

Cell phones could be allowed in class

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 20 June 2013 14:26 -



A new junior and senior high school handbook proposal will allow kids to carry cell phones throughout the building and into classes.

Currently, cell phones must be left in lockers or vehicles and are not permitted in class.

Gothenburg High School principal Randy Evans said the proposed change is because the majority of students already have cell phones in school.

“We may as well adjust with the times and not pretend that students don’t have them in possession because they do,” he said.

“In this day and age, electronic devices are used for educational purposes and we want kids to utilize and be comfortable with them

However the principal said students cannot use phones while in class.

If they do, consequences are the same as they are now which means cells phones and pagers are confiscated by teachers the first time the rule is violated.

Parents must then retrieve the phone. If it happens again an hour of detention will be assigned.

A third breach of the rule will result in a two-hour detention.

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Evans said he didn't think relaxation of the rule would disrupt the classroom.

"Kids know to shut them off or turn them on vibrate," he said.

Often it's parents who call during class and get their child in trouble, Evans said.

"We encourage parents not to call during the school day or use the school phone," he said.

School officials are also proposing another handbook change—a longer school day and shortened lunch period.

To accommodate more minutes of instructional time, classes would begin at 8:08 instead of 8:15 a.m. and a minute added to the 48-minute class period.

Access time, when students can get help from teachers before school, would still begin at 7:45 a.m. but would end earlier.

"The majority of kids are done by the time the bell rings for school," Evans explained.

Minutes would be shaved from the lunch period for high schoolers although some school officials had hoped the expansion of the cafeteria would mean more time to eat because of increased space in the eating area.

Evans said most high schoolers eat lunch in 10 to 12 minutes and have 20 to 22 minutes "to mess around."

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Currently, students are dismissed in two groups—at 12:22 and 12:24 p.m. for lunch. Bells to return to class ring at 12:55 or 12:57 p.m.

Under the new schedule, high school students would be dismissed at 12:25 and the first bell for sixth period would ring at 12:55 p.m.

The proposal to shorten lunch time came about, Evans said, because of an unintended consequence of offering more entrees and increasing serving lines from two to four.

Students now move through the lines faster and, instead of taking time to eat their food more slowly, he said they leave and congregate in the hallway where fights have started.

The majority of the teachers support the proposals, Evans said.

District 20 school board members will vote on the changes during a noon meeting on July 15 in the school library.

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