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Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Support for Amendments to House Bill 2251 – Ensuring Local Control Over Cell Phone Policies in Schools

Dear Oregon Legislators,

I am writing to express my strong support for amendments to House Bill 2251 that would ensure **local control** over policies governing cell phone use in schools. As a 25-year veteran in education and the superintendent of Central Point School District 6, I have witnessed firsthand the impact that cell phone use has on student learning, classroom management, and overall school culture. Given the diverse needs of our schools and communities, it is imperative that local districts retain the ability to craft policies that best serve their students, rather than implementing a one-size-fits-all mandate from the state level.

Local control is essential because each school district faces unique challenges and opportunities regarding technology use. Urban, suburban, and rural districts all have different resources, student populations, and instructional models. A policy that works well for one district may not be practical for another. By allowing school boards and educators to make these decisions, we can ensure policies are responsive to the specific needs of students, families, and teachers.

Furthermore, cell phone use has a profound effect on student engagement and mental health. Many educators have observed that excessive phone use in classrooms contributes to decreased focus, increased anxiety, and difficulties with face-to-face communication. At the same time, when managed effectively, technology can enhance learning and provide critical access to resources, especially in emergencies. Local districts are best positioned to strike the right balance, ensuring that policies reflect the educational priorities and safety concerns of their communities.

Additionally, disciplinary approaches to cell phone use should be flexible and context-driven. A rigid statewide policy could lead to unintended consequences, such as disproportionate disciplinary actions or an inability to accommodate students with special needs who rely on technology for communication and learning support. Allowing districts to develop their own policies ensures that decisions are made with equity, fairness, and student well-being at the forefront.

Finally, empowering local school districts to govern cell phone policies fosters stronger partnerships between schools, parents, and students. Engaging families in discussions about appropriate technology use reinforces shared responsibility and encourages thoughtful digital citizenship. A local approach enables school leaders to collaborate with their communities in ways that a blanket state policy simply cannot accommodate.

For these reasons, I urge you to support amendments to House Bill 2251 that preserve local control over cell phone policies in schools. Oregon’s students deserve policies that reflect their unique educational environments, and our educators deserve the flexibility to implement strategies that truly support student success.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your commitment to Oregon’s education system and look forward to your support in maintaining local decision-making authority on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Walt Davenport
Superintendent
Central Point School District 6