
Student Cell Phones

Strategic Focus Group Report

What *role should HCPS play* in navigating the advantages and disadvantages of cell phones for students?

What are *productive policies* for managing cell phones in schools?

The Office of Strategic Initiatives conducts focus groups dedicated to specific questions directed by the Superintendent for creative brainstorming and problem-solving by diverse stakeholders.

August 15, 2023

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

Aaron Poynton, D.P.A. *President* • Melissa Hahn, *Vice President*

Terri Kocher • Lauren Paige Strauss • Denise Perry • Wade Sewell

Carol Mueller, Ph.D. • Carol Bruce • Diane Alvarez • Madina Sabirova, *Student Member*

Sean Bulson, Ed.D., *Superintendent of Schools* • Eric Davis, Ed.D., *Chief of Administration*



Office of Strategic Initiatives

Katie Ridgway, *Director*

Contents

Methodology	p. 3
Advantages & Disadvantages	p. 4
Policy Concepts	p. 10
Discussion	p. 13
Recommendations	p. 16

Special Thanks

Office of Secondary Education Services

Havre de Grace Middle and High School Administrators & Students

Parent Advisory Council

Parent Teacher Associations

Harford County Education Association

Board of Education Members

Towson University in Northeastern Maryland

Methodology

The Superintendent of Schools proffered two questions related to student cell phones in schools:

(1) *What role should HCPS play in navigating the advantages and disadvantages of cell phones for students?* (2) *What are productive policies for managing cell phones in schools?*

In order to effectively explore the multifaceted perspectives for these two questions, the Office of Strategic Initiatives facilitated a deliberate process to engage stakeholders for an opinion assessment and data-gathering exercise. Identical in-person focus group sessions were facilitated with teachers, parents, administrators, and middle and high school students.

Stakeholder Group	Session Date	Number of Participants	Method of Sign-up
Teachers	June 5, 2023	21	Voluntary sign-up with notice provided through HCEA and through principals of secondary schools.
Administrators	June 21, 2023	13	Voluntary sign-up with notice provided through the Superintendent's Bulletin and through email to principals and assistant principals of secondary schools.
Parents	June 6, 2023	8	Voluntary sign-up with notice provided through the Parent Advisory Council, the Harford County PTA, and through principals of secondary schools.
Students	June 14, 2023	32	Collaboration with the Office of Secondary Education Services and Havre de Grace Middle & High School principal during the student school day.

Part one of the focus groups focused on the advantages and disadvantages of cell phones at schools, and part two focused on productive policies for managing cell phones in schools. In each part, groups engaged in brainstorming, discussion, prioritization, and then individual reflection, with final data gathering through a standardized Microsoft Form.

Advantages & Disadvantages

Each group discussed the perception of cell phone advantages and disadvantages for students at school. Starting with personal opinions and experience, each group discussed the possible perceptions of other stakeholder groups, ascertained group opinions that were in line with or differed from peers, and ultimately narrowed down personal priorities. The following captures the consistent advantages and disadvantages stated by focus group participants through a standardized form after group participation and discussion.

Advantages

- The ability for teachers to work with different learning styles and ability levels.
- Ability to navigate schedule logistics for after-school activities or pick-up.
- Ability to problem-solve forgotten items or responsibilities.
- Ability to record lessons or notes that will help with studying and learning.
- Access to parents for mental and physical health concerns.
- Access to tools that help with student organization, homework, and responsibility reminders.
- Accessibility tools for vision and hearing.
- Aids in communication with students and/or guardians.
- Beneficial instructional tool.
- Benefits for students with learning deficits.
- It can enhance instruction and engagement.
- Cell phones are a part of modern life and the future.
- Communication specific to active shooter/lockdowns.
- Emergency contact with parents and others.
- The feeling of safety.
- Feeling that cell phones improve mental health by being able to contact family, listen to music, relax through games, use calming tools, connect with friends, or distract from hard times.
- General access to parents.
- It supports quiet and occupied behavior.
- Language translation capabilities are important for English language learners.
- It makes lunch and breaks enjoyable.
- Medical monitoring tools.
- Music aids in work completion.
- Quick access to internet tools for schoolwork.
- Recording of videos of concerning behavior as evidence.
- Serves as backup to school device if forgotten or battery is dead.
- Supports multimedia schoolwork in a way that is difficult or not possible on a laptop or Chromebook.
- Supports students contacting parents before or after school.
- The ease of accessibility, mobility, and familiarity of cell phones for students exceeds laptops or Chromebooks.
- Tools for struggling students.
- Tracking of student's location.

Disadvantages

- Access to inappropriate websites and content.
- Addiction.
- Class disruption.
- Communication and facilitation of illicit or illegal activities.
- Creates disconnection between the family and the school.
- Cyberbullying and harassment.
- Defiance.
- Disengagement.
- Distracting.
- Inability to focus.
- Increase in social anxiety.
- Increased cognitive load.
- Influence of social media.
- Lack of equity of access to phones.
- Listening to music prevents students from hearing directions.
- Opportunity for cheating.
- A platform for arranging and instigating fights.
- Provides the ability to contact others during a lesson.
- Reduces interaction with the “real world.”
- Screentime negative impact.
- Stolen, lost, broken property.
- Students reach out to parents prior to reporting the issue to the teacher or administrator.
- Tool and platform for predators.
- Unwanted pictures and videos taken during school.
- Unwanted sharing of media through airdrop, texting, and social media.

HCPS Role

Participants were asked if HCPS has a role in helping students navigate the advantages and disadvantages of cell phones. The large majority believes that HCPS has a role in this topic.

Does HCPS have a role in navigating the advantages and disadvantages of cell phones with students?



Students

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cell phones are a part of modern life and the future.• Emergency contact with parents and others.• The feeling of safety.• Feeling that cell phones improve mental health by being able to listen to music, relax through games, connect with friends, or distract from hard times.• General access to parents.• It supports quiet and occupied behavior.• It makes lunch and breaks enjoyable.• Music aids in work completion.• Quick access to internet tools for schoolwork.• Serves as backup to school device if forgotten or battery is dead.• Supports multimedia schoolwork in a way that is difficult or not possible on a laptop or Chromebook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cyberbullying and harassment.• Distracting.• Influence of social media.• Opportunity for cheating.• Reduces interaction with the “real world.”• Unwanted pictures and videos taken during school.

Sample quotes from students about navigating advantages or disadvantages:

- “Cell Phones are a really good resource when used appropriately and at the right times. It also helps with safety. Parents should also have the right to be able to communicate with their student.”
- “Cell phones are here, and we are going to be using them for the rest of our lives. Teachers act as if cell phones are a terrible, awful thing ruining kids’ lives and education. Instead of strictly enforcing and taking cell phones, teachers should teach kids to be responsible with them.”
- “Some students may feel safer knowing that they can contact someone if anything goes wrong.”
- “Music is really important to help me focus, so I would definitely say listening to music is important. I also think that cheating is a large disadvantage.”
- “Kids need to make their own decisions and have their own responsibilities.”
- “I think there needs to be some sort of policy regarding recording. I think this is my main problem with cell phones.”

Teachers

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aids in communication with students and/or guardians. • Beneficial instructional tool. • Benefits for students with learning deficits. • Emergency contact with parents and others. • It supports quiet and occupied behavior. • Language translation capabilities are important for English language learners. • Medical monitoring tools. • Recording of videos of concerning behavior as evidence. • Serves as backup to school device if forgotten or battery is dead. • Supports multimedia schoolwork in a way that is difficult or not possible on a laptop or Chromebook. • Supports students contacting parents before or after school. • The ease of accessibility, mobility, and familiarity of cell phones for students exceeds laptops or Chromebooks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addiction. • Class disruption. • Communication and facilitation of illicit or illegal activities. • Cyberbullying and harassment. • Defiance. • Disengagement. • Distracting. • Inability to focus. • Increase in social anxiety. • Increased cognitive load. • Lack of equity of access to phones. • Listening to music prevents students from hearing directions. • Opportunity for cheating. • A platform for arranging and instigating fights. • Provides the ability to contact others during a lesson. • Screentime negative impact. • Stolen, lost, broken property. • Tool and platform for predators. • Unwanted pictures and videos taken during school. • Unwanted sharing of media through airdrop, texting, and social media.

Sample quotes from teachers about navigating advantages or disadvantages:

- “I think it’s important to teach students how to use phones safely and securely as well as how to use them as a tool for learning.”
- “Clear guidelines that can be consistently followed from one school to the next with a clear continuum of consequences if students fail to follow the rules.”
- “Need to have more focused and detailed instruction about proper use of social media/ texting leading to bullying, fights, harassment, and future repercussions both as a punitive measure for involvement as well as how actions will affect future endeavors/ interactions.”

Administrators

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability for teachers to work with different learning styles and ability levels. • Ability to navigate schedule logistics for after-school activities or pick-up. • Access to tools that help with student organization, homework, and responsibility reminders. • Accessibility tools for vision and hearing. • Aids in communication with students and/or guardians. • Beneficial instructional tool. • It can enhance instruction and engagement. • Emergency contact with parents and others. • Feeling that cell phones improve mental health by being able to use calming tools and listen to music. • General access to parents. • It supports quiet and occupied behavior. • Language translation capabilities are important for English language learners. • Medical monitoring tools. • Music aids in work completion. • Quick access to internet tools for schoolwork. • Serves as backup to school device if forgotten or battery is dead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to inappropriate websites and content. • Addiction. • Creates disconnection between the family and the school. • Cyberbullying and harassment. • Disengagement. • Distracting. • Inability to focus. • Increase in social anxiety. • Influence of social media. • Opportunity for cheating. • Students reach out to parents prior to reporting the issue to the teacher or administrator. • Unwanted pictures and videos taken during school. • Unwanted sharing of media through airdrop, texting, and social media.

Sample quotes from teachers about navigating advantages or disadvantages:

- “This is a classroom management issue and needs to be approached from that lens.”
- “We need to move forward with the lens that phones are the way this generation communicates, and as part of their life learning, we need to teach kids how to navigate the technology.”
- “It needs to be a One District Policy and consistent across all schools.”
- “I think we should focus on teaching students and parents responsible use.”

Parents

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to navigate schedule logistics for after-school activities or pick-up.• Ability to problem-solve forgotten items or responsibilities.• Ability to record lessons or notes that will help with studying and learning.• Access to parents for mental and physical health concerns.• Access to tools that help with student organization, homework, and responsibility reminders.• Beneficial instructional tool.• Communication specific to active shooter/lockdowns.• Emergency contact with parents and others.• The feeling of safety.• Feeling that cell phones improve mental health by being able to contact family, listen to music, relax through games, connect with friends, or distract from hard times.• General access to parents.• Tools for struggling students.• Tracking of student's location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to inappropriate websites and content.• Class disruption.• Communication and facilitation of illicit or illegal activities.• Cyberbullying and harassment.• Distracting.• Inability to focus.• Provides the ability to contact others during a lesson.• Unwanted pictures and videos taken during school.

Sample quotes from teachers about navigating advantages or disadvantages:

- "My child has a medical issue, and the phone is an important tool."
- "Students need to learn to balance work and social life as they enter adulthood, starting in school."
- "HCPS should emphasize the consequences of using phones to record school fights, using them as a bullying tool and misusing them during instruction time."
- "Schools and teachers should be empowered to set their own rules (which can change based on classroom activities) and what the teachers know certain students need. Teachers should be able to say, "No phones in here today" and be supported."
- "I think parents feeling about their children having a cell phone as long as the child isn't posting videos should be the priority."

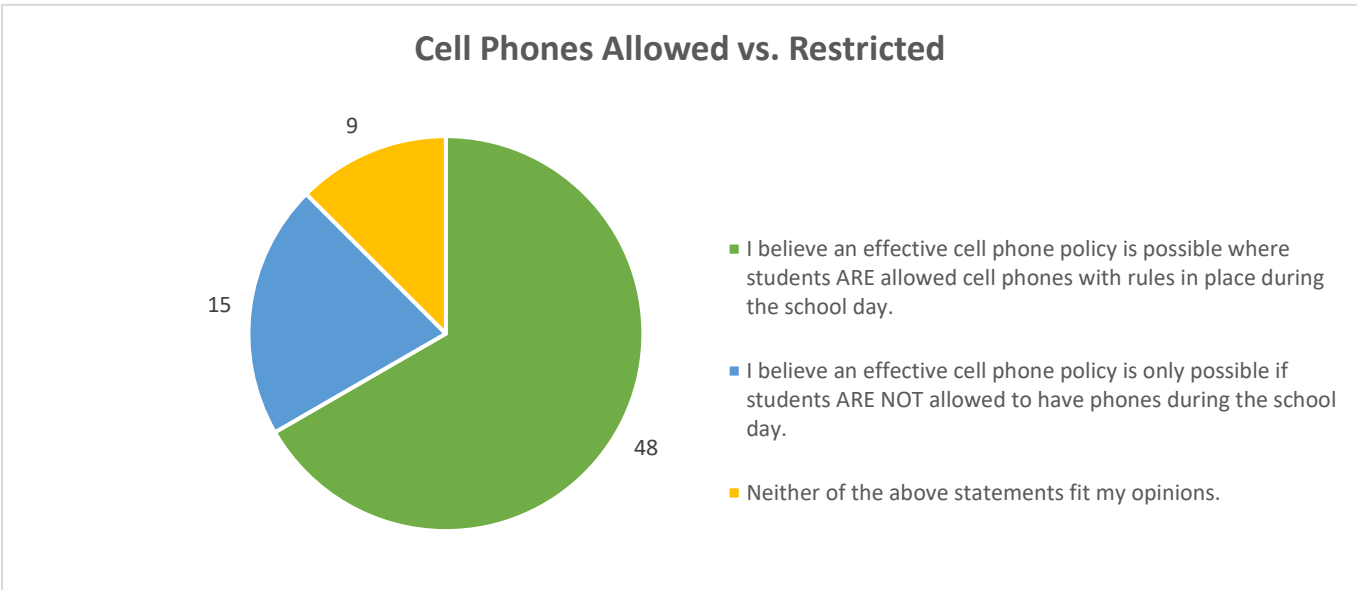
Policy Concepts

Each group discussed the merits of different policies, procedures, and practices at schools; brainstormed goals, rules, enforcement, and special circumstances; and discussed the roles of students, parents, teachers, and administrators around cell phone use. Starting with personal opinions and experience, each group participated in exercises to explore specific measures that may be a productive cell phone approach at schools and ultimately narrowed down personal priorities. The following captures the consistent policy opinions stated by focus group participants through a standardized form after group participation and discussion.

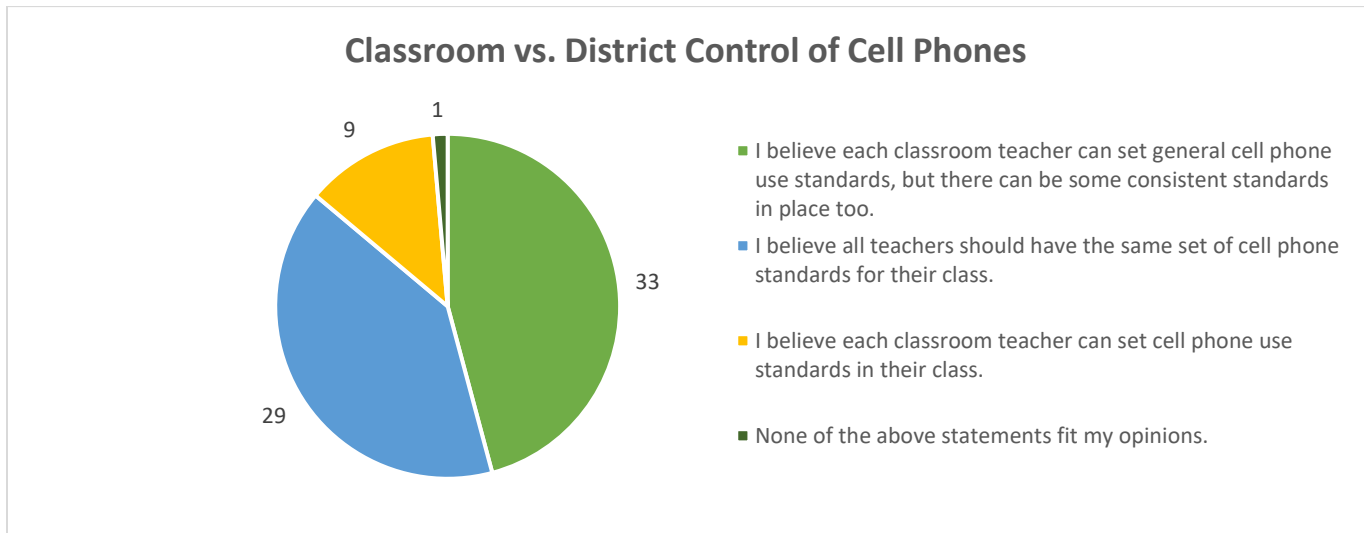
Overall Opinions

An area of concerted discussion in all groups was the topic of full restriction, full allowance, or management of phones on a spectrum from strict to lenient. Since the adult sessions were voluntary and self-selected, participants arrived with deeply held beliefs about the allowance or restriction of cell phones.

The data from the focus groups show that of the 74 participants (with 72 respondents to the question), there are 48 stakeholders who firmly believe in the possibility of implementing an effective cell phone policy that allows students to have their phones during the school day as long as certain rules are in place. On the contrary, 15 stakeholders are of the opinion that a successful cell phone policy can only be achieved if students are prohibited from having phones altogether during school hours. Some participants felt that neither allowing cell phones nor banning cell phones adequately addressed effective cell phone policies.

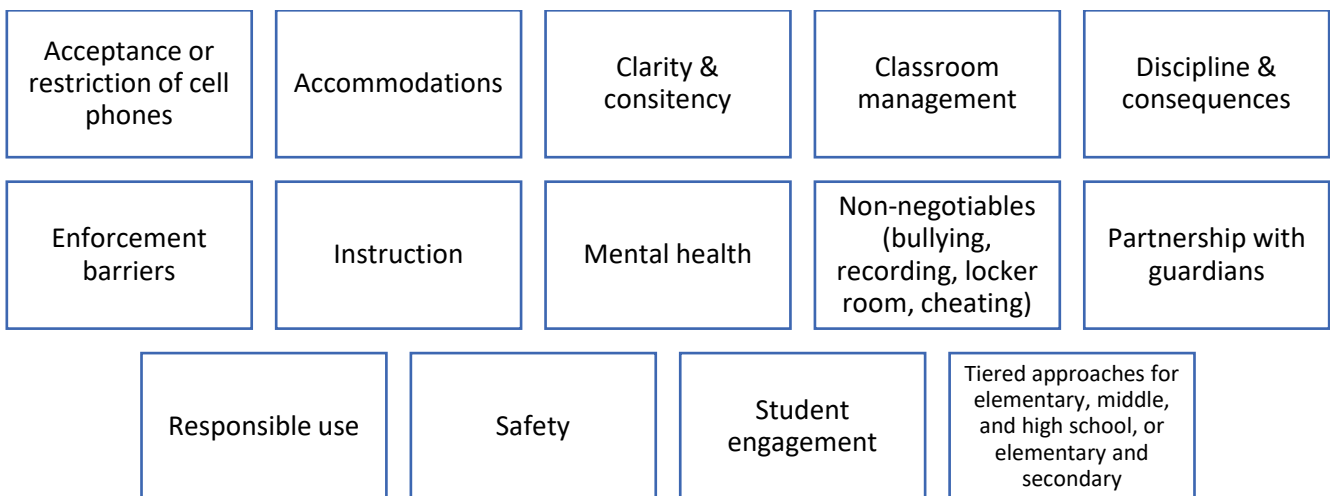


The next discussion point centered on classroom-level, school-wide, or district-mandated rules. The focus group data presents a range of perspectives on cell phone use standards in classrooms. A total of 33 stakeholders believe in a dual approach (out of 72 respondents to the question), advocating for each classroom teacher to have the flexibility to set their own general standards while also implementing some consistent guidelines across all classes. In contrast, 29 advocates for a unified approach, suggesting that all teachers should adhere to the same set of cell phone standards for their respective classes. A notable group of 9 stakeholders is of the opinion that each individual teacher should have the autonomy to establish cell phone use standards specifically for their own class. A notable group of 9 stakeholders is of the opinion that each individual teacher should have the autonomy to establish cell phone use standards specifically for their own class.



Response Themes

The themes found in the answers surrounding productive cell phone policies, procedures, and practice include:



Policy Ideas

The following is representative of the multiple iterations of policy ideas provided by focus group participants. Some of these function as a stand-alone approach, but others were offered in a variety of combinations with the general intent and overall concept captured in the ideas listed here. The focus groups did not endeavor consensus building, so it is important to note that these ideas may contradict each other. Overall, the ideas offered reflect the complexity of creating cell phone policies and procedures.

- All classrooms have a caddy or lockers for phones to be removed at the teacher's discretion.
- Allow teacher discretion and post responsible use reminders in every class.
- Allow teacher discretion and provide categories of non-negotiables with the severity of offenses laid out. For example, recording without consent, cyberbullying, crime, invasion of privacy, distracting others, cheating, locker room use, and inappropriate sharing.
- Allow teacher discretion and use other school rules for discipline when the cell phone is the tool for violation. Examples: bullying, cheating, disruption.
- Create a cell phone contract between guardians, students, and the school that allows students to have cell phones but not use them unless allowed by the teacher, with violations leading to cell phone restrictions for that student.
- Create a cell phone contract between guardians, students, and the school that restricts phones.
- Each school creates a school-wide plan that has three simple procedures (take care of yourself, each other, and this building).
- Instead of a cell phone policy, incorporate cell phones into the responsible use policy.
- Prohibit cell phones except as specified through IEP, 504, or English Learner supports.
- Restrict phones, but allow them when work is complete and at lunchtime.
- Restrict, but use cell phones as a positive behavior reward.
- Teachers create classroom management plans and then refer to the administration if needed.
- Tiered approach with elementary and middle school restrictions and high school allowances.
- Tiered approach with elementary restrictions and middle and high school allowances.
- Tiered approach with elementary restrictions, middle school locker storage, and high school allowances.

Within the policy recommendations, other ideas were proffered that could be incorporated into cell phone approaches or stand alone as follows:

- Students and families need more guidance on cell phone misuse, addiction, boundary setting, and the negative impacts of social media and/or screen time.
- Media literacy should be enhanced in all grade levels to embed with all curriculum areas.
- Professional development can support teachers with classroom management techniques, integration of digital technology, boundary setting, media literacy, responsible use, and engaging this generation of students.
- Students desire more or different engagement with teachers and the instructional content.
- There are digital tools that have intrinsic use that should be valued, such as medical monitoring, language translation, reminders, calendars, and note-taking.

Discussion

The significant majority of stakeholders agree that HCPS should play a role in navigating the advantages and disadvantages of cell phones with students, and a ban on cell phones cannot facilitate this role. The details of how to manage phones have significant differences amongst stakeholder groups with no consensus. Accepting cell phones as “here to stay” requires some mindset shift, communication, and buy-in between administrators, teachers, parents, and students. As stated by students, parents, and administrators, the future of our students includes cell phone technology, so HCPS must seek this balance to prepare students for their futures and to support teachers along the way.

The themes from all stakeholder responses can be used as a guide to adjust current and future practices and can guide goals and policy elements as follows:

- ***Acceptance or restriction of cell phones:***
At the surface, this appears like the main issue at stake, but underlying ideas around acceptance or restriction tend to include other topics such as discipline, student engagement, societal norms of technology, reclaiming of historical practices versus changing to new modern practices, and how the cell phone as a tool aid; both in positive instruction and negative behaviors.
- ***Accommodations:***
All stakeholders agreed that allowances are essential for students using cell phone accessibility tools to support special education needs or goals, disability accommodations, medical monitoring, and English language learning and communication. Some stakeholders voiced that cell phones also had tools to support students who struggle with learning or organizational skills.
- ***Clarity and consistency:***
A pervasive request from all stakeholders was to ensure that any policy, procedure, or practice was crystal clear to all. Stakeholders are also looking for consistency in practice, whereby school practice mirrors any handbook guidance or policy, which will support teachers’ actions, parents’ understanding, and student compliance.
- ***Classroom management:***
A theme arose in the exercises that cell phones are a modern-day tool for age-old student practices such as passing notes, being off task, spreading rumors, cheating, and being disruptive. The cell phone provides an accessible medium for historical student behaviors, which teachers have always had to manage within their classrooms. Schools have rules for disruption, academic integrity, and bullying, and the cell phone is the tool but not the root behavior. The idea is that effective classroom management can offset negative behaviors regardless of the medium utilized.

- Discipline and consequences:***

The most significant underlying issue within the focus group sessions was a general feeling about discipline and negative student behaviors. These concerns arise from the understanding that discipline is crucial in creating a positive and conducive learning environment. Negative behaviors create learning disruptions, impact the safety and well-being of students, and impact social and emotional development and academic achievement. Across the board, stakeholders expressed a desire for consequences when students disrupted the class, shared inappropriate materials, and recorded without consent. Several stakeholders felt that a frequency and severity scale should be developed to help students understand the consequences of any pervasive or egregious behavior.
- Enforcement barriers:***

Restricting cell phones in schools faces several barriers. Schools face logistical challenges in monitoring every student and ensuring compliance across different classrooms. With the advancement of technology, students can easily hide or use their phones discreetly, making it difficult for teachers and school administrators to monitor and enforce the restriction effectively. Enforcing the restriction becomes a full-time job, and time is lost for teaching. Parents and students find overwhelming value in the sense of security from cell phone access and in coordinating after-school activities or transportation. One parent specifically mentioned telling their middle schooler to carry and hide their phone, even though they know it is currently restricted. Students echoed this sentiment stating that students will actively subvert any ban.
- Instruction:***

Stakeholders expressed instructional benefits when cell phone technology is allowed in the classroom, including, but not limited to, note-taking, organizational tools (reminders, calendars), collaboration and communication for group projects, multimedia capabilities for presentations and group projects, specialty apps for curriculum, language translation, back up for devices out of power, differentiated ways to engage with students, music supporting staying on task, and more.
- Mental health:***

The topic of mental health came up in both positive and negative ways regarding students' cell phone use. The positive impact on mental health was described in terms of safety, access to family, access to calming tools and music, and space for "brain breaks." The negative impact on mental health from cell phones was described in many ways, including addiction, screen time impact on brain development, and the impact of social media.
- Non-negotiables (bullying, recording, locker room, cheating):***

All stakeholders held beliefs that students should understand that using cell phones to engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or any form of harmful behavior toward others is strictly prohibited. Students should understand that recording or taking pictures of others without their consent or in private areas like the locker rooms is prohibited. Additionally,

there was no debate that cell phones should not be used for cheating or dishonest academic practices. This includes using cell phones to access unauthorized information, communicate answers with others during exams, or engage in any form of academic dishonesty.

- ***Partnership with guardians:***

All adult focus group sessions showed a desire for partnerships between the school and families or guardians. Parents can partner with teachers and administrators by staying informed about their student's cell phone activity and behaviors, communicating regularly with students and teachers, supporting school policies, educating about responsible use, monitoring and setting boundaries, and seeking support from the administration with any concerns arising from student cell phone use.

- ***Responsible use:***

This is a central and vital theme amongst all stakeholder groups. Responsible use of cell phones and digital devices is critical for utilizing them to promote safety, respect, and positive engagement. This means using devices within the boundaries of school policies or procedures, adhering to ethical and legal guidelines, and not disrupting the school day. It involves using digital devices for educational purposes, accessing appropriate content, and practicing good digital citizenship by respecting others' privacy, refraining from cyberbullying or harassment, and being mindful of the potential consequences of one's online actions. Responsible use also entails managing screen time effectively, prioritizing offline interactions, and being aware of the impact of digital devices on overall well-being. All of these aspects of responsible use are vital for inclusion in education for students, teachers, and staff.

- ***Safety:***

An important theme from students and parents arose regarding the feeling of safety through access to a cell phone by providing immediate access to help, communication with trusted contacts, and features like location tracking, safety, calming (for anxiety), and medical monitoring apps.

- ***Student engagement:***

Much like classroom management, students, administrators, and parents zeroed in on how student engagement can offset the disadvantages of cell phones through interesting, engaging, and dynamic lessons that meet students where they are in terms of learning styles, connection with the curriculum, and connection with teachers.

- ***Tiered approaches for elementary, middle, and high school, or elementary and secondary:***

HCPS's current practices have a tiered approach to cell phone rules for elementary, middle and high school that many stakeholders liked and expressed that if changes are made, consideration of the tiered level of cell phone access or use should remain, specifically between elementary and secondary schools.

Recommendations

1. SET AN OVERARCHING GOAL, SUCH AS:

To strike a balance between leveraging the educational benefits of technology while ensuring a focused and safe learning environment for all students. It should promote responsible cell phone usage and help students develop healthy digital habits that support their academic and lifetime growth.

2. REVISE OR DISCONTINUE CURRENT BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 06-0005-000, PORTABLE COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

a. If pursuing revision:

- i. The current definition of a portable communication device is inclusive of laptops, tablets, and cell phones. Each of these needs to be separately defined, as HCPS now provides tablets, chrome books, or laptops to each student, and these are used as part of instruction. Another delineation could be HCPS-owned devices versus personally-owned devices, similar to how the handbook addresses personally-owned devices.
- ii. Consider reducing content to include high-level information, where management details (the day-to-day and rules for elementary versus secondary) are provided in a procedure or student handbook guidelines instead of the policy. Examples of policy elements to keep or include are:
 1. Goals regarding portable communication devices used in schools.
 2. Prescribe who is responsible for setting the management procedures and/or handbook guidelines.
 3. Prescribe the role of Education Services, Administrators, Teachers, Parents, and Students.
 4. Reference responsible use requirements.
 5. Statements regarding theft, loss, or damage to personal devices and HCPS devices.

b. If pursuing discontinuation:

- i. Consider what policies, procedures, or practices require specific additions or changes related to the use of digital tools such as laptops or cell phones. Examples include academic integrity, classroom disruption, bullying and harassment, and progressive discipline.
- ii. Include statements regarding theft, loss, or damage to devices in yearly parent-required acknowledgments through the district-wide permission form.
- iii. Include statements regarding responsible use in yearly parent-required acknowledgments through the district-wide permission form.

3. REVISE STUDENT HANDBOOK SECTION TITLED: *PORTABLE COMMUNICATION.*

- a. First, consider whether a formal procedure or handbook guidance is the best format to outline any cell phone rules or expectations.
- b. The handbook currently focuses on personal devices. Consider if any guidelines are needed for HCPS-owned devices in the handbook.
- c. A progressive approach to cell phone use continues as a recommendation, with elementary and secondary having distinct practices.
 - i. Consider reviewing the middle school practice to support transition and alignment with high school practice.
 - ii. The verbiage in the high school provisions does not reflect current practice by stating that “the student does not activate or use their device.”
- d. An allowance for English language learners, IEPs, and 504s should be incorporated in the circumstances allowing cell phones outside of other set rules.
- e. Consider adding additional specific prohibitions such as cheating, recording, locker rooms/bathroom use, and cyberbullying. Although no list can be all-inclusive, and the current verbiage addresses classroom disruption and laws, listing the specific concerns with cell phones as a tool can be used as an opportunity to communicate non-negotiables to all stakeholders.
- f. Consider adding the requirement for all students to complete responsible use training, families to review responsible use practices, or other forms of cell phone use education at the beginning of each school year.
- g. Consider adding a statement regarding consequences for not complying with the policy, or refer to other disciplinary procedures.
- h. Consider adding a statement that personally owned devices are considered a privilege, and teachers have the authority to restrict use as necessary.

4. INCLUDE CELL PHONES IN HCPS “RESPONSIBLE USE” PROCEDURES, COMMUNICATION, & TRAINING.

Include specific capabilities of cell phones such as recording, airdrop, access to websites banned on the HCPS network, social media, and text bullying.

5. PROVIDE BEST PRACTICES, SAMPLE MANAGEMENT PLANS, OR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO TEACHERS ABOUT CELL PHONE USE IN CLASSROOMS, INTEGRATION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT.

6. THE FOLLOWING PERIPHERAL CONCERNS REQUIRE ADDITIONAL FOCUS:

- a. Discipline efficacy, consistency, and communication.
- b. Teacher support by parents, administration, and central office.
- c. Parent participation in reinforcing positive behavior, school rules, and responsible use of devices.



Harford County Public Schools Nondiscrimination Statement

The Board of Education of Harford County does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, pregnancy, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

In accordance with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 USC §1681, et seq.), Harford County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its programs or activities or with regard to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX, and its implementing regulations to Harford County Public Schools: Involving **students, refer to:** Ken Miller, 102 South Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, MD 21014 at [\(410\) 375-0408](tel:4103750408) or Kenneth.Miller@hcps.org; Involving **all other members of the school community, refer to:** Renee McGlothlin, 102 South Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, MD 21014 at [\(410\) 809-6087](tel:4108096087) or Renee.McGlothlin@hcps.org. Discrimination complaints may also be filed with other agencies, such as the Office of Civil Rights in the United States Department of Education. Assistant Secretary for the Office of Civil Rights: 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202, 1-800-421-3481. For updated information on the Board of Education, visit www.hcps.org.