

Growing Student Accountability With SmartPass

A SmartPass Success Story

Two words that might send shivers down a teacher's spine: *Middle School*.

» THE CHALLENGE...

Any middle school teacher will tell you that this age group is unique. Students in these buildings are simultaneously so grown up and yet so very... not... grown up. As they become more social and the content becomes more rigorous, some students find creative ways to maximize their social time outside the classroom.

That's a polite way of saying kids at this age are a handful. Roy Woodring, Eighth Grade American History teacher at Northwestern Middle School in West Salem, Ohio, notes that this time outside of the classroom is less than ideal, for them and for teachers.

Woodring and the other teachers at Northwestern Middle noticed a disturbing pattern: students were using paper hallway passes to "game the system" and meander about the campus. The teachers found that students would ask for permission to visit another teacher or space on campus but would not arrive at that destination; rather, they would be in the hallways or end up in another location without any way for the permitting teacher to monitor their student's progress and whereabouts.

Similarly, students would visit restrooms for extended periods of time in multiple class periods throughout the day. During intervention and study hall times, teachers noted a "mass exodus" of students using that time to visit lockers, restrooms, and other locations throughout the school. All of these visits added up to a significant loss of instructional time.

The primary concern, of course, was student care and safety. School staff is responsible for the safety and security of students – something that can't happen without close supervision.



AT A GLANCE

THE SCHOOL

- Northwestern Middle School
- West Salem, OH
- SmartPass user since 2022-23

SMARTPASS USES

- Study hall management
- Attendance management
- Behavior incident mitigation



ROY WOODRING

**Classroom Teacher,
Northwestern Middle School**

» MORE SMART MOVES

Teacher Buy-In

Northwestern MS teachers started seeing measurable benefits within just a few weeks.

"We found little hidden gems in the management of our school! One being that we have students who are inclined to get into confrontations with one another, but can prevent those with SmartPass."

Before & After

Students would request a pass to one location on campus, but would travel to a different location. Study hall periods lacked organization and student accountability for the instructional time.

"We had no real way of figuring out where or why [students] were going, so it incredibly enhanced our ability to know where they were supposed to be. Just to know where students are or where they're headed rather than 'I'm going to so-and-so's class' when in fact they were going to go to the library instead."

Teachers are empowered with knowledge of where students are going, resulting in fewer hallway wanderers, behavior incidents, and better use of instructional time.

» THE SOLUTION...

Northwestern Middle adopted SmartPass as its digital hallway pass solution at the start of the 2022-2023 school year. Within just a few weeks of use, a new pattern emerged: the hallways were clearing. Woodring and his colleagues noted fewer hallway wanderers during class times. As more and more staff used SmartPass with fidelity, they found that they were more and more able to regain control of the hallway traffic. Students know that they are accountable for their time out of class and are clearing the hallways quickly. Study hall periods are no longer a revolving door and students are using that time effectively. In fact, Woodring noted that a few students complained to him about SmartPass cramping their style—meaning that for teachers, SmartPass is doing its job.

One of Woodring's favorite features of SmartPass is Kiosk mode. Teachers at Northwestern keep a small laptop or tablet by their classroom doors with SmartPass open in Kiosk mode, enabling students to request to travel to another location on campus and allowing teachers to approve requests as appropriate without interrupting their instructional time. SmartPass reminds teachers which students are out of the room before they approve these requests, so teachers always know the number of kids out of the room at a given time.

Woodring says that overall, he and his colleagues feel more aware: aware of where their students are traveling on campus and aware of how long students are out and about. SmartPass teachers are empowered to control the flow of students in and out of their classrooms.

» AND SO MUCH MORE...

It's not just teachers feeling empowered. Woodring notes that administrative staff at Northwestern appreciate the efficiency of the SmartPass system for issuing passes to students to and from school offices and for early pick-ups. SmartPass' Encounter Prevention feature allows school administrators, staff, and teachers to decrease the likelihood of potential conflict and behavior incidents, with data from SmartPass about where behavior incidents and student conflicts frequently occur.

School staff at Northwestern Middle School knew that the old way of managing student movement throughout the day wasn't working; disorganized study hall periods and wandering students were diminishing the value of instruction time. With SmartPass, Northwestern has streamlined student movement around campus and empowered its staff to regain control of its hallways and school processes.



To learn more about how the SmartPass Digital Hall Pass can help you improve student accountability and manage your school's processes, [click here](#) or visit www.smartpass.app/get-started.

“I can say that faithfully, all of our staff uses SmartPass the entire day. Within two weeks, our entire staff knew what they were doing and how best to use it.”

ROY WOODRING

Classroom Teacher,
Northwestern Middle School