

# NEWS

## Benefits of hand washing vs. hand sanitizer

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*General Assignment Writer*

With the popularity of hand sanitizer growing, some are wondering when it is best to use hand sanitizer and when best to use simple soap and water.

"You should wash your hands if there is visible soiling on your hands, after going to the restroom, and before you eat," said Mrs. Lauren Touma, the teacher of Bloomington Area Career Center Health Occupations class. "For my students, I tell them to use hand sanitizer after they remove their gloves."

A common hand sanitizer myth is that it weakens the immune system. It is however, a myth.

"If soap and water is not available, it's best to use hand sanitizer than nothing else, especially before you eat. It does not weaken your immune system, said Mrs. Touma. "People can't see germs so they think their hands are clean when they actually are not."

Washing hands and using hand sanitizer each have their own advantages and disadvantages.

The biggest advantage of hand sanitizer is convenience. The biggest disadvantage comes from overuse because it kills the good germs too.

Soap and water are not as convenient and can lead to open cracks on your hands where bacteria can get in.

"In the health field it's very important to have clean hands because it prevents hospital acquired illness. You don't want to spread germs in your daily life either," said senior Rachel Soltwedel, student in BACC Health Occupations. "It's important to have clean hands in all aspects of life."

Despite all of the disadvantages, for clean hands, soap and water is the best method.

"Hand washing is the number one medical aseptic technique to prevent infection," said Mrs. Touma.

Places where there are mass amounts of people, such as schools, are breeding grounds for germs and an easy place for them to spread.

"Students need to wash their hands often, especially before lunch to kill germs they've accumulated throughout the morning like from touching shared equipment in PE," said senior Laura Chiles who is also in BACC Health Occupations.

Even though most hand sanitizers guarantee to kill up to 99.99 percent of germs, the old method of washing hands with soap and water still seems to be the most popular.

## Teachers examine alternative semester grading methods

**PAIGE BOLEK**  
*News Writer*

As first semester comes to a close, students and teachers both are worried about finals and grades.

Teachers, though, have different worries than the students.

This year, the problem of how teachers determine students' final grade is under investigation, and most teachers believe the system should change.

The way the system is now is there are grade splits from quarter one and two and then the final grade. The percentage of the quarter grade does not matter, just the letter.

A group of ten teachers has come together and looked at the effectiveness of Bloomington High School's grading system.

"Students know how to play the system," said Mr. Tim Coughlan, "They become apathetic on finals because they have the 'right' splits."

The majority of teachers do not like how the system is and want change. Besides the grade split option of final grades, there are two other basic grading systems.

One way is 40 percent of the first quarter grade is calculated with 40 percent of the second quarter grade

and then added in with 20 percent of your final grade. This way is the most common in the state.

"This seems easier. You kind of get to start over second quarter and you get your final to help you," said freshman Akiah Newbill.

The other way to calculate a semester grade is having a semester long grade. At the end of first quarter, the grade does not change; it is more like a midterm grade. Eighty percent of the grade is from the semester grade and 20 percent is from the final.

"I like continuing the grade through the semester because it gives you a chance to bring your grade back up. It seems easier to me," said junior Alex Rolfs.

Most teachers agree that anything is better than the current grading system. There is a significant majority who want something new.

"Administration would want what is best for students," said Mr. Coughlan.

Ms. Amanda Holaway, a teacher in the English department, has only one concern about changing to a new grading system.

"Since I work with a lot of freshman, my fear is the freshman who take awhile to adjust will be behind with the semester long system," said Ms. Holaway.

### Current System:

- Quarter 1- Letter Grade
- Quarter 2- Letter Grade
- Final Grade determined by semester exam/ letter splits

### Proposed System 1:

- Quarter 1 weighted 40%
- Quarter 2 weighted 40%
- Semester Exam weighted 20%
- Final grade total of the three

### Proposed System 2:


- Semester Grade (no quarter grade), weighted 80%
- Semester Exam weighted 20%



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