

From: Marjorie Mauk

Subject of Comment

Against Proposed Student Cell Phone Policy - 1st Read

Your Public Comment

I am writing to you today as a dedicated teacher and a concerned member of our educational community regarding the proposed cell phone policy that is scheduled for a first read tonight.

I believe that a middle school classroom is not the appropriate place for students to have cell phones. Students should not have these devices on them from the first bell to the last bell. This distraction impedes their ability to focus, engage with their peers and teachers, and fully participate in their education. Instead of focusing on constant vigilance against cell phone misuse, we should be fostering an environment where students can learn how to manage and prioritize their usage of these devices outside of the school day.

While I recognize the need for a clear policy, I feel compelled to share my perspective on some of its specific components, as I am strongly against the policy in its current form.

The proposed consequences for violations are also a significant source of concern. While some accountability is necessary, the policy's penalties, including expulsion, are disproportionately severe. It is difficult to justify why a cell phone infraction would carry a harsher punishment than instances of bullying, which have a far more damaging and lasting impact on a student's well-being and sense of safety. Furthermore, when comparing this policy to the existing discipline policy, it appears that the consequences for a cell phone violation are more severe than those for students as young as five years old found in possession of a dangerous weapon, who may face suspension but not expulsion.

Additionally, a part of the policy states that students will be required to leave their phones at home for five days following an infraction. I believe this part of the policy is deeply flawed. The monitoring and enforcement of this rule would fall upon the family, not the school staff. How will the school be held accountable if a family does not abide by this rule? It places an unnecessary burden on both the administration and the family, and it is a rule that is nearly impossible to enforce.

I respectfully ask that you consider these points during your review of the policy. I am confident that we can develop a solution that protects the learning environment while also being fair and enforceable for all students and families.