



MEMO TO: Jerry Wilson, Ph.D
Superintendent of Schools

FROM: High School Principals

THROUGH: Manny Ortega
Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools

DATE: May 9, 2008

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO CHANGE THE CURRENT OPEN CAMPUS POLICY TO
INCLUDE NINTH GRADE

In April 2007, the Board of Education indicated that high schools should have a closed campus for 9th graders. The high school principals have interpreted this to mean that during the 9th grade lunch period, campus should be closed. Other times throughout the school day the 9th graders would be expected to be in class. While most classes are on campus, some classes are off campus. Some of these off campus classes may be held at CSU, FRCC, other high schools, internships, and other similar type experiences.

PSD's current policy indicates that junior high schools will have closed campuses. Over the past thirteen years, Poudre High 9th grade students have been fully included as high school students including the open campus policy. The high school principals would like to change the current open campus policy to include all ninth graders.

The principals believe this request to be important to the transition and acculturation of 9th-grade students into the high school for the following reasons:

The high school culture sets high expectations and is inclusive of all students in all aspects of the school.

- Whether in academics, athletics, or clubs, all students are expected to strive for the highest standards and to actively participate in the school. This has worked very well in the high schools.
- If expectations for 9th-grade students are different, this may unintentionally create conflict for these students.
- To maintain the positive culture of individual responsibility, self-directed learning, and high expectations for all students, the high school principals believe it is critical to treat 9th graders the same as the rest of the students.

A challenge for providing closed campus for 9th graders is the lack of space in most of our high school cafeteria facilities, due to the volume of students requiring school lunch in a short period of time.

- Current facilities as they are would require that most of our schools provide a separate lunch period for 9th-grade students. This would limit the 9th grade student's ability to take courses and/or limit the clubs or activities they could participate in as a result of this change.

- High schools plan to provide as many opportunities for 9th-grade students as possible. An integrated lunch with other students will allow 9th-graders to have full access to classes that may not be possible if they have a restricted lunch period.
- Specifically, if 9th graders have a different lunch from other students, students in 10th – 12th grade will be in class during the 9th grade lunch period, which would exclude 9th graders from a number of classes.
- 9th graders at Poudre High School have had open campus during lunch for the last 13 years with positive results.

With closed campus, resources typically spent to provide classes for students would have to be spent on security to ensure that students do not leave campus.

- Depending on security needed for a particular building, closed campus could result in \$90,000 to \$180,000 dollars spent for supervision to ensure students do not leave campus.
- This could mean as many as three teaching positions would be used for security rather than classroom instruction.

High school principals believe that high school is the next step to creating the 21st century learner, or independent learners, problem solvers, creative thinkers and civic learners.

- This skill set indicates that we need to empower learners to be responsible and trusted citizens by treating students as responsible and trusted citizens in the way they manage their time, schedules, and their lunch.

Safety and security are of the utmost importance in the decision to have an open campus, due to the maturity level of the students. High schools are in the planning process and have been in dialogue with parent members of their site teams regarding the open campus question. They have been working to create the best possible circumstances for all students and specifically 9th-grade students. Some of the efforts the high schools intend to implement or continue include:

- An advisory or similar program for students,
- Training for staff members on developmentally appropriate practices in the area of social emotional needs for 9th-grade students,
- Redesigning or having an audit of traffic flow and patterns to better facilitate the anticipated traffic flow on and near campus,
- Increasing the number of lunch kiosks and other strategies to make the school lunch more inviting,
- Ensuring that all 9th- and 10th-grade students will be assigned full schedules,
- Addressing the social, emotional, and developmental needs of students, such as linking older peers with 9th- and 10th-grade students for orientation and support, and having Student Ambassadors available to work with students at junior highs to prepare them for transition.

In summary, keeping all 9th grade students on campus will create some unintended consequences to students and the schools they attend. Closed campus would:

- Likely require a separate lunch, which will restrict a number of classes for all students, primarily 9th-grade students.
- Restrict the number of classes students will be able to take since funds typically spent on teachers will need to be spent to monitor the campus.
- Establish a culture of dual expectations for students based on grade level. This dual culture will adversely affect other aspects of the school, including academic achievement and student conduct.

Therefore the high school principals would like to ask district officials to adjust the current open campus policy to be inclusive of all high school students.