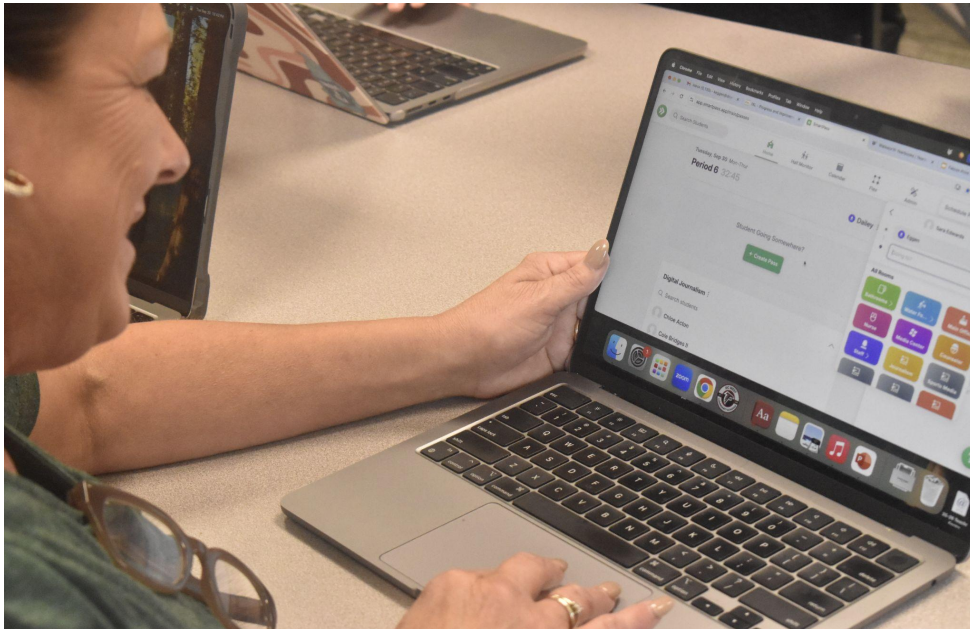


Falcon Print



Click, Swipe, Go - Introducing the SmartPass

Written By: Sara Edwards & Brienna Sullivan

SmartPass is a digital hall pass used to limit students' bathroom uses and to make sure we keep students' classroom attendance more than 90%. SmartPass has passes for you to go to other teachers' classrooms, the office, counselor, water fountain, the nurse and the bathroom. You only get three passes a day, so use them carefully. For the bathroom pass you have a time limit of four minutes and you choose if you're going to the West or East bathroom and it sends a notification to your teacher.

SmartPass keeps track of how much overtime you spend wherever you go. If you spend too much time over the limit a teacher will come looking for you. Other schools in the Metro area are interested in this new Smartpass because of how quick and easy it is to keep track of students. KETV7 came and shadowed Douglas County West High School and did a broadcast showing how it works. They interviewed our Principal and our Vice Principal over it, and then aired it. This broadcast aired September 11th, 2025. There is a link online to the broadcast if you would like to watch it.

Click, Swipe, Go - Continued..

How our administration feels about SmartPass:

We decided to ask some members of our administration how they felt about SmartPass. Chelsea Dembinski, who is the Middle School secretary, says, "I don't have a lot of knowledge on SmartPass but I hope the Middle School can have it next year." Our High School Principal, Jim Knott says, "It's a nice upgrade, we are trying to use technology to make sure students miss as little class time as possible. We're not the first school district to use electronic passes, in fact most do now." The High School counselor, Nikki Billedeaux says, "I think it's a great process and it keeps everyone in class or where they need to be, so there isn't a lot of roaming in the hallways." Jenny Fink, the High School secretary says, "I love it because being a secretary I write a billion passes a day and now I don't, it puts accountability back on the students and the teachers to know where they are going." The last administrator we asked was Shawna Younghans, Assistant Principal. She said, "I feel like SmartPass is the solution the staff needed to provide data and gives the students autonomy on what they want for keystone."

How our teachers feel about SmartPass

Lindsey Boardman, high school science teacher, says, "I appreciate the thought that it has brought accountability to our students, it was a process that was easy to learn and that it makes it even easier to implement into your day to day routine." High school history teacher, Matt Caldwell, says, "I think it's good because it limits students from leaving the classroom every period, and makes them think about if they really need to go or not." Ben Knobbe, a business and technology teacher says, "I think it's fine, I don't really have a huge opinion on it. It doesn't really affect what's going on in my class, it's pretty similar to how it was last year just now it's on the iPad. The one issue that I have with it is if a student needs to see me and I don't see the request then they can't come till I approve it, so that can be frustrating." High school English teacher, Jared Wiemer says, "SmartPass is a more convenient way of doing things I used to do, I always kept a sign out sheet in my classroom, so SmartPass takes care of all that for me, I think it's a good thing." Lisa Benson, high school French teacher says, "I'm not a big fan of SmartPass because a lot of the class time is cut in with "can I go" or there's problems with SmartPass, there's also a lot of discussion about it in each class."

Senior Spotlight

Written By: Ryder Songer



Trey Scheiber

Trey has been apart of the Falcon community since his Freshman year of highschool. Trey has been on the boys Varsity Basketball team for three years and has helped them reach state back to back years. He has also been an active member member in the community and in clubs around the school. Trey's advice is to "be friends with everyone and make new relationships."

Zane Wohlers

Zane has also been apart of the Falcon community for four years starting his Freshman year. Zane as also been a part of the varsity boys basketball success over the last couple of years. Zane has also been apart of boys football team the last couple of years. Zane's advice was, "Don't care what other people think and be your own person."

Bailey Anderson

Bailey has been apart of the Falcon community for her whole life. She has been a part of the DC West softball team all four years of highschool. Bailey has also been a active member in the community and has helped the softball team reach state and districts multiple times. Bailey said "make sure to talk to everyone, It is a small school and you will become friends with everyone in it."

Joy Kelley

Joy Kelley has been a student at DC West for about a year now. She has yet to participate in any sports or clubs but she is an active member is the community. Joy said she is focused on getting grades and having a good GPA before she graduates. Joy also said "Work hard and have fun because it goes by really fast."

Falcon Fuel



Falcon Volleyball Brings Awareness to Suicide

Written By: Ryder Songer

The DC West volleyball team has made it a tradition to host a 988 game or a Suicide Awareness game. The impact this game has had has gone farther than just the community, and has been recognized by big names in sports.

Last week our Falcons faced Yutan in their fourth annual 988 Suicide Awareness game. The Falcons ended up beating the Chieftains in five sets to cap off a great night of volleyball. The Lady Falcons won the fifth set with a score of 15-11. This has been an ongoing tradition for DC West over the past four years. Coach Wald stated "I love playing this game every year, because it helps let people know that they are not alone and that EVERYONE matters." The impact this game has on not only the community but also on the students and players is extraordinary. Some statistics show that around 20.4% of high school students have reported seriously considering attempting suicide. Males are more common to attempt suicide with a 12.6%

compared to Females 6.4%. This game has not only saved people but has given light to just how important mental health actually is. I interviewed Coach Wald to ask him some questions about the Suicide Awareness game and what makes it so special. Coach Wald said "What makes the game so special is how it evolves each year. Each year it gets bigger and bigger and I feel like it helps more and more people every time." Ainsley Buchholtz who is a 2023 graduate from DC West and has been a big part of the 988 game since it started. I asked her how the game has evolved each year and what makes it so special. Ainsley stated "The crowd grows larger and larger each year. The turnout of people, the sales of T-shirts, the help from sponsors, all of it makes this game so special."

Ainsley also said "We have gotten involvement from big names in Nebraska such as Jordan Larson, Harper Murray, Heinrich Haarberg, and DC West Alumni Nora Wurtz who plays for Creighton's Volleyball team." This game has had a huge impact on the community and also on the people and families that have been affected by suicide. Every year the game grows larger and the community grows closer together. Each time the game is played more and more people show up, more people are helped, more people get involved. This game has had a huge impact on everyone and it continues to grow each year. I am excited to see our Lady Falcons play their 988 game next year and see just how huge the turnout will be. Go Falcons.

Eggen's Advice

Q: What is some advice you would give to incoming students who will be taking Journalism?

A: Understand that you can't be shy because you will have to talk to some people you won't know. Another tip is to not be afraid to share your ideas to your classmates and teachers.

Baker's Advice

Q: What would you say is the most important thing to know to succeed in your English Class?

A: When asked he said one of the most important things to do in his class would be to be open to working and collaborating with peers. His next statement was to ask questions when needed so students will be aware of what needs to be done and what they're learning. But most importantly was to get all your work done that was assigned to you in his class.

Boardman's Advice

Q: What advice would you have for the incoming juniors that are going to be taking environmental science.

a: Get curious about the world around you - ask "How" and "Why". Environmental science isn't just about collecting data—it's also about building respect for the systems you're studying. Learn to connect cause and effect, analyzing problems, weighing evidence, and evaluating different perspectives. I'd encourage students to practice mindfulness when outdoors. Taking time to be still balances the rigor of science with personal connection. Some of the best scientists developed their ideas by sitting quietly in nature and watching closely. Slow down, notice patterns, listen to sounds, and pay attention to small details. This helps you connect emotionally with the environment, not just intellectually. This connection deepens your motivation to study and protect it.

Teacher's Corner

Written By: Reese Troshynski and Harper Troshynski

For this week's teacher corner we interviewed Mrs. Benson. She has been a teacher for three years at DC West. When asked why she wanted to become a teacher, Mrs. Benson responded, "No one really inspired me to become a teacher. From the time I was a teenager, I taught ballet to middle school students and it was then I realized I liked working with students. In college, I had to student-teach elementary, middle school, and high school students. It was then I realized that I prefer working with the high school students as they made me laugh the most."

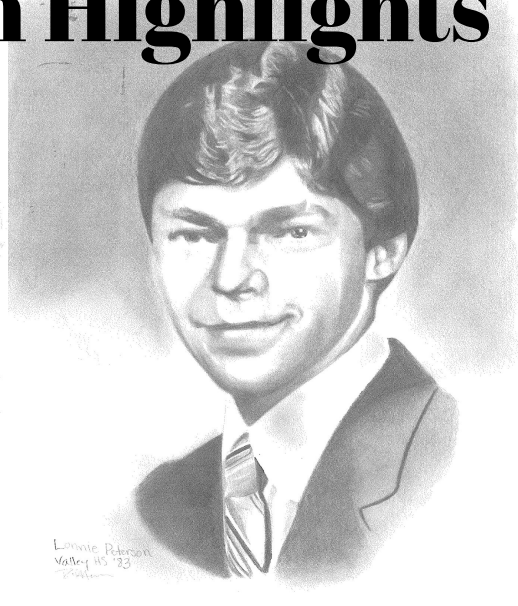
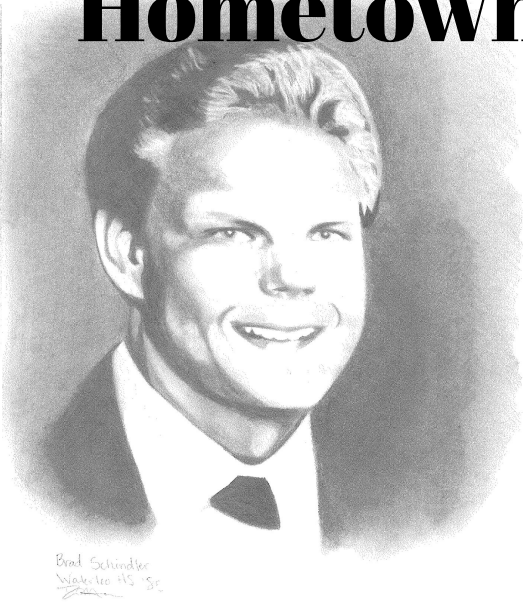
Mrs. Benson has lived a very interesting life outside of being a teacher mainly including travel. She even lived in Germany for seven years. She has traveled to Germany, The Netherlands, Scotland, England, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Poland, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Greece, Morocco, Mexico, Jamaica, Canada, and within the US. as she enjoys teaching.



With all her experiences she chooses to share them with students by being in charge of the world language club.

When asked what her favorite class to teach was she said "My favorite class to teach is French IV. By the time I have you as a student in French IV, that means I've had you for years. I'm extremely close to my french 4 students and we together have become a family of sorts. In addition, in french 4, much of the grammar has been taught by now and we can concentrate on more fun things to do, like reading, watching french movies, and playing games." Mrs. Benson does a great job sharing her love of the language with her students, she makes them enjoy learning it just as much as she enjoys teaching it.

Hometown Highlights



New Hall of Fame Inductees

In a special ceremony during the DC West homecoming game on September 19, 2025, three stupendous people : Brand Schindler, Lonnie Peterson, and Randy Ennis were honored with induction into the DC West Hall of Fame. All three inductees were recognized for their contributions to the school's football program.



The first was Lonnie Peterson, He is father to three and he has nine grandkids. He was a great kid and player, he got seven total letters, four in football and three in basketball. His coaches, his teammates, and peers were also able to count on him every time to make the right play at the right time.

The second was Randy Ennis. He lettered in both basketball and football for four years as well as being named senior MVP by his coaches. Teammates said they always felt like they would win when Randy was there. He was an all around player with positions both running back and linebacker leading the Terriers to a #4 state ranking fall of 1971. After high school he went on to Wayne state college and played football for one season before coming back to Valley to work in construction and retiring 42 years later. He is now married with 3 kids Rob, Rick, and Elizabeth and has 7 grandchildren.

Lastly, Brad Schindler graduating in 1985 had a surprising 10 athletic letters from his football, wrestling and track seasons. He always supported the team and those around him said he made the team better. In one of his senior year football games he made 25 tackles! While on the mat during his junior and senior years of wrestling he went all the way to the top qualifying for state and winning conference both years. He ended that season with an outstanding record of 30-2. He was always looking up and writing down goals to hang in his locker, his coach said you could never tell if he won or lost a match because of how positive he constantly was. All together, we are proud to introduce our three new Hall of Fame inductees. They deserve it!

What's coming up..

Come support the Falcon football team for Pack The Stands on October 10th. If you come to support the team in the student section, you have the chance to earn an extra pass on Smart Pass or a concession stand gift card.

What's coming up..

On Friday October 10th, there is also a falcons pride booster chill feed at the new DC West Athletic complex. The booster club is a group of parents who donate their time, money and effort to better our school's clubs, sports and activities. So make sure to go buy some chilli!

What's coming up..

Just a reminder that the end of 1st quarter is coming up! Make sure you are checking in with your teachers and keeping your grades up. Parent teacher conferences are on October 8th from 3:45PM - 7:45PM and October 9th from 12:45PM - 7:45PM. With the end of the quarter, we have fall break which begins on the 9th and goes through the 13th.