



By Carolyn Lee

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Because of a change in the elementary school lunch schedule, students in grades 7-12 now attend a 20-minute “advisory period” each day since school began this fall at Chase County Schools.

Elementary Principal Pat Lane had asked for the elementary lunch period to be moved back 20 minutes, leaving 20 minutes free on the secondary side.

Rather than institute a short study hall, Secondary Principal Mike Sorensen polled teachers on what was needed, and the grade 7-12 advisory period came up, according to Counselor Trent Herbert.

Between nine and 12 students in different grade levels gather in a teacher’s room each morning for the 9:43 to 10:02 a.m. advisory period.

They discuss study skills, setting goals, bullying and more. Herbert said next week they will talk about safe school programs, and in the spring they will discuss registering for high school and college classes.

The period is also used for club meetings, such as FFA and FBLA, on a weekly or monthly basis.

Art Teacher Chelsea Zuege said her pupils enjoy interacting with different ages.

“I see the younger kids enjoying being with the older kids. The older ones have the experience and the younger ones benefit from that,” she said.

Bullying, study habits, “When you talk about issues like that you get close,” she added.

Zuege said every Monday her students discuss accomplishments they have seen the past week, and “celebrate those times and reward those kids.”

In addition, once a week her students check their grades on Infinite Campus. As the high school students have the laptop computers, they share them with the younger students so they can log on to Infinite Campus.

“It’s a way of me keeping tabs on their grades,” she observed.

Herbert also noted, “We can keep an extra set of eyes on how they’re doing grade-wise.”

Senior Spencer Hartman said he was initially opposed to the advisory period, but now sees its potential.

“It hasn’t made the leaps and bounds I expected,” he said, adding that, “In its prime it will build up to mentoring. It was rough getting started.”

Hartman said he thinks the program needs to be one-on-one between students “to build a long-term relationship with the younger kids. It’s a longer-term project” than he initially thought.

Hartman pointed out that since he’s a senior, he won’t be able to build those relationships over a longer time period, but hopes that two years after students have experienced it, they will begin to bond with and mentor other students.

The initial idea was to have the groups maintain their composition each year.

Herbert said the administration will assess the situation at semester to see if the group

dynamics need to be changed or if the students need to experience different teachers. “I’ve enjoyed my group,” Zuege said. “I’m not the teacher giving them assignments to do.” Rather, she’s a guide helping students build relationships.