

I am the parent of two grade school children and an elementary school educator. I see firsthand how phones impact students both at home and in school, and I would like to address the current smartphone policy in schools. As instructors we are already being as creative as possible to keep hold of our student's fleeting attention. Allowing devices from home into our learning space thwarts our efforts to keep our students fully engaged and halts the momentum to keep them immersed throughout the school day. I urge the state of Oregon to consider adopting a bell-to-bell phone ban across all K-12 schools.

Smartphones are incredibly distracting, addictive traps and they have no place in a thriving school community. Kids have not developed the brainpower to balance their relationship with phones. I have concerns that in an emergency situation students will be distracted by their devices and reach for their phones *first* before shifting their attention to their instructor who guides them in safety protocols. As parents and educators it is our job to protect students from being in a position to have to choose what to pay attention to at any given moment.

At the high school level it's especially important to keep students off of their phones throughout the day. Breaks are an opportunity to practice their communication skills with their peers. These personal interactions will go on to help them when they can later nail a job interview or easily make new connections in college. High school is not the time to loosen restrictions when so many "real world" opportunities eagerly await these students. We should be especially vigilant with our oldest students as they are at the highest risk of exposure to inappropriate content, cyber bullying and apps that prey on their vulnerabilities. During the school day let's give their brains a mandatory rest from the constant online headache and phone drama that is all too prevalent.

I urge the state of Oregon to consider adopting a full ban on communication devices in all K-12 schools. Let's take the time now to enhance the current insufficient phone policy to mitigate any further risk to our students. Thank you for your time and serious consideration to fully ban smartphones from all Oregon schools.

Sincerely,
Marianne Schnell-Bruton