durant. Even though they don’t live in town, they fell in love with Durant and the school.

Sophomore Kierra Hahn, oldest of five, said she feels a small school like Durant provides a better environment for her family.

“I like being at a small school because everybody knows everybody,” said Kierra.

As a parent, one of Mrs. Hahn’s biggest concerns is her children’s safety. However she is “worry-free” about sending her children to school in Durant.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Hahn grew up going to smaller schools, which made Durant even more appealing to them for their own family. They knew the teachers and staff at Durant would actually care about their children.

The family’s home is located on the Muscatine county line, making it in the Muscatine School District.

Mr. and Mrs. Hahn decided to open enroll their children to Durant after finding

out Durant is closer to their home than either Muscatine or West High School.

Davenport’s diversity plan was struck down by the Iowa Legislature earlier this year, and as a result, the district has lost 163 students so far, according to Davenport Superintendent TJ Schneckloth.

As of September 8, 22 students have open-enrolled to Durant.

Mrs. Hahn has recommended Durant to other families because her family has had a “good and welcoming experience.”

Kierra feels that possibly transferring to Durant earlier would have been nice, but she feels that “God set it up where it was the perfect time to come [to Durant].”

Krynn Hahn, the youngest of the five children, will be starting preschool next year, and the family isn’t sure she’ll be able to come to Durant because she has Down Syndrome.

“Because she has special needs, it’ll be a tougher fight to get her out of Muscatine schools to go to Durant,” said Mrs. Hahn.

The Muscatine School District would get additional funding because Krynn has special needs, according to Mrs. Hahn. Muscatine has to release her out of its district in order for her to be accepted by Durant.

Mrs. Hahn said she is hoping that because her other children are already at Durant, the fight to get Krynn enrolled will be lessened.

Mr. and Mrs. Hahn want Krynn to be as involved as possible with her class, and they know that is more achievable at Durant because it’s a smaller school.

Couples teach in married wing

By Madison Weber

The high school now has two married couples, Mr. Matt Straube and Mrs. Abigail Straube, and Mr. David Houk and Mrs. Hailey Houk.

Both couples work in the same downstairs hallway, and both work right next to their spouse.

The Straubes have been married for six years and have been working together for seven years. Mr. Straube, a social studies teacher, had been working at Durant for two years before Mrs. Straube, a math teacher, was hired.

The Houks have been married for four years, and this is their first year working together. Mr. Houk, an art teacher, previously taught at Monroe Elementary in Davenport for 17 years. Mrs. Houk, a science teacher, is currently in her third year teaching at Durant.

“With moving to a new district, I am thankful she’s right next door. If I need any help, I don’t have to go far!” said Mr. Houk.

“It couldn’t have been a better next chapter in our life story than for Dave to also get to leave the Davenport district and come to one just minutes away from home!” said Mrs. Houk.

They are excited to finally have the same work schedule, especially since their oldest is currently enrolled in preschool at Durant.

“It will be nice to have the same holidays and breaks off,” said Mr. Houk.

The Straubes also experience many benefits working together.

“I love working with my wife,” said Mr. Straube. “With my busy hours of coaching and being the athletic director, it’s really nice to be able to eat with my wife and see her throughout the day.”

Another benefit is that they get to save money on gas by driving together when they can.

Both of them said that a challenge they face is the occasional inappropriate comments from students, but they have learned to brush it off.

The Straubes are excited to have another married couple in the same hallway.

“It’s definitely going to start a Jets vs. Sharks style turf war,” joked Mr. Straube.

“We are excited for them,” said Mrs. Straube. “They are like us and have a young family, so I’m sure they appreciate being together, so they can spend more time with their family.”

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