



City Honors School

AT FOSDICK-MASTEN PARK

William A. Kresse, Ph.D. PRINCIPAL Tandy J. Hamilton ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL Angela R. Hannah ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL Carla L. McDow ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

February 5, 2020

Grade 12 Parents:

I am writing you regarding “senior privileges” at City Honors. This morning I notified our students that I am putting privileges on hold until after the February break to give our staff time to determine whether we can continue this practice safely and to confer with the school district to be sure it is still supported.

I certainly understand that some students are invested in the concept, and I want to be sure you have the correct information. The essential idea of these privileges is that during scheduled study halls or lunches, seniors in good standing may find a quiet place to read or study in the hallways. All parents who have a child participating in privileges, which is about 50% of the Class of 2020, signed a detailed agreement sheet along with your child. I inherited this tradition when I arrived in 2005. Since that time it has remained unchanged. What has changed is that our school has grown by approximately 300 students. Concerns from teachers, parents, my assistant principals, and my supervisors regarding this practice have grown over time. Aside from our seniors, I may be the only one defending this practice. I have always felt that our students with excellent attendance and conduct could handle some additional responsibilities, such as self-regulation in common areas.

Despite our best and frequent efforts to discuss these matters with students, I have to grudgingly admit that the strains on the system have been showing:

- Our teacher representatives bring concerns to me during our monthly meetings about seniors in the hallways disturbing their ability to teach and stating that the appearance of students in hallways during class times is incentivizing other students not to attend classes.
- The office and administrators receive daily calls from teachers stating they are unable to teach because of the volume of seniors in the hallways.
- Seniors have engaged in vandalism of school property during these unsupervised times.
- Students are eating meals outside of the cafeteria, fostering an environment for vermin.
- Seniors who are not in good standing, as well as underclassmen, grant themselves the same privileges, sometimes skipping classes to do so.
- Students are opening exterior doors to allow strangers and food delivery drivers access to our school.
- Perhaps worst of all, students who are not abiding by the boundaries of this arrangement are becoming confrontational with staff members who ask them to make adjustments.

I understand the perspective that many of our students use these privileges responsibly, and that they should not be impacted by the decision-making of their peers. However, our staff’s best efforts at specific enforcement, even with enhancements like issuing pins to those with privileges, have been unsuccessful.

It is important for parents to realize that our society is much more litigious than when we grew up. Schools are held strictly accountable for student safety and school security. Senior lounges, open campuses and other facets of life in the 1970's and 1980's diminished as various incidents highlighted the dangers involved with inadequate supervision of students. School districts have faced increasing civil liability and financial penalties for any lack of supervision. This is the dilemma we face at this moment. Our highest responsibility to you is that our students are safe and receive a quality education in the classroom. Anything that may interfere with this responsibility must be carefully evaluated.

I thank you for your understanding while we review this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William A. Kresse".

William A. Kresse, Ph.D.
Principal