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How Cameback High School reduced student referrals and improved their school culture

CAMELBACK HIGH SCHOOL

At a glance

70%
decrease in student discipline referrals

2,200
students spending more time in class

160
teachers using and loving digital hall passes



Challenge

Decrease student referrals and increased student accountability

Camelback High School serves more than 2,200 students from across the Phoenix valley in Arizona. Students are drawn to the school because it offers almost every sport you can think of, as well as more than 60 clubs and the most dual enrollment courses of any high school in the district. They stay, though, because of the school's supportive and affirming culture, and its longstanding reputation for providing a learning environment where every student can make it.

A Title 1 urban school, Camelback has a 10-person safety team led by a dedicated Assistant Principal of Student Support, as well as intervention specialists and social workers. Despite their strong team, the school was experiencing a high number of student referrals, an average of 10 per school day. Students were frequently leaving class and lacking personal accountability to stay and learn. Something had to change.

Solution

Gaining buy-in for a digital hall pass is easy, and it reduces referrals by a whopping 70%

Head principal, James Arndt, was hearing good things about a digital hall pass from some friends at another school, so he took his team to check it out. Once they saw it in action, James says he and his team "were amazed."

James says, *"I think a lot of us have asked why there isn't a better way to do this. It seems like it should exist. So when we visited our friends, and we saw the Securly Pass dashboard showing every student with a hall pass and where they were going, we were like, 'Oh my God! This is the Holy Grail!' The team was immediately hooked."*

James and his team didn't waste time moving forward. They quickly ruled out other options, including the digital hall pass included with their SIS. James explains, *"We just didn't have a lot of faith in that option because, in our experience, that program hasn't worked super well. But when we saw a digital hall pass from Securly, we felt confident that a company that was started with student safety in mind would be the best at it."*

The Camelback team found Securly Pass in the spring and implemented it over a four-month period leading up to the new school year in August. They committed to training because as James explains, they weren't just going to adopt it, they were going to be the best at it.

From there, James says the launch was "seamless," and getting buy-in was easy. *"The Pass team worked very quickly with us to get things off the ground,"* he says. *"When we showed our staff the dashboard, they were like 'This is great!' They loved how transparent and safe it is."* He adds, *"Teachers want this. It's not a hard sell. They want to feel safe. They want kids to be safe."*

Speaking of data, James beams with pride when he shares the improvements he's seen. Comparing semesters from before Securly Pass to after, student referrals went from 858 to 290, a 70% decrease. *"Just think about the mental health of your staff not having to process so much student discipline,"* he adds.

He also emphasizes the increased transparency and accountability since implementing Securly Pass. In his words, *"It's not like our kids just suddenly saw the light. It's that we have removed the opportunity, because we've restricted the ability to just leave class. There's a higher accountability around staying in class and learning now, and that's a positive feedback loop. The more kids are in class, the more they're interested in class. And the more they're interested in class, the more likely they are to learn. The more likely they are to learn, the more likely they are to stay in class."*

Outcomes

"Securly Pass is the cornerstone of a cultural shift on our campus. Our school is a totally different place. I've never used any tool in my whole career that has had such an immediate and profound impact."

James says he's blown away by the changes one tool has made in his school. He explains, *"You can see all passes in use all the time. I just love that every staff member can log on and see the whole dashboard. It creates a sense of collective accountability and also community."*

James says it's also made his job much less stressful, *"In three clicks, I can sign in and see how many kids are out of class and why. It creates a sense of calm and awareness around your campus when you can't be there. And that's really powerful."* He admits, though, that while he and his teachers love Securly Pass, not all students do. *"The purpose is to limit distractions and make sure that you're in the room focusing and collaborating. Securly Pass helps us enforce that expectation. So, yeah, some students hate it."*

But he's quick to add that student complaints also provide an opportunity to have constructive conversations. He shares the example of his vice president of student government requesting that he raise the limit on hall passes in use at any time. James was able to pull up reports of hall pass usage in Securly Pass. After reviewing the data together, he agreed that the pass limit could be raised. *"You can have a much better dialogue, not just with teachers but with students. Because of Securly Pass, we have the data available. So, sure, some teenagers hate it, but for many others, it's become a very nice and mature conversation."*

By partnering with Securly, Camelback HS is:

- **Decreasing student referrals and their negative impact on teachers**
- **Creating transparency around hall pass usage and expectations**
- **Keeping more students in class**
- **Using data to have constructive conversations**
- **Building a culture of accountability**

James says that the adoption of Securly Pass was a success, with everyone from the 40-year veteran teacher to the first-year rookie happily using the system. Now that they're past the implementation, he's looking forward to digging into the data and reporting functionality even more. He's also excited to see Securly Pass be implemented in more local schools. He shares, *"Our entire district is adopting it now. They didn't even wait till the end of the year. They're adopting it one semester later, because they saw the success it had on a couple of campuses."*

Maximize in-class time and regain control of your hallways.

Securly Pass simplifies hall pass requests and approvals, and gives school administrators and teachers visibility into and control of pass usage to improve student accountability and strengthen school safety.

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