

LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony to the County Board of Education on Student Cellular Device Use Policy

Joanne C. Benson

SB130

Good afternoon, Chair Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair Cheryl Kagan, and the esteemed member of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee. (EEE)

I appreciate the opportunity to speak today on behalf of students, educators, and parents in our community regarding the newly established Student Cellular Device Use Policy. My name is Branndon Jackson, and I am on the Prince George's County School Board.

As we navigate the challenges of modern education, we must address the impact of technology on student learning environments. The proliferation of cellular devices among students has brought both opportunities and distractions into our classrooms. The new policy, aimed at regulating the use of these devices, is a critical step towards fostering a more focused and productive educational atmosphere.

Supporting Evidence:

1. **Improved Academic Performance:** Research conducted by the London School of Economics found that schools enforcing a ban on mobile phones experienced a substantial improvement in student performance. Specifically, test scores increased by an average of 6.4%. This data underscores the potential academic benefits of reducing mobile phone distractions during instructional time.
2. **Prevalence of Device Usage:** According to a Pew Research Center report, 95% of teenagers in the United States have access to a smartphone, and 45% of them report being online "almost constantly." This statistic highlights the ubiquitous nature of mobile devices in students' lives, necessitating clear guidelines for their use in educational settings.
3. **Classroom Focus:** A study from the University of Texas at Austin revealed that students who used their phones during class scored 20% lower on a test of lecture material compared to their peers who did not use phones. This finding illustrates the direct correlation between device usage and diminished academic performance.
4. **Mental Health Concerns:** A survey by Common Sense Media indicated that 50% of teens feel addicted to their mobile devices, with 59% of parents believing their children are addicted. This addiction can lead to negative mental health outcomes, such as increased anxiety and decreased attention span, further justifying the need for a regulated device usage policy.

The newly established policy provides a balanced approach to managing cellular device usage, allowing for educational flexibility while prioritizing the academic and mental well-being of our students. By enforcing rules that limit distractions, we create a conducive learning environment where students can thrive.

I urge the County Board of Education to support and rigorously implement this policy. Let us work together to ensure our schools are spaces where learning takes precedence and distractions are minimized. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully, Branndon Jackson, Chair of Prince George's County School Board, and A Caring Parent.

Sincerely,

Brandon Jackson