

Dear Members of the Board,

I appreciate the Board's ongoing commitment to supporting safe and productive learning environments for all students. I also understand the desire to reduce distractions and promote engagement during instructional time, a goal I fully share. However, I must respectfully express my strong concerns regarding the proposed cell phone ban during passing periods and lunch at the high school level.

On any given day, high school administrators are responsible for responding to fights, conflicts connected to local gang activity, vaping and drug-related issues, medical emergencies, mental health crises, and a wide range of behavior and safety challenges. These issues require immediate attention, professional discretion, and the ability to move swiftly across campus. Our staff's time and focus must remain available for these high-priority interventions.

A blanket prohibition on cell phone use during passing periods and lunch would demand constant monitoring and enforcement. Supervisors would be required to correct or discipline students for brief, non-disruptive interactions that occur in the natural flow of unstructured time. Realistically, this would shift staff energy and attention away from the very situations that most threaten student safety. Every minute spent addressing a minor phone infraction is a minute not spent preventing a fight, intercepting contraband, de-escalating tensions, or supporting a student in crisis.

It is also important to recognize that unstructured time is not wasted time for students. Lunch and passing periods provide essential opportunities to reset, connect socially, communicate with family, manage personal needs, and prepare for the rest of the day. The ability to briefly use a device during these times can help students organize their schedules, check messages from parents or employers, and decompress in healthy ways. Removing this autonomy does not foster responsibility, it creates frustration and reduces trust in the adults guiding them.

I urge the Board to consider whether the benefits of this policy outweigh the significant operational and safety costs it would impose. The current classroom-based restrictions already support focused instruction. Extending these restrictions into unstructured time, however well intended, is not practical for high schools, nor is it conducive to student well-being or campus safety.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the Board to reconsider the proposed policy and to engage administrators, staff, and families in developing solutions that genuinely enhance learning without compromising our ability to maintain a safe and supportive environment for all students.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Julie Bumgardner, Principal - Dayton High School