

Ajay S. Rao

Mrs. Hanson

Language Arts

24 April 2025

### Why Schools Shouldn't Ban Phones

Cell phone bans have become increasingly common in American schools, with 75% of high schools and 84% of middle schools prohibiting phone use during class, and 31% of high schools and 67% of middle schools banning phones during breaks as well. These bans have gained popularity in recent years due to growing concerns about student distraction and mental health. However, banning phones outright does not strike the balance that administrators are hoping for. By removing phones from the school environment, administrators not only deprive students of an important educational resource but also restrict their personal freedom and family communication. Cell phone bans should not be implemented in schools because they are overly restrictive, unpopular with students, and hinder students' ability to communicate with their parents.

One major problem with cell phone bans is that they are often too restrictive. For example, in the article *Why Students Should Be Using Their Phones in Class*, Cirelli considers, "When given access to cell phones, students are afforded the ability to record and organize their studies on a portable device they will frequently use outside of the classroom" ("Why Students"). This illustrates how cell phones can streamline academic progress and give students greater independence over their work. This is important because school-issued computers are often slow and heavily restricted, limiting their usability. In addition, Michael B. Horn, a teacher at Harvard Graduate School of Education, points out, "We risk barring teachers, schools, and districts from

productively using these apps to drive learning gains" (Horn). This highlights how cell phone bans can restrict teachers' ability to utilize cell phones productively in the classroom. There are numerous apps that can enhance a student's learning experience, and students, teachers, and districts should be able to harness these tools. While many schools are concerned about the impact of cell phone use on students' grades, they may not realize that these devices can actually improve grades and overall learning. In summary, cell phone bans often prevent students and teachers from accessing and using valuable learning and productivity resources.

Another issue with cell phone bans is that they are often extremely unpopular among students. A poll conducted in 2024 found that 91% of students ages 13 to 18 and 71% of parents believe students should have cell phones in school. Even 56% of teachers feel that students should be allowed to use cell phones outside of the classroom ("Support for Cell"). This indicates that the majority of students and parents oppose cell phone bans and aren't having their opinions heard. Students, in particular, are the most opposed to cell phone bans and often do not have a say in their school's policy. Students should have a say in school policies that affect them, and many schools implement cell phone bans without consulting students. Furthermore, in an article by *The Economist*, a student facing a cell phone ban claims, "'It's like they don't trust us,' says Eva King, a 14-year-old pupil at Alice Deal Middle School in Washington, DC" ("American Parents"). This exemplifies how students can become resentful towards policies that are made without their input. Since cell phone bans are extremely unpopular, students might feel that their school staff doesn't trust them and wants to limit their independence. Overall, cell phone bans are despised by students, leading to resentment towards school staff and a general dislike toward school.

Many administrators argue that banning cell phones is necessary to protect students' mental health and safety; however, a major concern with cell phone bans is how they can hinder communication between students and parents. For instance, in the article *Schools Say No to Cellphones in Class. But Is It a Smart Move?*, Klein asks, "How could parents get in touch with their children during a school shooting or a dangerous weather event?" (Klein). This question demonstrates how phone bans can get in the way of important communication between students and family members. There are many situations where a student may need to communicate with a family member about a personal matter, and cell phone bans can get in the way of parents trying to communicate important information with students. Similarly, Jennifer Jolly, a writer for *USA TODAY*, explains, "Many parents argue they want their child to reach them in that tragic event; the parent wants to reach the child; perhaps they can help get them out, or even just to say 'I love you' one last time" (Jolly). This stresses that during a dire situation, students might need to have access to their phones to contact their parents. During a tragic event, the last thing you want is a school policy getting in the way of students calling their parents for help. To conclude, cell phone bans create challenges for parents trying to communicate important information with their kids, which can lead to problems during an emergency and is also just inconvenient.

In conclusion, unreasonable restrictions, unpopularity, and hindered communication are just some of the reasons why cell phone bans aren't a good idea. There is plenty of research to back up the real concerns that students and parents have with the rapid increase in school cell phone bans. With 67% of middle schools and 31% of high schools banning cell phones during breaks and even more banning them in classrooms, these policies continue to degrade students' educational experience and limit their freedoms. It is evident that cell phone bans have become

excessive, and students and parents need to advocate for better policies that harness the tools that cell phones offer.

## Bibliography

- Aldis, Alli. "Pessimistic Parents and Cell Phone Bans: 2024 Midyear Polling Review." *CE Think Tank Newswire*, 30 July 2024. *SIRS Issues Researcher*,  
[explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/3092444903?accountid=134741](https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/3092444903?accountid=134741).
- "American Parents Want Their Children to Have Phones in Schools." *The Economist*, 6 June 2024. *Gale in Context: Opposing Viewpoints*,  
[link.gale.com/apps/doc/A796599052/OVIC?u=poway\\_mvms&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=c32174aa](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A796599052/OVIC?u=poway_mvms&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=c32174aa). Accessed 18 Mar. 2025.
- Bertsch, Sara. "Cell Phone Serves 'Lot of Purposes' in Mitchell High School." *TCA Regional News*, 16 Sept. 2017. *SIRS Issues Researcher*,  
[explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2264388735?accountid=134741](https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2264388735?accountid=134741).
- "Cell Phone Policies for Students and Teachers in US Middle and High Schools, 2020." *Gale Opposing Viewpoints Online Collection*, Gale, 2022. *Gale in Context: Opposing Viewpoints*,  
[link.gale.com/apps/doc/LDIDRI913314067/OVIC?u=poway\\_mvms&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=04129e78](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/LDIDRI913314067/OVIC?u=poway_mvms&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=04129e78). Accessed 19 Mar. 2025.
- Horn, Michael B. "Ban the Cellphone Ban: Blanket Policies Ignore the Potential of App-powered Learning." *Education Next*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2023, p. 76+. *Gale in Context: Opposing Viewpoints*,  
[link.gale.com/apps/doc/A743647683/OVIC?u=poway\\_mvms&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=9c4706d2](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A743647683/OVIC?u=poway_mvms&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=9c4706d2). Accessed 19 Mar. 2025.

Jolly, Jennifer. "Parents Push Back on Smartphone Bans." *USA TODAY*, 29 Aug. 2024. *SIRS Discoverer*,

[explore.proquest.com/sirsdiscoverer/document/3100315822?accountid=134741](https://explore.proquest.com/sirsdiscoverer/document/3100315822?accountid=134741).

Klein, Alyson. "Schools Say No to Cellphones in Class. but Is It a Smart Move?" *Education Week*, vol. 39, no. 04, 11 Sept. 2019, p. 1. *Gale in Context: Opposing Viewpoints*,

[link.gale.com/apps/doc/A600236330/OVIC?u=poway\\_mvms&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=fe6f6f08](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A600236330/OVIC?u=poway_mvms&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=fe6f6f08). Accessed 18 Mar. 2025.

Langreo, Lauraine. "Can SEL Help Students Curb Their Own Cellphone Use? Experts Say That a Combination of SEL Skills and Better School Policies Would Help Curb Student

Cellphone Use." *Education Week*, 3 May 2024. *Gale in Context: Opposing Viewpoints*,

[link.gale.com/apps/doc/A792467714/OVIC?u=poway\\_mvms&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=96cf24e9](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A792467714/OVIC?u=poway_mvms&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=96cf24e9). Accessed 18 Mar. 2025.

"Ontario Isn't the First Place to Ban Cellphones in Schools." *Toronto Star (Online)*, 30 Apr. 2024.

*SIRS Issues Researcher*,

[explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/3065074041?accountid=134741](https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/3065074041?accountid=134741).

"Support for Cell Phones in School among Teens, Parents, and Teachers, March 2024." *Gale*

*Opposing Viewpoints Online Collection*, Gale, 2024. *Gale in Context: Opposing*

*Viewpoints*,

[link.gale.com/apps/doc/JIGNMN236625422/OVIC?u=poway\\_mvms&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=52b744fe](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/JIGNMN236625422/OVIC?u=poway_mvms&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=52b744fe). Accessed 19 Mar. 2025.

"Why Students Should Be Using Their Phones in Class." *University Wire*, 29 Jan. 2018. *SIRS*

*Issues Researcher*,

[explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2265386945?accountid=134741](https://explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2265386945?accountid=134741).