

LOCKED OUT

It's that time of year again, the bathrooms are locked during JAG. All bathrooms around our school, besides the Art Wing and next to the counseling office, are locked in an attempt to curtail vaping. This consequence was decided upon by the administrative team.

"What we started to see were some issues regarding vaping going on in our restrooms," Assistant Principal Bryan Brutto said.

While vaping in the school bathrooms is a problem, there has to be another way. The administrative team's views seem completely out-of-touch with how students feel about this subject.

"The last thing we want are students that are just going to the restrooms just to use the restrooms, and unfortunately they are going in and being made to feel uncomfortable because students are doing something illegal or against school rules," Brutto said.

As a student who has never vaped, I dislike students vaping in the bathrooms but I don't feel uncomfortable. I just want to do my business and go. All I want to do is to be able to go to the bathroom that is closest to where I sit during JAG.

Everyone is being punished for something that only a few people do. The new curtailment strategy does not solve the vaping problem, it just slows everything down. My biggest issue with all of this is that sometimes even after JAG the bathrooms are still locked.

Everyone has to use the bathroom at some point. It is unproductive to walk across the entire school to use an unlocked bathroom, when there is locked one right outside of almost every classroom.

Some teachers get irritated because their students are gone for five minutes or more and miss important instruction, activities or learning.

“My teachers get mad when I ask to use the bathroom because they know how long it takes,” sophomore Kailey Gronek said.

I don't think that any student should have to go out on a field trip to find the closest unlocked bathroom each day.

“Some of my teachers won't even let me go to the bathroom during class anymore,” sophomore Lizzie Wombolt said.

Teachers have implemented stricter policies for using the restroom during class, including English teacher Kara Abernathy. In order to use the restroom, students have to turn in one of the two Extra Credit slips received at the beginning of the year. The slips were originally created as an incentive to get students to remain in class. Now they are losing a potential grade bump because they do not have the time to go to the bathroom during passing period. If they do try to use the restroom during the five-minute passing period, they are often tardy.

Making a tough situation tougher, the administration stations our two male School Resource Officers and teachers outside bathroom doors during JAG. It is uncomfortable for girls to walk in and out of the bathroom with a male police officer looking them up and down. This is yet another example of how the administration seems out of touch with how kids think.

“We wanted to be able to monitor restrooms a little more closely,” Brutto said. “While we fully believe that students are entitled to privacy we also think that proximity is something that deters the use of vapes in the restroom.”

People go to the bathroom with their friends because they like to talk or just be with someone else. Teacher monitors automatically jump to the conclusion that they go together because they are vaping. Last week after two friends were in stalls next to each

other, a teacher waited until they were washing their hands, went in both stalls and looked around sniffing loudly. The issue of vaping is serious but our school is not addressing this issue in a smart or effective manner that respects student's privacy.

There are new Smart devices on the market that detect vaping. Once the smell is detected the devices send an instant alert to Smart devices like phones or computers. Apps like these would allow adults to deal with vapers in an exact time and place after receiving a text.

The school's new solution to address vaping in bathrooms must end. It is ineffective and creates more problems between students and their teachers. If the administration really wants to put an end to vaping in the stalls, they should create harsher punishments for people who are caught vaping. Kids just want to go to the bathroom, closing restrooms does not entice them to turn in vapers; it only makes them mad at administrators for making a rule that hurts people who haven't done anything.