

# **DCS Community Conversation - Survey Results**

**Cell Phones in Schools**



## Overview

DCS hosted a Community Conversation regarding Cell Phones in schools on 3/19 which was attended by roughly 40 community members.

After the Community Conversation, a survey went out to the DCS community to gather additional information.

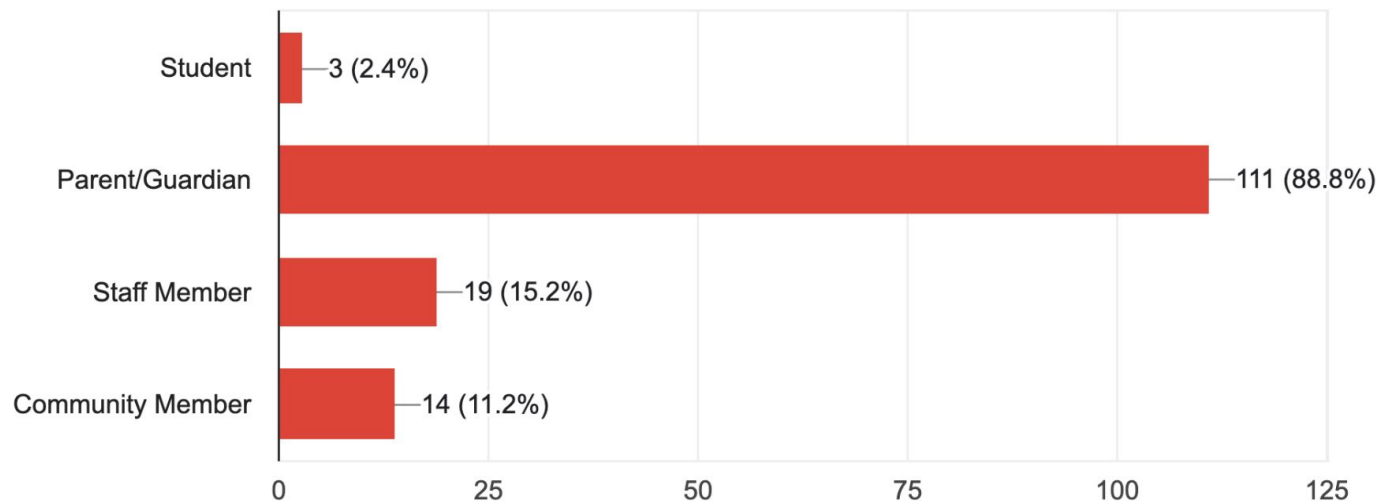
Here are the findings:



# Data Set

I am a.... (check all that apply)

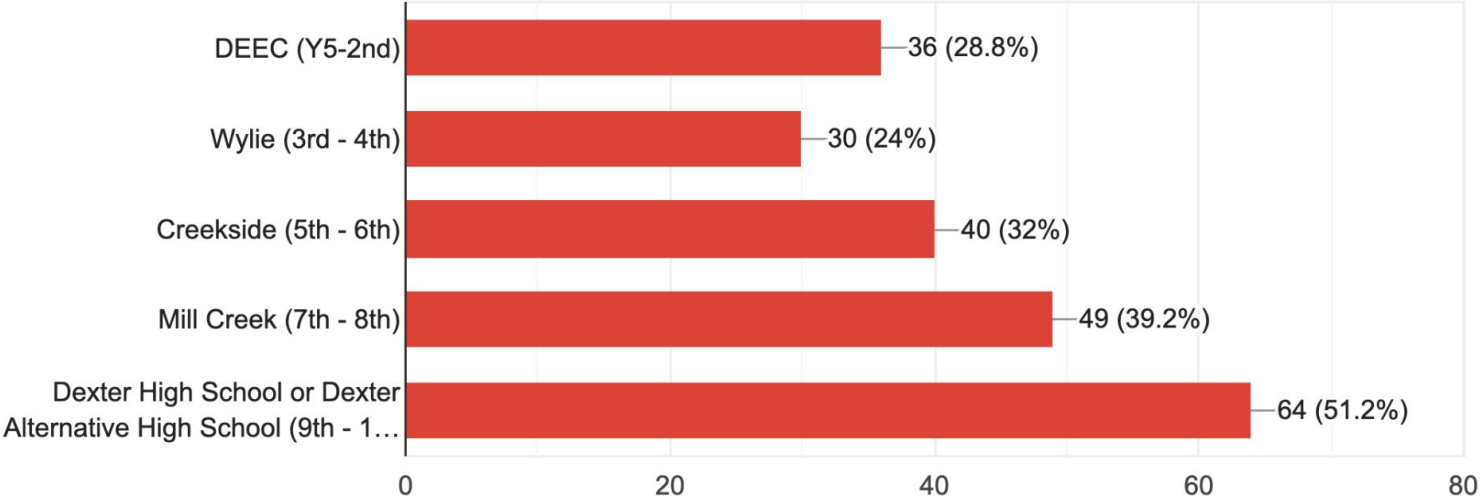
125 responses



# Data Set

My relationship to DCS is through the following buildings... (check all that apply)

125 responses



# Cell Phone Concerns in Schools

## 1. Distraction from Learning (≈75–80%) — Dominant Issue

This is the most consistent and strongly expressed concern across responses.

- Students frequently:
  - Lose focus during instruction
  - Are off-task or multitasking
  - Disrupt the learning environment for others
- Many respondents emphasized that phones are *constantly present* and difficult for students to ignore.

**Takeaway:** Cell phones are widely viewed as a **primary barrier to academic engagement and productivity.**



# Cell Phone Concerns in Schools

## 2. Social Skills & Reduced Face-to-Face Interaction (~35-40%)

A significant portion of respondents highlighted negative social impacts.

- Concerns include:
  - Less in-person communication
  - Reduced relationship-building
  - Students being “not present” with peers
- Some noted quieter hallways, less conversation, and weaker interpersonal skills.

**Takeaway:** Phones are seen as **replacing real-world interaction and weakening social development.**



# Cell Phone Concerns in Schools

## 3. Addiction, Dependence & Attention Span (≈30–35%)

Many responses describe phone use as compulsive or difficult to control.

- Common themes:
  - “Addiction” or constant checking
  - Difficulty focusing for extended periods
  - Reduced ability to read, think deeply, or persist through challenges

**Takeaway:** Phones are perceived as **undermining self-regulation and cognitive stamina.**



# Cell Phone Concerns in Schools

## 4. Bullying, Cyberbullying & Social Conflict (~25–30%)

A major concern tied closely to social media and device access.

- Includes:
  - Cyberbullying and harassment
  - Sharing photos/videos without consent
  - Escalation of peer conflict during the school day

**Takeaway:** Phones create **real-time pathways for harmful peer interactions.**



# Cell Phone Concerns in Schools

## 5. Mental Health Concerns (~20–25%)

Respondents linked phone use to broader well-being issues.

- Frequently mentioned:
  - Anxiety
  - Social pressure from social media
  - Emotional distress tied to online interactions

**Takeaway:** Phones are seen as contributing to **declines in student mental health.**



# Cell Phone Concerns in Schools

6. Academic Integrity: Cheating & AI Use ( $\approx 20\text{--}25\%$ )
7. Inappropriate Content & Privacy Risks ( $\approx 15\text{--}20\%$ )
8. Excessive Screen Time ( $\approx 15\text{--}20\%$ )
9. Safety & Parent Communication ( $\approx 10\text{--}15\%$ )\*
10. Policy & Enforcement Challenges ( $\approx 10\text{--}15\%$ )\*



# Policy Desires

## 1. Strong preference for a restrictive policy or full-day ban ~60–70%

A majority of responses support one of these:

- no phones during the school day
- bell-to-bell ban
- no phones in classrooms
- phones off and away all day
- phones in lockers, bags, caddies, lockboxes, or pouches

A sizable share explicitly argue that **partial rules create loopholes** and that students will work around any gray area.

**Overall read:** The center of gravity in this dataset is toward **tight restriction**, not open access.



# Policy Desires

## 2. No phones during instructional time, but some access at lunch/passing time ~20–30%

A meaningful minority supports a **middle-ground policy**, such as:

- no phones during class
- access at lunch
- access between classes
- access before and after school only

This group generally still supports restrictions, but wants a more practical compromise, especially for older students.

**Overall read:** There is support for a **structured-access model**, especially at the high school level.



# Policy Desires

## 3. Consistency across teachers/classrooms/buildings ~45–55%

This is one of the strongest implementation themes.

Respondents repeatedly said:

- all teachers must follow the same rule
- students should not face different expectations by classroom
- inconsistency undermines compliance
- uneven enforcement creates conflict with staff who do enforce rules

**Overall read:** People view **uniformity** as essential. Even a strong policy is seen as likely to fail if enforcement differs teacher to teacher.



# Policy Desires

## 4. Clear rules with little or no gray area ~35-45%

Many responses emphasized:

- simple wording
- no ambiguity
- no teacher discretion
- no “wobble room”
- straightforward expectations and consequences

Several respondents explicitly said that vague rules will be exploited.

**Overall read:** There is strong demand for a policy that is **easy to understand and hard to reinterpret.**



# Policy Desires

## 5. Strong enforcement and real consequences ~35-45%

This was another major implementation theme.

Common ideas included:

- confiscation
- office pickup
- progressive consequences
- teacher/admin follow-through
- consequences that actually deter behavior

Some also emphasized that **teachers should not bear the full burden alone.**

**Overall read:** Respondents do not just want a policy on paper; they want a policy with **visible, reliable follow-through.**



# Policy Desires

6. Storage systems: caddies, lockers, lockboxes, pouches, bags ~30–40%
7. Parent/community buy-in and communication ~15–20%
8. Access for emergencies, transit, after-school logistics, or medical/IEP needs ~15–20%
9. Teach responsible phone use, not just ban it ~10–15%
10. Teachers need support / enforcement cannot rely only on teachers ~10–15%



## Big-picture conclusions

- Phones should be unavailable during class at minimum, and preferably for the full school day, with a simple rule, uniform enforcement, and clear consequences.
- A policy will only work if it is consistent, clear, and enforced the same way by everyone.

