

# The Wildcat Chronicles

Durant High School

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## New daily schedule set for 2019-2020 year

By Danielle Paulsen

Declining student enrollment at Durant will force a new daily high school schedule starting in the 2019-2020 school year that allows for even more sharing of classes with Wilton High School.

Since 2014, the total district enrollment for Durant has dropped from 668 to 619, and it's only expected to continue to decrease. In fact, Durant's kindergarten class is only expected to have between 20 and 30 students next year.

As a result, Durant's high school schedule will line up perfectly with Wilton's next year by starting the day at 8:10 a.m. and ending at 3:15 p.m. with Wednesday starting at 9:10 a.m.

"We're trying to keep the quality of education we have here and the course offerings by being as efficient as we can and sharing with Wilton," said Superintendent Mr.

Joe Burnett, who is also in his second year of leading both school districts in a shared position.

In addition to the time schedule changing, there will be something called a "skinny" at the end of each day. A skinny is just half of a block where the students will be given the option to take more course offerings. This class will begin at 2:35 p.m. and conclude at the end of the school day.

These classes will be open for students to choose. As of now, the idea is that if students are struggling with a class, they can take a course during that skinny to get them the help they need. This is also an opportunity for students to make up a credit if they are behind. There will also be a variety of electives offered during this time.

The seniors, however, will most likely be required to take a course called "life skills" during their skinny, which will

help prepare them for things they will have to know during their adult lives such as financial literacy.

"I think that's often been a criticism of education," Mr. Burnett said, "that we don't prepare kids enough for 'the real world' after high school."

By making both schools' schedules aligned, this will help steady Durant's enrollment until it begins to increase again.

"We receive about \$7,000 in state aid per student. So that's our basic generator; number of students to serve times basic aid from the state," said Mr. Burnett.

He explained that for each student coming over to take a class from Wilton, Durant will get a portion of the \$7,000, therefore providing additional funds that go towards staff salaries and programs.

Durant also decided to make this change to keep its students from missing

class time under the current schedule.

Right now, a regular school day begins at 8:05 a.m. and concludes at 3:00 p.m. Each class is around an hour and a half with a 30-minute seminar after lunch. For some students, however, a few classes are cut short due to bus transportation to and from Wilton High School.

Durant's current schedule doesn't line up exactly with Wilton's, so the students who are traveling here or there for a class end up missing part of another class.

One thing that seems to be a thought in people's minds with the added sharing is that these identical schedules will soon lead to the districts combining, but Mr. Burnett disagrees with that statement.

"The more you share and the more efficient you become, the longer you can stay independent," he said.

## Green Out tradition continues to impact local community

By Nicole Brown

Organ donation has held a special place in the Durant community for the last nine years because of the meaningful impact of one student.

On the morning of December 5th, 2010, Emily Bohnsack, a junior at Durant, attended church with her family. Later that day, Emily drove to her first day of club volleyball practice. While on the way to the school, she tragically died in an automobile accident near Durant.

Emily Anne Bohnsack was spunky, ornery, full of life, fun, and sassy all in one, recalls her mother, Mrs. Suzy Bohnsack. She was an active churchgoer, choir member, athlete, and fantastic horse rider who loved spending time with family and friends,

"She had a pretty good little life there in her short time," said Mrs. Bohnsack, who retired last year after teaching elementary school in Durant for 34 years.

Before her death, Emily knew she wanted to be an organ donor when asked at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). After her passing, Mrs. Bohnsack began to take the initiative to promote the awareness of organ donation and start a new tradition at Durant.

Every year during basketball season, the Green Out game raises awareness about organ donations. Fans are asked to wear a green shirt or buy the organ donor support shirt to raise money. This year's game is January 17th when the Wildcats face

the West Branch Bears.

This is Mrs. Bohnsack's first year not leading the event. She said her role is a little different, but she will still help the student council, National Honor Society, and FCCLA orchestrate the event.

The event includes a speaker who can bring a personal connection to the organ donation campaign. There are different fundraising opportunities during the games in support of the Iowa Donor Network, such as a 50/50 raffle. Organizers also hope to set up a table where people with a permit or license can change their ID to be an organ donor that night.

Because of Emily, students and community members now understand the importance of being an organ donor and how many lives they could potentially save.

"I had no idea what an impact Emily would have had by being an organ donor, and I think it continues, and I want to keep that alive for her and to spread awareness," Mrs. Bohnsack said.

Originally, Emily's family was told that she saved 80 lives. However, during the previous year's Green Out game, Mrs. Bohnsack was given a plaque that said Emily had now saved 226 lives. They were able to freeze many of Emily's viable parts. These included 37 grafts from bone-connected tissue and 189 skin grafts for burn victims. Her parts were also used for six cases of medical research.

"I was just shocked," said Mrs.



Photo by Nicole Brown

Mrs. Bohnsack poses by daughter Emily Bohnsack's plaque located in the school's memorial hall.

Bohnsack, "because I thought it was done at 80."

Mr. Jeff Trask taught Emily in his first and second years of teaching, and her death has made him a vocal supporter of organ donation

"I always made sure that whenever I renewed my license or did anything along those lines you always are very cognizant of putting that "Y" on there [yes to organ donation]," said Mr. Trask. "I even told my friends like you need to be doing this because of her experience and the amount of lives she was able to save."

Mrs. Bohnsack will never forget the feeling of seeing the police walk up to her door on the day of the accident to notify her. Her husband, Rob, was hunting earlier that day, and she initially assumed that they were coming regarding him.

However, she finds solace in the fact that Emily's legacy continues to live on in the hearts of students and staff at Durant.

"It's been very meaningful when a student will come up to me and say, 'Mrs. B., I just got my driver's license, and I said yes on my driver's license to become a donor,'" Mrs. Bohnsack said.

## Durant High School junior receives heart transplant last spring

By Kiley Stineman

When Durant junior Cameron Cavins steps onto the court for the upcoming Green Out night, the JV basketball player will be a living testament to an event that raises awareness of organ donation.

He had a heart transplant May 22 at the age of 17 at Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago in a four-hour surgery.

Cavins had a very rare heart condition that caused blood to leak from his left ventricle. His doctors did not think he would make it this far in life without a new heart, but Cavins proved them wrong by constantly watching his health.

Cavins has had this condition since he was two, and it has proven to be a genet-

ically passed disorder. When he was diagnosed, his whole family decided to get tested to ensure that there were no surprise medical issues somewhere down the road.

When the family's results came back, they showed that Cavins's father had also been living with the same condition. By getting the testing done, it may have saved his father's life as well.

Leading up to Cavins's surgery, he was constantly getting checkups until last January when his condition became so severe that he was moved to 1A, the highest spot on the transplant list, and hospitalized until his surgery in May.

During that hospitalization, he had two surgeries in a week and had to shut

down the left side of his heart a week before the transplant. However, he was able to keep himself busy by playing video games and making friends in the hospital that he still has today.

Looking back at his story, he explained that he doesn't know who his donor is but would like to thank whoever it was that was so generous to do this.

Since he wasn't an adult at the time, he was able to receive a heart from either a younger or older person.

Following the surgery, he had a set of restrictions where he couldn't lift anything over ten pounds, and he needed to eat healthier food.

Cavins started school at Durant this

year after moving from Moline High School. While he was at Moline, three banquets were held to help his family pay his medical bills.

For the first time since third grade, Cavins stepped out of his comfort zone and joined a sport this year. He decided to play on the Durant basketball team.

Cavins hadn't played in eight years and described the experience as "something new."

The surgery has allowed Cavins to think about things differently, especially when it comes to smaller issues that might bother other people, but not him

"They're just babies, crying over the little stuff," said Cavins.