

Restrictive cell phone policies on the rise

By Ryan Brown

Schools nationwide are adopting policies that restrict the use of cell phones during the school day.

However, Durant High School is not headed that way anytime soon, according to Principal Joel Diederichs.

According to a study done by the National Center for Education Statistics, bans on the non-academic use of cell phones during school hours were in effect in more than 76 percent of schools nationwide in the 2019-2020 school year.

A new study from Common Sense Media and the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital also found the average teen receives between 200 and 4,000 smartphone notifications per day, according to a recent article from the Teen Health and Wellness website.

Mr. Diederichs says that he is aware of the ongoing spread of no cell phone policies in schools across the United States.

“It’s an interesting trend, I’ll tell you that,” Mr. Diederichs stated.

One state that seems to be out front in this wave is Florida.

Mr. Diederichs brought up a new law in Florida that requires public schools to prohibit the use of cell phones by students during instructional time and also block cer-

Schedule

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“If I were a student, I would be a little stressed if I had A and B days,” Mrs. Houk said. “Some weeks you might only see your teacher twice. It’s hard to retain information if you’re not having that constant repetition and review of topics each day.”

According to Mrs. Houk, some students favor block scheduling because it allows time to finish homework in class.

However, she pointed out, “Is that really preparing them for the future? Will the kids who go onto college have learned the study skills they need to be successful? I could be totally wrong, but if it’s worked in the past, why not give it another try?”

Mr. Casey Strub, who teaches a health class and a weights class, says he doesn’t have much of an opinion about a possible schedule switch, but when it comes

Lawsuits

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libraries and classroom collections violate the First and 14th Amendment because of vague and overly broad language.

Last month, the Iowa State Board

tain social media applications within its internet system.

However, he says that schools in Florida have not stopped there.

“But then some schools in Florida took it a step further and said they don’t want any cell phones on school grounds the whole day,” he said, adding that this was prevalent in bigger schools, such as those in Orlando, with student bodies in the thousands.

Mr. Diederichs said he briefly thought about a no cell phone policy and has been approached by different faculty members about it. Yet, he does not plan on adopting a no cell phone policy for the high school at this time.

“I said that we’d look at that [no cell phone policy], but I left it at an individual teacher basis on their decision on it,” said Mr. Diederichs.

Mr. Diederichs has heard both pros and cons to a cell phone ban and feels that it will be interesting to see how this trend develops.

It is worth noting that the junior high does use a no-phone-during-instructional-time policy, which it adopted in 2021-2022. He doesn’t see any major issues with that ban in effect.

“I think once you get used to it, it’s not a big deal,” he added.

to weights class, it wouldn’t be ideal.

“It’s ideal to have block scheduling because in that [80 minutes], the kids can get a good exercise and lift in,” said Mr. Strub.

With a shorter class, it would be hard to get a whole workout in. He would have to switch what students usually do to just include a core lift, such as the bench press, and two to three auxiliary lifts, such as bicep curls.

Mr. Strub was unsure on whether a schedule change was going to be beneficial to students or not. He said when he was a student, he remembers not liking to sit still for long periods of time.

“I think it could be beneficial to students on that aspect,” he said.

Three high school students interviewed all opposed the possible switch.

Earlier this semester, my journalism advisor, Mr. Steve Sands, approached me hoping I would do some sort of “phone detox” for an article. But I refused because I’ll be the first to admit I have an addiction to my phone.

Luckily for me, two *Chronicles* staff members stepped up to the plate, news editor Grace Paustian and sports reporter Colby Gast. Both said that they didn’t feel any symptoms of withdrawal while doing their detox for an entire school day.

Paustian said that it was definitely habit breaking for her to not have her phone on her during the school day.

“I noticed myself reaching for my phone in my pocket, and it’s just a habit of having my phone,” she said.

She anticipated going into the day that she was going to be bored, but she realized that her peers weren’t on their phones as much as she anticipated they were going to be. As a result, she had frequent personal interactions.

However, Paustian did say that at times, such as study hall, she caught herself “staring at the wall.” She added she would probably never do another phone detox on her own.

Gast said that he didn’t see any positives to doing this, just negatives.

“It only affected me in the free times that I couldn’t be on my phone, or I needed my phone for an assignment, and I couldn’t have it,” Gast stated.

I can certainly say that I would struggle with this kind of ban. When I heard chatter about the possibility of this kind of policy taking effect in an upcoming school year, I was relieved that I am a senior. I guess I’ll never know if it would help cure my addiction to my phone.



Photo by Josh Peel

Journalism advisor Mr. Steve Sands receives sophomore Colby Gast’s phone.

signments.

Sophomore Brooklyn Frantz, who has experienced period scheduling at Walcott Intermediate School, said she would prefer block scheduling but wouldn’t complain if Durant moved back to periods.

“I wouldn’t mind it as much but knowing there’s block scheduling that has worked before would make us a lot happier if we just kept it how it is right now,” said Frantz, who agrees with Arenholz and Petersen that being a student athlete would become much harder.

“I know myself and multiple others want to strive at being both a good athlete and have high academic achievements, but it’s hard trying to fit in all of the work as it is and possibly having more makes it hard,” said Frantz.

the literary or artistic value of the book.

Summarizing the lawsuit’s objections, Mrs. Dohrmann said, “What does that [proposed addition] mean? How does a person judge that? Is it an exact reference? Implied reference? Would a normal person consider it obscene? What if it is in an informative text or innuendos?”

Mrs. Dohrmann does feel that SF 496 could be deemed unconstitutional when these lawsuits are reviewed by a federal court. She referenced a 1982 U.S. Supreme Court case, *Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico*, in which a school district was banning books based on a list from a conservative group.

“The court voted that the First Amendment gives students the right to receive information and that the school board members could not restrict the availability of books in the libraries because they disagreed with the content,” she said.

The Penguin Random House lawsuit claims SF 496 “automatically prohibits” two categories of books, those that contain a “description or visual depiction of a ‘sex act’” and those that “‘relate’ to ‘gender identity’ or ‘sexual orientation.’”

Referring to the second category, the lawsuit stipulates, “In practice this prohibition appears to have been intended to apply, and has been applied, to remove only books containing LGBTQ+ themes or characters or those written by authors within the LGBTQ+ community.”




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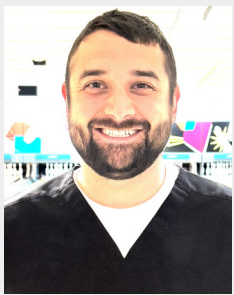
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Today's Dentistry coach of the month

Coach Dan Sterner is the coach of Durant’s bowling team. He has been coaching the team for five years, and he got into it because he had multiple students reach out and encourage him to coach the Wildcats. What Coach Sterner enjoys most about coaching is that his bowlers can participate in the sport throughout their entire lives. His goal this season is to help his bowlers improve their skills.




Sterner



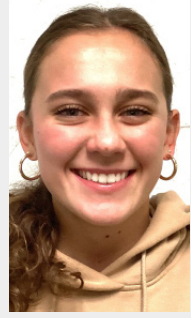
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Liberty Trust & Savings Bank's club member of the month



Senior Madeline Utter is in her first year with FCCLA and joined because she liked some of the past events the members put on, and she wanted to be a part of a group that served in the community. Her favorite activities were trick or treating for cans and the fall rally at Iowa State.



Utter