

Will vape sensors come to DHS restrooms?

By Kiyah Daily

A sensor that detects vaping has been installed in a bathroom at neighboring Wilton High School; however, the superintendent of both the Wilton and Durant school districts, Mr. Joe Burnett, said it's "kind of a test run."

Mr. Burnett said he's not sure if Durant High School will also install a vape sensor and wants to see how the trial in Wilton goes first.

"The challenge with the vape sensors, from what I've heard," said Mr. Burnett, "is even with the vape sensors, it's still hard to detect vaping in there [bathrooms]."

Mr. Burnett said he is "always open to trying to find ways to curb it [vaping]."

Mr. Burnett stated that vape sensors aren't cheap, so he would want to make sure they work before purchasing them.

He also said that "unfortunately

when school districts put in some type of deterrent, people figure out a way around it."

Wilton's school resource officer, Sergeant Todd Johnson, stated that Wilton just recently got its vape sensor up and running.

He said that "with just one installed, we have already had it triggered numerous times."

Sgt. Johnson also said that since students know about the sensor, they have chosen different bathrooms to vape in, so they don't get caught.

Vape sensors cost \$900 for each sensor and a yearly license fee of \$200 per unit, according to Sgt. Johnson.

Mr. Burnett thinks that vaping has become an issue everywhere, but that it's being regulated more now.

Both Mr. Burnett and Durant High School Principal Joel Diederichs agree that

high schoolers were targeted by vape companies because of the fun colors, packaging, and flavors.

Both also feel that vaping has been an issue at Durant since the product came out.

"There's different people that do it [vape] differently; some are more open and some are not," Mr. Diederichs said.

Although school administrators did not have a guess about the percentage of Durant high school students who vape, one anonymous high school student said he thinks about 10 percent of the student population vapes.

The student said he started vaping because it was cool and helped him relax.

The student said he is now addicted to vaping, and if he could go back, he wouldn't have tried it. This student's advice to people who want to start is quite simply

"don't try it."

The student said that the Durant administration is pretty good at preventing students from vaping.

The Durant school district has started educating students more about the dangers of vaping to try to prevent it.

Durant School Resource Officer Sgt. Mike Meier, who would like to have vape sensors in the school, says to help curb vaping, the administration is just educating and talking to students, as well as using extra enforcement in the bathrooms.

"I understand there's still vaping out there. I'm not naive to it," Mr. Diederichs said, "but hopefully through education we can learn and get better from it."

Mr. Diederichs, Mr. Burnett, and Sgt. Meier don't believe vape sensors pose a privacy issue because the sensors don't record you, and it's in a public building.

Proposed program entices future educators

By Kennedy Schumacher

High school students interested in becoming teachers may receive the opportunity to take an apprenticeship in a classroom while still in high school.

Two Durant high school students are intrigued by the apprenticeship, which comes from a state task force put together to fulfill a legislative goal of diversifying K-12 teachers in Iowa.

The apprenticeship is a proposed solution the task force originated, meaning it isn't underway yet.

A project like this will be the first coming directly out of the Iowa Department of Education, according to Mrs. Jamie Walker-Sallis, Equity Innovator in the Davenport School District and a member of the task force.

Sophomore Maddie Utter and junior Nora Ramer are both interested in the apprenticeship and would take advantage of the opportunity.

"It interests me because I can get a head start on my career and the overall cost of college would be less expensive. I could experience student teaching sooner," said Utter.

She wants to be able to experience teaching before fully committing and going to college for teaching.

Utter feels getting to start her career

earlier with an apprenticeship would give an incentive to follow through with a teaching degree and becoming a teacher.

"I want to do elementary education," said Utter. "After helping Mrs. [Kris] Daufeldt in her kindergarten classroom in eighth grade, it sparked my interest even more in becoming an elementary teacher."

Ramer has a unique perspective on the opportunity as well.

"It makes me consider my options and consider what I really want to do," said Ramer. Being able to experience what it would be like to be a teacher would help solidify and reassure her that teaching is what she wants to do.

"I want to teach students who want to be there [at school] and want to learn," said Ramer, who either wants to become a psychologist or be a high school history teacher.

Even if Ramer didn't end up taking the teaching route, she would pursue the apprenticeship because it would give her experience and look good for college.

Ramer said she would want to be an apprentice at a Davenport school because of how diverse the district is.

"I'm up for the challenge of dealing with people and dealing with situations that I've never been in before and learning how to navigate them," she said.

Utter would pick Durant for her apprenticeship, preferably in an elementary classroom.

The proposed apprenticeship has many benefits making it appealing to students including on-the-job training, being a classroom and teacher's aide, getting a kickstart to their career, first-hand experience in a classroom, dual credit, and being paid while learning.

First-hand experience in a classroom is most appealing to Ramer because "it means a lot to me to be able to experience something before I commit to it."

Superintendent Joe Burnett is "100 percent on board" with students taking apprenticeships for teaching in high school and starting their path to becoming a teacher as a junior in high school.

"We've got to get more young people interested in becoming educators," he said.

"I think anytime we can get young people to experience and explore any career pathway is a good thing, and teaching's no different," said Mr. Burnett. "So I think it's a great opportunity for young people to see if they think education might be a career path they choose, and I would encourage the program to move forward."

According to Mrs. Walker-Sallis, the goal of the task force was to find a way to



Photo by Kennedy Schumacher
Junior Nora Ramer and sophomore Maddie Utter are looking to pursue a career in teaching.

increase the number of people wanting to go into the teaching field.

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200 plus students absent because of TikTok trend

By Kayden Johnson

A TikTok trend known as "School Shooter Day" left more than 200 Durant students absent on December 17.

The TikTok trend followed a school shooting on November 30 at Oxford High School in Oxford Township, Michigan, where four high school students died and seven more people were injured, including one teacher.

Durant's school resource officer, Sgt. Mike Meier, was aware of the TikTok trend before school that day.

"I had actually already heard about it prior to coming into school that day," he said.

"We get intelligence briefings pretty regularly, so we had already heard about it. I came to it and kind of approached it just like a normal school day with a little more awareness and extra peripherals and stuff like that."

Sgt. Meier also does not view the Durant Community School District as a likely place for a school shooting.

"For me, I think it is down at like a one or a two," Sgt. Meier said, when asked to rank the possibility on a scale of 1-10. "But truthfully, you never know," he said, pointing out that a school shooting could occur anywhere.

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2 seniors graduate early

By Karissa Hoon

This school year, there are two Durant seniors who graduated after the first semester, Michael Frisch and Kaitlyn Paustian.

Frisch started his high school journey with high expectations to graduate early. Frisch scheduled all of the required classes into his freshman and sophomore year while managing his time to get everything done without a single study hall.

Frisch wants to move out of state right away to begin his career path. His hopes are to find a technical college, so he can pursue a major in software development to continue to work around computers.

With being out of school, Frisch will mostly miss his friends and teachers, but he will return to graduate.

"I am thankful for what the education program provided me," said Frisch.

He says that it's good to get high

school out of the way to be able to start his career sooner, but at the same time, he won't be able to enjoy the second semester alongside of his classmates.

"I recommend early graduation to those that have a plan of what they want to continue on after high school. Otherwise, they might as well stay in school," Frisch said.

Paustian, another early graduate, made her decision because she felt it would be the best for her schedule. Paustian explains that if she didn't graduate early, then her days would be less productive since she would have to spend half of the day at school.

"It was really simple to complete all of my credits ahead of schedule. All I had to do was accurately schedule my classes and not fail any of them," said Paustian.

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