

Schools banning iPods to beat cheaters

By REBECCA BOONE, Associated Press Writer
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MERIDIAN, Idaho - Banning baseball caps during tests was obvious — students were writing the answers under the brim. Then, schools started banning cell phones, realizing students could text message the answers to each other.

Now, schools across the country are targeting digital media players as a potential cheating device. Devices including Apple Inc. iPods and Microsoft Corp. Zunes can be hidden under clothing, with just an earbud and a wire snaking behind an ear and into a shirt collar to give them away, school officials say.

"It doesn't take long to get out of the loop with teenagers," said Mountain View High School Principal Aaron Maybon. "They come up with new and creative ways to cheat pretty fast."

Mountain View recently enacted a ban on digital media players after school officials realized some students were downloading formulas and other material onto the players.

"A teacher overheard a couple of kids talking about it," said Maybon.

Shana Kemp, spokeswoman for the National Association of Secondary School Principals, said she does not have hard statistics on the phenomenon but said it is not unusual for schools to ban digital media players.

"I think it is becoming a national trend," she said. "We hope that each district will have a policy in place for technology — it keeps a lot of the problems down."

Using the devices to cheat is hardly a new phenomenon, Kemp said. However, sometimes it takes awhile for teachers and administrators, who come from an older generation, to catch on to the various ways the technology can be used.

Some students use iPod-compatible voice recorders to record test answers in advance and then play them back, said 16-year-old Mountain View junior Damir Bazdar.