

## Durant awaits decision of proposed plan

By Grace Paustian

A Davenport schools reorganization plan could lead to additional students transferring to the Durant school district from Walcott as soon as next school year.

The Davenport school district is expected to lose 749 students by 2031, including 239 elementary students, 149 junior high students, and 369 high school students. This is the cause of the proposed reorganization plan.

The Walcott school is currently a K-8 building with 465 enrolled students, according to a district report on its website. Its current capacity is more than 800.

Under two long-range options, the building would house grades 5-8, and its feeder schools would be Buffalo and Blue Grass elementary schools.

Under an additional third option, Walcott would house grades 6-8, and its feeder schools would be Blue Grass, Buffalo, and Jackson elementary schools. Durant

Superintendent Joe Burnett believes that the Davenport reorganization plan could potentially lead to Walcott elementary students open enrolling to Durant.

"I think the odds of us getting more students are definitely higher if they [Walcott schools] reshuffle," said Mr. Burnett.

However, Mr. Burnett doesn't think preparing for new students is important at this time considering Davenport's proposed plans could change anytime before the final decision is made.

"It's hard to prepare for something when you don't know if it is going to happen," said Mr. Burnett.

If the Durant district does need to make adjustments before the new Walcott students arrive, it should have enough time to do it

"We would know that this spring, and we could make adjustments with our staff if we needed to hire more people," Mr. Burnett said.

Mr. Burnett thinks that the Durant district shouldn't have a problem accepting a high number of incoming Walcott elementary students.

A new bond has been proposed to make advancements to the Durant school building and will be voted on in March. However, Mr. Burnett thinks the bond referendum is important to the school regardless of where the Walcott elementary grades end up.

"The bond that we will have coming up is important regardless because it addresses the basic needs of our building," he said. "I think it's important regardless of what Davenport decides to do."

Walcott community member Mrs. Liz Bruns is the mother of two children, a second and a fifth grader who currently attended the Walcott school.

"I would be sad and very disappointed that my children would not be able to attend the same school anymore," she

said. "When we moved to Walcott, we were excited to have everybody in kindergarten through eighth grade in one building."

Mrs. Bruns said that the Walcott community is torn during this time because many families like sending their children to a small-town school.

Although the Durant school district doesn't know exactly how many new students it could be gaining from this plan, Mrs. Bruns estimates Durant could see more than 20 students enroll from Walcott.

"I could see another couple dozen or so, possibly coming to Durant," she said.

Last year, 73 Davenport students open enrolled to the Durant district, according to an official count. That number has increased to 109 this year, according to tentative figures. Davenport students were able to open enroll to Durant after 2021 legislation eliminated Davenport's diversity plan.

The Davenport school board will be voting on the proposal in December.

## IHSAA: ref harassment needs to come to an end

By Kennedy Schumacher

The Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) recently sent out a letter to coaches, parents, and fans stating harassment of referees is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated any longer.

Local area football referee Mike Coss can attest to the harassment.

"Unfortunately, it is a pretty common occurrence in high school sporting events," said Mr. Coss of Wilton.

He explained his football crew has had audience members yell things at them from the stands and has also had a parent even wait for them after a game to tell them how terrible one of their calls was.

Mr. Coss points out that this behavior may cause people to turn away from a career as a referee, which is leading to a shortage of referees.

"It doesn't seem like younger people are willing to become officials with the abuse that sometimes comes along with it," he said.

He estimates that about half of referees are those who have retired previously; however, the average age of officials is starting to increase due to the harassment.

Mr. Coss became a referee because he has always enjoyed all aspects of sports, but the harassment from fans can be very challenging. He has seen many cases of harassment second hand but also has received numerous comments and been confronted himself.

"The worst comment is just that a call was terrible, usually stated with some choice language," he said. "That was the worst [expletive] call I've ever seen."

In another instance, Mr. Coss's

football crew was yelled at continuously by a fan, who was then removed from the game.

Durant's athletic director and varsity basketball coach Matt Straube knows what it is like to be on both sides of the issue.

"As a coach, I know I can do a better job, but I try not to harass referees," he said. "I try to have a running dialogue with referees, and I appreciate the fact that there are referees that communicate and explain situations, which I think helps tremendously."

After being Durant's athletic director for seven years, Mr. Straube has had to deal with out-of-control fans a time or two. However, it's most common for fans to use choice language.

After the letter was sent out by the IHSAA, it leaves some wondering if the letter will cause anything to change.

"I understand why the state sent out the letter, but I'm not sure it has really made a difference," said Mr. Coss. "Most officials have just learned to ignore the comments up to a point where they become personal or malicious."

"Then we usually get an administrator to handle the problem."

He feels fans only see referees as the people who make good or bad calls, where really, they share the same love of the sport too.

"If sports, as we know, are going to continue, something will need to change. Hopefully, people will begin to realize that officials are people who usually just love the sports they officiate and unfortunately do make bad calls sometimes. Most of us try very hard to do the best we can and get in the best position to make the correct call."

## Teachers watch what they post

By Kiyah Daily

Most people don't even think twice when posting on social media, but for teachers all across America, it's very different.

Teachers are held to a higher standard than other adults because of their positions within the community and could even face termination for an inappropriate post.

The *Chronicles* interviewed three teachers about their social media habits: Mr. Michael Cronk, Mr. Kevin Mundt, and Mr. Cody Wille.

Mr. Cronk, an English teacher in the middle and high school, said he feels comfortable posting on social media.

"It's less about what I post, but who can see it," he explained. "I can control who follows me, so then I can control the narrative I'm sending out to people."

Mr. Cronk is on multiple social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat, but he said he rarely ever posts.

"My Instagram is hooked up to my Facebook, so whatever I post on Instagram goes to my Facebook," said Mr. Cronk. "If

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Photo by Kylie Meyermann

Senior Roman Marquardt dumps a bucket of slime on English teacher Mr. Cronk.

## Pep rally becomes instant classic

By Michael Iossi

A September pep rally featuring the sliming of three teachers became an instant classic.

On September 30, Durant High School's Adult Living class held the rally to climax its fundraiser for the King's Harvest Pet Rescue No Kill Shelter in Davenport.

Students voted for one of six

teachers to get slimed by putting fundraising money in the individual teacher's bucket.

Two staff members were selected from each part of the school: Mrs. Brooke Thoma and Mrs. Hailey Houk from the elementary, Mr. Michael Cronk and Mr. Ross DeLong from the middle school, and Mr. Steve Sands and Mr. Cody Wille from the

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## Durant graduates find new home in Denver, CO

By Ryan Brown

Denver, Colorado, is starting to look like "Durant West" as a handful of Durant alumni have begun to call the Denver area home.

To many, the desire to live in Denver is centered around the mountains.

"I really feel like I was fascinated with the views and hiking and just being active," said Sam Fusco, a Durant graduate of 2016. "I would go there, and I would climb 14'ers [14,000-foot mountains], and then eventually it just ended up being a personality trait of mine."

Fusco says that her love for the area was really sparked on a school-sanctioned trip to Colorado Springs during her junior year in high school.

"It kinda started because Mr. [Nolan] Hovland [former Durant cross country coach] took us on a cross country trip to Colorado Springs, and we hiked Pikes Peak," she said.

Fusco's opportunity to move out to

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