

The Wildcat Chronicles

Durant High School

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Durant schools add new e-hall pass system

By Ava Streeter

Durant's high school and middle school have adopted a new e-hall pass system that records where students go when they leave a class and the length of time students are out of class.

Students can create digital passes that must be approved by staff members, or staff members can create their own passes for students.

High School Principal Joel Diederichs said he wanted to clean up the old system where students had to sign out of classes and take a yellow pass with them.

He said he was not proud of the paper trail the old system caused and found it a struggle to collect sign-out sheets every week from teachers. Mr. Diederichs thought the new pass system would be good for the students because they are good with technology.

He hopes this new pass system will create consistency for the students and improve their learning.

Since the new system went into place, Mr. Diederichs said the hallway traffic has decreased, and he has seen a change in the time students spend in the bathroom. He believes this pass system will help keep students in the classroom where they can spend more time learning.

Spanish teacher Mr. Jeff Trask said he thinks the e-hall passes are easier for teachers.

"I like the idea of virtual passes as they are actually easier for me as a teacher since I do not have to stop class and create a pass on paper," he said.

Mr. Trask said the e-hall passes cut down on distractions because all he has to do is accept and end the hall pass.

"I hope that this makes students more mindful of how long they are outside of the classroom," he said.

He also feels this new system will help the school keep track of its students. The system allows for teachers to know when a student is coming to their room, which will

help stop roaming in the halls.

Mr. Trask hasn't experienced any problems with the new system yet and even was given a bit of training on it like the rest of the teachers. He did admit that, like with all technology, there could be a few malfunctions, but for the most part the good outweighs the bad.

"Change isn't always easy, but it will become second nature and no longer a big deal soon," he said.

Mr. Trask is excited to test out different features of the system.

"I am excited to try and use the appointment passes as these will help me with NHS [National Honor Society] and student council meetings," he said.

Another staff member, Mrs. Jill Randolph, also appreciates the new system because she watches over study halls and has to give out many passes throughout the day.

She likes the new system because she can see who is out of the classroom and believes it helps keep track of students.

She is looking forward to not having to go through so many paper hall passes and ink pens.

"People don't like change, but I believe as time goes by, they will be okay with it," said Mrs. Randolph.

Mrs. Randolph also has a few concerns with the new system. Since students generate their passes on their iPad, they will have to remember to charge their iPads every day and bring their iPads to every class, or they won't be allowed to leave.

Mrs. Randolph has also experienced some problems with the new system not working the right way and feels that her iPad is having problems, she won't be able to give out passes.

The *Chronicles* interviewed four students and all of them disagreed with the new pass system.

Senior Michael Iossi said he did not like having to sign out of classes last year, and with the new e-hall pass system, he said **See Hall Pass, page 2**

Bond election Nov. 7

By Grace Paustian

The Durant school district has failed to pass two bond referendums in the last five years. Will the third time be a charm when voters go to the polls on November 7?

On March 7, the voters rejected a \$15.6 million bond referendum that would have renovated the middle school gym and auditorium.

In 2018, voters also rejected a referendum that included a new high school gym, new STEM classrooms, an update to the auditorium, and a new secure entrance to the building.

The school district has received enough signatures to hold a third election Nov. 7 for projects totaling over \$13.2 million.

As part of the proposed bond, the middle school gym will be replaced.

Science and art classes will also be updated, the superintendent's office will be relocated to the high school wing, and the heating system will be updated.

In addition, there will be upgrades to the lighting and electrical systems and the sprinkler system.

The newest referendum will cost almost \$2.4 million less than the rejected bond in March.

The most expensive renovation on the list is the gym. It will cost \$4,048,550,

an increase of \$368,050 from the previous bond.

If approved, the bond would raise tax rates \$2.7 per \$1,000 of property value.

Every renovation that was included in last March's bond referendum is included in this bond, except for those pertaining to the auditorium.

"It was a community decision, and I know it was a struggle for the committee because there is a recognition that the auditorium does need work; however, we have a lot of other needs too, and we have to do something," said Superintendent Joe Burnett.

Due to recent state legislation, the next possible date to hold another bond referendum would be November 2024 if this one does not pass.

Two high school students stressed the importance of the community passing the bond, which needs an approval rate of 60 percent.

"I know I am going to be graduating next year and won't be able to see many of the changes happen, but I think it will better our school and community in the future," said junior Adison Daufeldt.

After graduating in May of 2025, Daufeldt said she hopes the school will be in a better condition when she makes future visits.

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History shows bond success

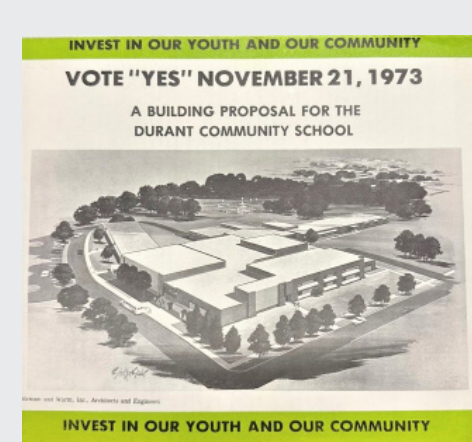
By Grace Paustian

The Durant school district passed four major bonds in just over four decades, according to a *Chronicles* review of documents at the Tri-County Heritage and Genealogy Museum in Durant. The review was provided by secretary Mary Erickson in May.

The first school building in Durant was built 165 years ago in 1858. This school building cost \$800, and the money was donated by a founder of Durant, Thomas C. Durant.

In 1869, a second school building was built; however, that building burned down in 1917. Even though the second school building, which was located on the corner lot of Seventh Street and Fifth Avenue, burned down, it was no longer in use after the third school building was built in 1904.

The first bond to ever be proposed in the community of Durant happened on March 3, 1956, and cost \$450,000. This bond was developed to build a new high school, which is currently used as the junior high. This bond also included the construction of the current elementary school, which included a small gymnasium known as The Cracker Box and five elementary



A 1973 flyer promotes the Durant school district bond that year. It created a cafeteria space and a shop/agriculture classroom, and the central heating facilities were also included in this bond.

Durant passed its second bond referendum on December 20, 1962, for \$205,000. This bond included the addition of nine elementary classrooms. The second bond also included the current junior high locker rooms, which are located under the junior high gymnasium.

The third school building was in use for 71 years from 1904 to 1975. In this time frame, the third bond referendum was **See HISTORY, page 2**

Durant grads exceed state average in degrees

By Kylee Hahn

More than 70 percent of Durant High School's class of 2016 received a post-secondary degree within six years, according to a state survey. The class surpassed the state average by almost 23 percent.

According to the Iowa School Performance Profiles, the class of 2015 also surpassed the state average. More than 63 percent of students earned a post-secondary degree, with the state average for that class at almost 48 percent. For the class of 2014, 51 percent earned a post-secondary degree, and almost 55 percent of the class of 2013 earned a post-secondary degree in six years. Each of those classes was also above the state average.

Mrs. Maria Brown, the director of instruction and innovation at Durant, said that the high school does well to prepare students for post-secondary options in addition to a four-year college degree, emphasizing trade schools and community colleges.

"We provide a lot of options," said Mrs. Brown. "We look at career readiness too."

Mrs. Kristy Badtram, the high school guidance counselor, said that all the prep work, such as college visits and career fairs for high school students, leads to success later on.

"A lot of kids reach out to other staff members for assistance with different classes," said Mrs. Badtram. "We're still al-

ways there to support them."

A member of the class of 2016, Tanner Kleppe graduated from Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport and is working for a non-profit company in Wisconsin as a chiropractor.

He plans on moving back to Iowa to open his own practice this fall.

"I will be focusing primarily on movement and rehab-based treatment," said Kleppe.

Kleppe said he was not surprised by the percentage of students in his class to receive a post-secondary degree.

"I had a class of insanely hard-working people, so in those regards, it doesn't surprise me at all," he said.

Kleppe said he had a lot of guidance and support from the staff members in high school who led him right where he needed to be, but they still allowed him to be himself.

A member of the class of 2017, Aubrey Werthmann graduated from the University of Iowa with a double major in history and secondary education and received a social studies endorsement.

Werthmann currently teaches social studies classes at Madrid High School near Des Moines, including American History, World Geography, and Sociology.

"Durant provided me with opportunities to work as a team, build my confidence, make friends, and problem solve," said Werthmann.