

PURPOSE: To give students flexibility with their days off of study hours

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BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL FOR MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE:

SECTION ONE (REASONING):

The current system of students receiving days off from study hours fails to accommodate changes in students' schedules. When students pick their days off from study hours at the beginning of a quarter, they have no clue what could change in the weeks after that decision. It may turn out that a student asks to have Thursdays off from study hours, but they often have difficult tests on Fridays that require them to study Thursday evenings. However, they may frequently have no assignments or homework to do on Tuesday but are still restricted to campus and participating in study hours because their day off from study hours is locked in on Thursday. This current system does not allow students to take full advantage of the benefits they earned from the high grades and good record they worked toward.

For these reasons, a new system should be implemented. This new system would change the study hours off from a specific day of the week to a number of days a week according to a student's respective privilege plan, with no specific day. For example, a student on Extended Plan who is allowed one day a week with study hours off would get to use their day off from study hours on any day of the week, every week. It's important to note here that this system would not require students to pick a new day or set of days each week to have off. Rather, they would have a card that indicates how many days off from study hours they have, and a Hall Director or RA would sign it to indicate they have used a day.

This new sign-out card would be on the back of students' typical privilege plan cards for efficiency and to ensure an easy transition for the Resident Life staff. The front side of the typical privilege plan card still contains its normal valuable information but would no longer contain the days at the bottom that need to be hole punched. The new card only requires signatures and weeks because any other information is unnecessary. If a student uses a day off from study hours to leave campus, they still have to sign out on their Yellow Card. If a student uses a day off from study hours for Wellness, they still have to sign out on their Orange Card. Both of these contain the time when students signed out and signed in, so that information is not required on the new card. Students must sign out on this new card whenever they plan on not using study hours, and it must be signed out on between 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM if the student is not studying. It's important to note that this new system and card do not allow students to "stack" days off from study hours. If a student goes a week without using a day off from study hours, that week is crossed out on their new card. The cards have a specific row dedicated to noting the week to make sure RAs and Hall Directors can cross out weeks if a student did not use their day or days off from study hours.

This new system also ensures that students do not lose their privilege of having days off from study hours because of events beyond their control. If a school event, extracurricular

competition, or class field trip makes the student indisposed the same day they chose to have study hours off, they have effectively lost the privilege they worked hard to earn. A prime example is this year's Goen move-in. Classes were cancelled Friday so Goen (then Jones) residents could move in to Goen and Frazer residents could help. However, students with Thursdays off from study hours had no way to move their now-pointless day off from study hours to a different day for that week. Under this system, this and other similar events would not cause this issue.

A concern encountered in the process of drafting this bill was that this new system is unnecessary, as students are awarded General Purpose sign-outs they can use during study hours. So, it should not matter if a student does not have study hours off from a day they have nothing going on because they can use their General Purpose sign-out. This is not an adequate solution, however, because students are not solely using days off of study hours to leave campus. A General Purpose sign-out is used when a student leaves campus, but some students want to remain on campus while doing activities other than studying, such as playing a board game. Additionally, General Purpose sign-outs are a privilege earned by students, as evidenced by the fact the number of General Purpose sign-outs a student receives increases with increasing privilege plans. A student should not have to use a privilege they earned as a solution to a flaw in the system.

Another concern encountered is that this new system gives students too much freedom or leeway than should be given to high school students away from their parents. To address this concern, let it be clear that this bill is not changing any of the privileges given to MSMS students; rather, it installs a system that allows them to better exercise these privileges being offered to them. The goal is not to add leeway or privileges; the bill just allows the days off from study hours already being granted to students to be used up over the week rather than on fixed days.

Overall, this new system is a must. Its changes allow students to better use the privileges already granted to them. It protects students from losing the privilege of not having study hours because of unforeseen circumstances. It has an implementation plan ready to be employed.

SECTION TWO (SPECIFIC CHANGE):

On page 119 of the Student Handbook (PDF page 125), under the section "PRIVILEGE PLANS", the following would be changed to:

1. Students will be assigned a privilege plan each nine weeks.
2. Academic measure is one criterion upon which the privilege plan system is based. The student's last nine weeks' percentage average from 100 to 0 is used for privilege plans.
3. It is possible to end a nine-week grading period with one or more incomplete grades, thus making it impossible to determine the proper privilege plan. If at any time during the nine-week period a finalized grade is available, it will be used to reevaluate the student's placement in the proper privilege plan.

[illegible]

Response One (Mr. Edward Allen, Frazer Hall Director):

“I would love to implement this and give it a trial run. I think if it works it would be a great change for all the students. I know things change for you guys a lot. To have the flexibility to change with these changes would be a net positive.”

Response Two (Mr. Riccardo Byrd, Frazer Assistant Hall Director):

“It does seem like the day is wasted if the student has something going on the next day that would warrant them to utilize a different day. I support this bill.”

Response Three (Mr. Sam Yarbourough, Frazer Assistant Hall Director):

“I don’t see any problem with this as long as there is a good way of keeping track of when students have used their sign-outs. Overall, I’d say this is not a bad idea.”

Response Four (Ms. Gabrielle Berry, Goen Assistant Hall Director):

“I like it. I don’t see any issue with it, and I would like to implement it for a trial run.”

Response Five (Ms. Nila Johnson, Goen Assistant Hall Director):

“It’s a good system. Once it gets through a trial run and the kinks are worked out, it would be a great change.”

Response Six (Dr. Lib Morgan, MSMS Teacher and Alumna):

“When I was a student here, we had a way to change our days off from study hours if some circumstances prevented us from effectively using the day we had chosen to have off. For example, if someone chose Thursday as their night to not have study hours, but there was an early release that week, then the student could choose a different night to use the privilege of not having study hours.”

Response Seven (Joey Knight, Senior on O-Plan):

“As someone who was on O-Plan, I definitely support this change. Many unforeseen events happen a lot during a week, so there were many occasions where I wasn’t able to utilize the freedom of O-Plan.”

Response Eight (Adair Gaines, Senior on O-Plan):

“I wish privilege plans had a little more flexibility. I’m obviously really grateful to have three days off of study hours, but my week changes a lot. Most times, I really need to leave campus, but I can’t because I don’t have study hours off that specific day. I have a lot of club or sport activities before study hours, so my only time to really leave is study hours. I would prefer having the ability to change my days to match my week.”

