

## Durant students push for policy changes

### Open campus sought as special privilege

By Kennedy Schumacher

Durant students have expressed interest in having more of an open campus during the school day.

"I think the idea of an open campus would be popular with the student body," said sophomore Michael Iossi.

"I think you'd have to prove that you are doing well in school [to earn those privileges]."

If students can do that, Iossi said they should be able to leave during a study hall, when they are done with their work in class, lunch and seminar, and when students have free time in class.

Senior Tevin Miller also supports having open campus privileges.

"I think this [an open campus] is a great idea, so kids can have the freedom to come and go from school, especially if they have a study hall," said Miller. "You [stu-

dents] should be able to leave during study hall, lunch, and seminar."

However, Miller feels parents should have to give permission for their child to be able to have open campus privileges.

Another senior, Kristina Vasquez, also feels open campus privileges would be nice to have.

It gives kids a little more freedom, but "you have to earn the trust for that," said Vasquez.

"I think they [the administration] should let us leave for lunch and seminar," she said. Students aren't able to get very much done during seminar because of how short it is.

Vasquez suggests students could go to the school board about the issue to have it discussed and possibly voted on.

Iossi believes Durant would find the best fit for open campus privileges with something "like trial and error."

See **CAMPUS**, page 2

### Backpacks in class present safety issue

By Kiyah Daily

An overwhelming majority of Durant students feel that they should be able to carry their backpacks from class to class, according to an informal Instagram poll of 66 students.

The current school policy states that there are three reasons for not carrying backpacks to class.

It reduces classroom clutter, it is bad for students' backs, and most importantly it provides safety for students and staff.

Most students surveyed are for carrying backpacks around, while only five of 66 disagreed.

Of the five students that said that they agreed with the current policy, one was freshman Emma Meincke.

Meincke said that "it's unlikely, but someone could have a weapon."

School Resource Officer Sgt. Mike

Meier says he would hope nobody would bring a weapon to school, but the school has to be on the safe side with the backpack policy just in case it would ever happen.

"We have a good group here, and I would hope that it wouldn't [happen]," said Sgt. Meier, "but there's other indicators that we look for when people are coming in."

Principal Mr. Joel Diederichs said he has considered taking the policy away, but only if the school went to clear backpacks.

But overall, there isn't really a reason to get rid of the policy.

Of the 61 students who said they do not agree with the current policy, two were senior Tanner Jepsen and junior Brooklynn Chapin.

Even though Chapin disagrees with the policy, she said she would not go buy a clear backpack because "if there was an expensive item in there I wouldn't want people to take it."

See **BACKPACKS**, page 2

## Sophomore gives students something to cheer about

By Madison Weber

The invincible sophomore Isabella Buesing has lived with cerebral palsy most of her life, and now she is giving her fellow Durant students something to really cheer about.

"In a word, she is extraordinary," said Mr. Joe DeGeorge, one of Buesing's teachers.

Buesing was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when she was one year old, and hers has affected the right side of her body, so she tends to favor her left side. Buesing has not been able to participate in sports all her life, but she is participating in high school cheerleading for the first time this winter.

"My disability doesn't stop me," said Buesing. "I'm joining basketball cheer this year, but if I could do sports, I would do basketball because that's my favorite sport."

She really enjoys the experience so far with cheerleading and is having a lot of

fun with her teammates.

"Just being on the team and doing something that I can do just feels like I'm part of something," said Buesing.

She also enjoys playing basketball in her grandparents' shed with her siblings and has been showing pigs since she was six years old. Buesing has even participated in band since fifth grade. She tried every instrument to find the best fit for her, which was the trumpet.

"It only had three valves, so I could just push them with my left hand," said Buesing. But there was one problem that would have to be solved—how to hold the trumpet up? So they found a microphone stand to hold it while she played.

Cerebral palsy is "a group of disorders that affect a person's ability to move and maintain balance and posture," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The disability is "caused by abnormal brain development or damage to the devel-

oping brain."

"It was about 8th grade when I wanted to find out more about cerebral palsy, so I could find an easier way for people to understand," said Buesing. "I can't go up or down stairs by myself because I can fall, or I can't put my own hair up because I can only use the one hand that I can control my hand movements."

Mr. DeGeorge believes that Buesing's strengths are her physical and mental toughness.

"She completes every activity in life that presents a real challenge for her. She is fearless when she walks up and down the stairs and physically tough when she falls. She overcomes the fear of failure on a daily basis," said Mr. DeGeorge.

Despite her disability, Buesing keeps a very positive mindset.

"At the age of one, the doctors told

See **BUESING**, page 3

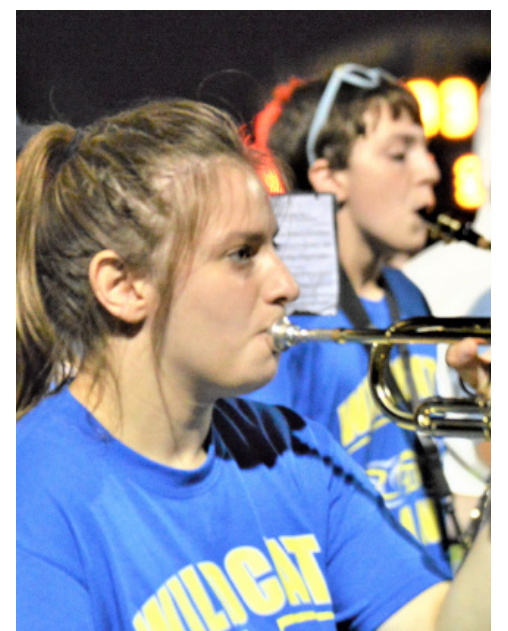


Photo by Kylie Meyermann  
Sophomore Isabella Buesing plays the trumpet during a halftime show this fall.

## 2 out of 3 trips still traveling after COVID-19 postponements

By Shannon Head

Two student-based trips are planned later this school year. Band students will travel to Florida this spring, and eight Durant students will travel to Europe this summer.

These trips were both canceled last year due to COVID-19.

Mr. Kevin Mundt, the band director, has led the band trip since 2009, and the trip takes place every two years.

"It's either Florida or St. Louis before I was the high school director," said Mr. Mundt about past trips. "However, we have gone to Florida every year since around 2009."

The trip will last five days and four nights from March 24-29.

During this trip, the students visit places like Cocoa Beach, Ron Jon Surf Shop, Disney World, and Universal Studios in Orlando. Everyone involved in the band has the opportunity to visit Florida with the group.

Currently, there are 88 students going between the Wilton and Durant music departments. Students must raise \$1,000-

\$1,200 each to go on the trip, and the band offers several fundraisers to help raise money.

Since this trip is involved with music, the students will be a part of a two-and-a-half hour session where they learn to incorporate and play Disney music and then add it to a soundtrack of a Disney movie.

Ella Mundt, a senior at Durant, plans to attend this trip in the spring.

"I decided to go on the trip because I thought it sounded like a fun opportunity," said Mundt, who is the daughter of Mr. Mundt.

Another trip later this year to Europe will be led by Mr. Daniel Knipfel, a high school history teacher. The trip will take place from July 28-August 6 with two travel days.

Students will visit places like England, France, Belgium, and Germany.

Kiyah Daily, a junior at Durant, received the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., back in her eighth-grade year. In fact, her class was the final class to go to the nation's capital.

Since she went to Washington, D.C., and had a lot of fun, she figured this trip would be fun as well.

She is planning on going on the Europe trip "to experience something different," she said. "I just thought it sounded fun, and my mom went when she was in high school, and she had fun, so I wanted to have that experience too."

One recurring class trip will not be returning, though. Two years ago, Durant made the decision of canceling the eighth-grade Washington, D.C., trip due to COVID-19.

This trip has been happening every year since 2007. The first trip in 2007 was a trip to New York. Every year thereafter was Washington, D.C. The trip took place at the end of the students' eighth-grade year.

During the trip, the students visited museums, landmarks, and historical sites. Some places included either a Baltimore Orioles or Washington Nationals baseball game, the outside of the White House, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, the Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Lincoln Memorial,

and the WWII Memorial.

As a whole, the trip was a six-day process with two traveling days included.

Due to the pandemic, Mrs. Rebecca Stineman, the elementary school principal, and Mr. Joel Diederichs, the high school principal, decided to stop the annual trip.

Sophomore Michael Iossi was one of the many students who were unable to attend the trip.

He was looking forward to going on the trip without his parents, getting to experience the fun that the other classes before him had, and spending time away from school.

"It's always a pleasure when I get to go somewhere I've never been," said Iossi.

Another sophomore, Olivia Alpen, was upset because she thinks she "won't ever go to Washington, D.C., any other time."

She said the grades before her had tons of fun, so she was looking forward to the experience with her friends.

"I was mostly looking forward to the bus rides and the hotel because everyone said that was the best part," said Alpen.