



Date: 11/17/2025

To: House Education Committee

From: Enrique Ferrera, Oregon Education Association

Subject: Cell Phone Ban

Statewide Cell Phone Ban - Educator Survey Results Show Implementation Success

Chair Hudson, Vice-Chair Dobson and McIntire and members of the House, my name is Enrique Ferrera, and I am the President of the Oregon Education Association. OEA represents over 42,000 educators across the state of Oregon. The membership of our union spans every aspect of education. We represent educators in from pre-kindergarten, K-12 and Community colleges. These members have diverse roles from licensed teachers and specialists, education support professionals (ESPs), community college faculty, bus drivers, school nurses, to counselors and more.

When this policy was first proposed, we had a mix of reactions from our members. Many welcomed the clarity and a chance to restore attention to learning. Others raised fair concerns about consistent enforcement, special education and medical accommodations, and parent communication. Teachers also stated concerns about safety as the national political landscape was changing and wanting students to have ways to communicate with families during emergencies. But what our survey has shown is that the reality of implementation has exceeded expectations across the board.

We surveyed our members statewide with just over one week for K-12 teachers to respond, receiving 585 responses from educators across elementary, middle, and high school levels, plus special education teachers, counselors, librarians, and other specialists. About 85 % of respondents were classroom teachers.

The data is compelling. Implementation is widespread and successful. About 89 % of respondents report full implementation of the ban, 8 % report partial implementation, less than 1 % have not yet implemented, and 2 % are unsure.

The impact is overwhelmingly positive. About 73 % of respondents describe the impact as very positive, 15 % somewhat positive, meaning 88 % see clear benefits. Only 6 % report mixed results and just 1 % report negative impacts.

The specific classroom changes are striking. About 70 % of respondents observe improved student focus. About 67 % see increased face-to-face interaction. About 64 % note reduced classroom disruptions. About 46 % report positive behavior changes. About 10 % report increased library usage.

We collected over 400 detailed stories from educators. The themes are consistent and compelling. One teacher stated "classrooms are loud again" because students are talking to each other instead of staring at screens. One educator shared "I haven't had to take a single phone this year; it eliminated those power struggles." A middle school teacher told us "I don't have to fight with students in the classroom. Also, they are finally learning how to read an analog clock because they can't just check their phone for the time."

One high school teacher reported "massive improvement in healthy student interactions" including a single class discussion where "17 different students volunteered" - more engagement than they had seen in a decade. Another educator observed "lunch time is much louder, but it is because kids are talking to each other again."

Students are reconnecting. Teachers report students playing cards, doing puzzles, reading books, and yes, hacky sack has made a comeback during breaks. One teacher noted "students are actually speaking to each other and do not stick noses in phones all the time."

We are providing honest data. About 21 % of respondents report enforcement difficulties and 5 % note parent communication challenges. These are manageable implementation issues, not fundamental policy flaws. Our members consistently emphasize that benefits far outweigh these challenges.

Some educators noted that students are shifting to using Chromebooks for off-task behavior, and smart watches remain trickier to enforce. A small number flagged the need for clearer guidance on accommodations for students with disabilities and medical needs like diabetes monitoring.

Based on our members' experiences, we recommend supporting this successful policy with practical implementation help. First, funding for simple storage solutions and clear signage. Second, statewide emergency communication protocols so families know how to reach students appropriately. Third, guidance on accommodations for students with disabilities and health needs. Fourth, professional development for consistent enforcement and monitoring to prevent disparate discipline impacts.

When phones are away, learning comes back into focus. This policy creates conditions where every student has a better opportunity to learn, connect, and thrive. One teacher summed it



up: "students were much more engaged and focused" with classrooms feeling "calmer with fewer outbursts."

Oregon educators have spoken clearly through this data: cell phone restrictions work when implemented thoughtfully and consistently. OEA stands ready to partner with you on refining implementation while maintaining a core policy that is proving successful for Oregon students and educators.

Thank you for your leadership in centering what works for students and those who serve them.