Cell-free schools

Montgomery County NC Board of Education

September 2024

Existing Policy:

- During the instructional day, cell phones/electronic devices/speakers should not be visible/used in classrooms or gyms/weight room without teacher permission. Students are permitted to use cell phones before school, at break, during their lunch time and after school.
- Refusal to give up cell phones/electronic devices/speakers if requested by an MCS employee will result in OSS for the remainder of the day and be assigned to a full day of ISS upon returning.

Enforcement Issues:

- Constant battle
- “Teacher so-and-so lets us use our phones..”
- “Phones allow me to take better notes ..”
- Chain of custody issues
- Blowback from some parents

Negative effects of cell phones:

- Surgeon General warns that social media may harm children and adolescents
- Mental health: poor sleep quality, anxiety, and depression.
- Academic performance
- Increase in bullying and discipline issues

News and Testimonials

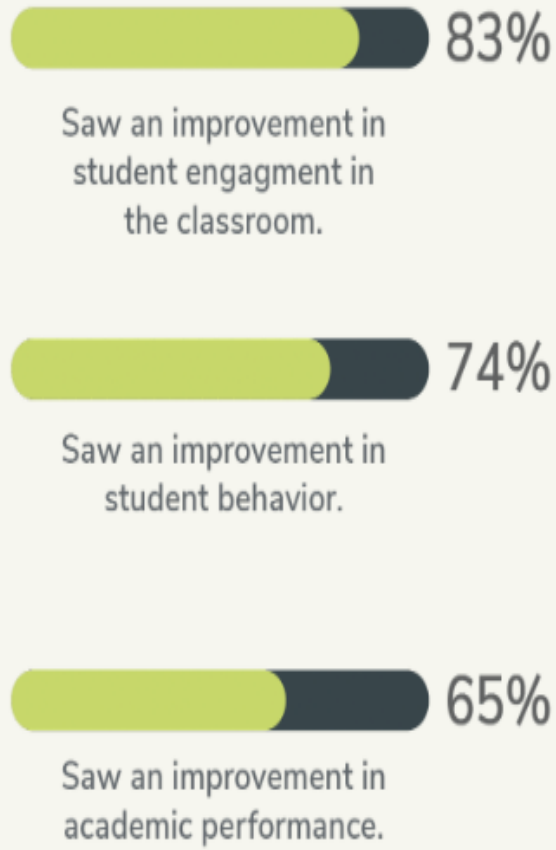
- https://youtu.be/eeyGeT0mIDc
- https://youtu.be/nYnV8k8R8bs
- https://vimeo.com/859967465
- https://vimeo.com/859964816

Cost and Custody:

- Middle and High Schools
- $30 per pouch. Pouch assigned with current educational device (laptop).
- Stenciled with identifying number/name
- Returned at year-end/reissued the following year
- Replacement charged to student/must be paid if cell phone is brought to campus. Cache of pouches available at school front office.
- Expected life of each pouch: 3 years

MILLIONS OF STUDENTS USE YONDR EVERY DAY

We partner with thousands of schools across 27 countries.



YONDR SHIELDS STUDENTS FROM THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF CELL PHONE USE:
ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION • SOCIAL ALIENATION • BEHAVIORAL ISSUES • CYBER BULLYING • POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

YONDR: THE TRUSTED SCHOOL PARTNER

Yondr pioneered the concept of phone-free schools in 2014. Our team has developed the products and guidance to help schools create engaging, phone-free learning environments from arrival to dismissal.

YONDR SCHOOL SURVEY

86% Saw positive impact on student safety and wellness

84% Saw positive change in student engagement

72% Saw positive change in student behavior

> "The schoolyard is buzzing with dialogue-rich student interaction and, quite significantly, eye contact between peers."
>
> —Jason L, School Principal

Recommendations for Success

- Must be supported and enforced completely. Complete buy-in!
- Applies to students, teachers, administrators, counselors, custodians, nutrition, maintenance, SROs, visitors…every person inside the building
- Applies to all areas inside school – café, gym, hallways, etc.
- Applies to concerts/auditorium, basketball games, volleyball games, all gym sports
- Visitors issued a pouch at front office or at inside sporting entrance
- Not allowed into event until your phone is secured in bag; released via hand-helds at exit stations
- Cell phone use only allowed outside during designated breaks

Last thoughts

- Complete paradigm shift

- *Later in the meeting, the board approved a revision to the school uniforms policy. The policy now reads, "At East Middle, all bottom garments must be khaki or navy blue in color. At West Middle, all bottom garments must be khaki or black in color." Moreover, "hip huggers" are no longer prohibited, and the policy reads, "Girls will be allowed to wear low rider pants as long as they are not to an extreme and their shirts are totally tucked inside the pants."*

- "If the students are going to have to be in uniforms with no logos of any kind, the principal, the teachers, even down to the janitor should have to wear them." She was also concerned that the administration was "nitpicking" about logos so small they were hardly noticeable, or in some instances, were even covered by belts. [*name withheld]* claimed to have difficulty finding uniforms that fit her son. She also bought her son a khaki coat that school officials refused to let him wear to school.

- An El Paso school has instituted a new dress code for the school year, banning students from wearing head-to-toe black clothing — because the look, they say, is "associated with depression and mental health issues."