



September 6, 2022

Dear Families of Banks High School,

We are very excited to have started another school year at Banks High School. We had a great start to the school year with our first few days of school. I am starting my 20th year working in the Banks School District, and 6th year as high school principal. I feel honored to work in such a great community with amazing students, staff, and families over the years. There is an excitement in the air that we haven't felt for a few of years. We have been able to start out the year with a sense of normalcy and positivity. We hope that this year is a great year for all of our students and families.

We will keep you updated throughout the school year with newsletters, the high school website, mailings, mass emails, and you can also follow Banks High School on social media for updates.

[What is new at Banks High School this year?](#)

New Staff

Please help us welcome our new teachers to the high school - Cathy Davis (Special Education), Alison Evans (Music), Madalyn Hatcher (English and Social Studies), Kyle King (English), Ericka Lepschat (CTE - Agriculture), and Lindsey Streifel (Counseling). We also have three new staff members assisting in our Special Education program - Sharon Cherry, Nicole Graham, and Brandi Sandage. A warm welcome to all of our new BHS team members.

New Classes

We have been able to add several new classes and bring back some classes that have not been offered for the past year or two. We have added two new AP classes called AP Human Geography, and AP Government. Students who pass the final exams in these courses can earn college credit through College Board. We also added Drama, Horticulture, Veterinary Science, Companion Animal Science, Computer Science, and the return of our music classes - Band, Choir, and Percussion. Some of these classes were added after forecasting, and there is still time for your student to take these classes this year.

Advisory Period

This year all Banks High School students will be enrolled into a grade-level advisory class. This advisory class will meet one day a week on Thursdays for a half hour period. The staff is divided among the different grade levels to be able to have small groups in each advisory class. We will use advisory period to accomplish required tasks throughout the school year specific to each grade level. For example, Freshmen will complete a 4-year plan and profile, Sophomores will create a resume and have a mock interview with community members and volunteers, Seniors will meet about scholarships, graduation details, etc. We will use advisory period to complete tasks like forecasting for next year's classes for Freshmen through Juniors in the spring. We also plan to use the advisory period for school-wide assemblies rather than taking time out of the last periods of the day.

In addition to these tasks that need to be completed, Banks School District has purchased a curriculum for students called CharacterStrong. These student activities and discussions will help students improve engagement, sense of belonging, and overall well-being. Each grade-level has slightly different lessons, but the overall goal is to attend to the students' health and well being. We have all noticed an increase in the number of students struggling with

anxiety, stress and mental health. Especially after the very challenging past few years. For more information, parents and students can review curriculum, sample lessons and more at www.characterstrong.com

These small group discussions will help students build skills around goal setting, building connections and community, coping with stress, supporting friends, time management, etc. There is a framework for each lesson, but the idea of the lessons is to have students take the active role in this learning.

Cell Phone Policy

Please see the attached cell phone policy for Banks High School for the 2022-2023 school year. The short version is... we want to eliminate the disruption, distractions, and issues caused by cell phone use during the school day. We noticed last year that students had a very difficult time not being on their phones during class time. We know this will likely be an unpopular new school rule, as many students are very attached to their phones. However, we believe this is very important for our students to have a break from their devices and focus on their learning during school.

School Breakfasts and Lunches

The past few years the federal government has subsidized school meals and made meals free for all students. This past summer the program ended, and school breakfasts and lunches will cost money beginning this school year. Parents can load money into the student's MealTime account online, or drop off money at the high school office. The lunch server will not be able to accept cash or give change at the cafeteria during lunch. <https://www.mymealtime.com/> is the website for parents to deposit money. If a student does not have money in their account, they can still have lunch, and their account will be charged.

Last day to change classes

At Banks High School we have a 2-week window at the beginning of every semester for students to make schedule changes. After that 2-week window, students need to stay in their enrolled courses through the end of the semester. This fall, the last day to make schedule changes is Friday, September 16th. Our school counselors have been very busy meeting with students about schedules at the start of the year. If your son/daughter has a schedule change they would like to make, this change must be completed by the 16th.

Pick-up/Drop-off

Our school parking lot can become very congested at drop-off and pick-up times. We share a parking lot with the middle school and combine that with buses trying to transport students, teenage drivers, and walker/pedestrians all alongside a busy state highway creates traffic issues. I encourage each of you that use pick-up and drop-off to make a plan to drop off before 8:10, and pick up after 3:10. You will notice that the parking lot is nearly free of traffic and congestion. Or better yet, encourage your student to walk or ride their bike. These are healthy activities for young people, and if you live near the school, it is a great way to get some exercise, especially when the weather is nice.

Yearbooks

The yearbooks from this past school year are in. We will be scheduling an evening signing party at Banks High School. Students can attend the signing party to pick up their yearbooks, or students can pick them up at lunch in the hallway the week after the signing party. We will not be handing out individual yearbooks until after the signing party has taken place.

Braves Gear

We are often asked where people can purchase Braves gear. We have several fundraisers and groups selling "Spirit Wear" throughout the year. Our Grad-Night committee is selling shirts now. Orders are due by September 20th

<https://www.companycasuals.com/banksgradnight/start.jsp>

The Banks High School FAD club is working on setting up a physical and portable store that can be brought out to community events to sell student produced items throughout the year.



Accreditation

This school year is an accreditation review year for Banks High School. This process happens every 4-5 years. An important part of this process will be gathering feedback from students, staff, parents, and community members. We will share surveys in the coming months and appreciate your cooperation in helping provide important feedback for our school as part of our continuous improvement. There will be a team from the accreditation review company that reviews our survey data and documentation this spring and will provide recommendations for future improvements. Your feedback is an important step in our accreditation process and I thank you in advance for your time taking the surveys.

Extracurricular Activities and Clubs

Banks High School has a strong tradition of success and participation in our sports programs and school clubs. We encourage all of our students to participate in at least one activity during the school year outside of being a student from 8-3. We hope that they can find a club or activity that interests them. Through these activities the students have opportunities to work together in a team around supportive peers and adults. If we don't have a club or activity that interests them, please encourage them to come talk to Mr. Buchanan and I about starting a new club based on their interests. There are likely many other students with similar interests that would love to get involved in something new. Below is a list of possible opportunities to get involved:

School Sports - Football, Volleyball, Soccer, Cross-Country, Basketball, Wrestling, Track, Baseball, Softball, and Golf.

School Clubs - Anime, Drama, Equestrian, Fabrication and Design, FFA, Garden Club, GSA, Leadership, Native Club, National Honor Society, Robotics, and Yearbook.

Thank you again for the opportunity to work with you and your students. I look forward to an outstanding school year. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Go Braves!

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Cell Phone Policy 2022-23 School Year

Banks High School and Banks School District recognize that cell phones are a very popular and normal part of a teenager's social life and means of communication. With this understanding, we still need to maintain the integrity of the learning environment in our schools and specifically our classrooms. Schools all over the country are struggling with issues of texting, social media, and access to websites, games, and video streaming services which has become a major distraction in the learning environment and classroom. Cell phones have also become a vehicle for harassment and academic cheating. With our awareness of the inappropriate use of cell phones, we also recognize the positive side of their intended uses as well.

We want our students of Banks High School to be able to learn responsible habits that they can carry into college, the workforce, and next steps after high school.

What follows is our cell phone use policy at Banks High School for the 2022-2023 school year.

1. Cell phones may be used in the hallways before/after school, during passing times between classes, and during lunch.
2. Students are not to use them in the halls when on a bathroom break or using a hall pass.
3. Students should turn their phones off while in their academic classes.

If these very simple rules are broken the following consequences will be followed:

1. A first offense will result in the student being politely reminded of the rule and asked to put the phone away.
2. A second offense will result in the phone being taken from the student and the teacher will return it at the end of the class period.
3. A third offense will result in the phone being taken from the student, given to the assistant principal or principal to be returned to the student at the end of the school day. Students will be assigned a lunch detention.
4. A fourth or repeated offenses will result in the phone being given to the assistant principal or principal. The administrator will call home and arrange a time for the parent/guardian to retrieve the phone and discuss the use of the student's cell phone in the school environment. Students will be assigned an after school detention.

It is not the school's intention to have cell phone issues result in conflict, but to create a safe and healthy learning environment that is free from additional distractions and disruptions for students. We want students to be able to focus on their academic process during academic class time.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in this matter.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- What if a parent needs to get ahold of their student during the school day and it is an emergency?
 - o Parents can always call the office and we will send a note for the student to come to the office or that they need to call their parents ASAP.
 - o If there is an emergency, a student can talk with their teacher privately about the situation, and step out into the hallway. This should not be a regular occurrence.

- What about Study Labs? Can students use phones during any classes like study lab?
 - o If there is a non-academic class such as study lab, early release, etc. It will be up to the student to manage their cell phone use. We want students to learn responsibility and rewards of making good decisions. If a student uses their time in study lab to be on their phone rather than work on school work, make up missing assignments,

- What if students need their phones for certain activities in the classroom?
 - o Almost every classroom in BHS has a chromebook cart, and students can use these laptops during class for their school work, class activities, etc.

Bell Schedule - 2022-23 School Year

Student Daily Schedule

Per.		Mon Tues Fri	Weds	Thurs
A	B			
1	5	8:25 - 9:53	9:10 - 10:25	8:25-9:45
			<u>ADVISORY</u>	9:50-10:20
2	6	9:58 - 11:26	10:30 - 11:45	10:25-11:45
<u>LUNCH</u>		11:26 - 12:01	11:45 - 12:20	11:45-12:15
3	7	12:01 - 1:29	12:20 - 1:35	12:20-1:40
4	8	1:33 - 3:01	1:40 - 3:01	1:45-3:01