

# Going Phone-Free

## A Toolkit for Parents Who Want to Work With Their School Protect Young Eyes (PYE)

One mom – we'll call her Amber - with a fifth grader heading into a public middle school was concerned about the use of personal cell phones during the school day.

She felt compelled to take action.

She contacted us at PYE for help and then initiated an intense campaign. She documented every step, which we've included below.

Here's where she started:

- **Middle school:** each teacher could allow or disallow phones.

This was the outcome of her campaign:

- **Middle school:** Devices are powered off and in bags during the day. Can't be seen or heard, or confiscated. Strictly enforced (kids don't use lockers).

The current policy doesn't include specific guidelines for smartwatches and iPods. But both are kept away in the same way.

We realize this isn't a pure "away for the day" policy since without strict enforcement and bathroom monitoring, bag storage has gaps. But as you'll see from teachers in comments at the end, the response from students has been extremely positive.

Throughout this document, you'll see important attributes of Amber's process, which can apply to any school and phone-free campaign. She communicated:

- **Often.**
- **Calmly.**
- **Consistently.** Namely:
  - Always circling back to research.
  - Always circling back to the District's mission.
  - Always reminding them of their role.
  - Always reminding them of the specific request - phone-free.

I also appreciate how Amber treated the decision-makers. As partners in this cause. She was direct but did whatever she could to support them in their decision-making role.

Dates are included just to show an example timeline. Amber was able to accomplish this in two months due to amazing persistence. Items in red are notes from Chris at PYE to emphasize something important. Italicized sections indicate actual text from Amber's emails.

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## May 25: Open School Board hours. Concerned parents attend and voice concerns.

Note: School Boards often have open hours for the community. Use them!

### Amber's agenda for that meeting:

- Introductions
  - Appreciate you being here
  - Discuss the current cell phone policy
  - I've done research, and I know several other parents who have contacted lower-level administration. I wanted to bring to your attention the info that we have become aware of.
  - Share [Protect Young Eyes Research PDF](#)
  - Share [Surgeon General Summary](#)
- "There is a mountain of evidence (that you can keep) that supports that phones are terrible in schools – for kids academically and mental health-wise. I have never seen a study that smartphones are having an overall positive impact on the educational goals of a school."
- "As a school board member entrusted to maximize educational opportunity for kids, and the well-being and growth of kids, I am asking you to help implement an AWAY FOR THE DAY POLICY."
  - Note: it's important that Amber clearly states what she wants. You'll see this repeated often.
- "I'd like to take a couple of minutes, if I can, to share the experience of Forest Hills school district in GR which has adopted such a policy for ALL schools within their district. There is also another School system in TX, called the Post Oak School that has adopted a similar policy."
  - Show docs [Key: [using this database](#) of example "away" policies, find one that will resonate with whatever district you're working with]
- "We know that phones are a part of everyday life. However, every piece of evidence points to how negative smartphones are for kids – especially in a school setting. I don't understand how a school system can achieve its mission [Key: look up the district's mission statement and connect your goals to the district/school mission statement. Insert the statement here]

while allowing kids to have smart devices in the classroom, lunchroom, and hang-out areas.”

- Ask for a meeting with the superintendent and a spot to speak at a board meeting.
- Offer to email the other board members so they have the same information and can see the information that I have provided.

## **May 26: Amber sent an email to the entire school board and superintendent after the open discussion.**

*Good morning,*

*I would like to take a minute to introduce myself. [NAME] I am a mom to 3 boys, with my oldest entering 6th grade at [SCHOOL]. I attended the open board meeting hours last night and had a great discussion with [NAME] on the topic that I want to also share with you. While I attended the meeting hours independently, upon arriving, I found many other individuals (including parents, a physician, and community members) who also feel the same way and have the same concerns that I will share with you. [Key parts of this paragraph – a friendly introduction, as a parent, not picking a fight, sets a great tone]*

*And I personally know many others who share the same concerns.*

*In this email, I will provide all board members and [SUPERINTENDENT] with the same materials that I provided [NAME] last night. I am concerned about the cell phone policy at [SCHOOL NAME]. I have done a lot of research, and I would like to share with you just a small portion of the information that is available. There is a mountain of evidence that cell phones and social media are harmful to children's educational success, their ability to focus, and their overall mental health and well-being. Yet, phones are being welcomed into [SCHOOL NAME] school buildings. I have never seen a single piece of research-based material that supports phones in schools.*

*I have attached multiple documents that I will quickly list and explain below:*

1. **#PhoneFreeSchools (the PYE research document):** This is just a sampling of the research that exists that shows the detrimental impact that phones have on children. The studies are almost all hyperlinked to take you to the supporting documents. There are sections for (1) Impacts on screens for learning; (2) Impacts of screens on mental health; and (3) a general section (including cyberbullying).
2. **Social Media and Youth Mental Health (advisory):** This is the executive summary from the recent advisory put out by the Surgeon General of the United States urging that we need to protect kids now.

3. **No More Smartphones ([blog post](#))**: This is a case study on how Forest Hills school district in Grand Rapids, eliminated cell phones from ALL school buildings in the entire district and the positive impact that it has had for students, teachers, and administrators.
4. **Forest Hills Schools cell phone policies**: These are screenshots taken from the Forest Hills website regarding current cell phone policies.
5. **Benefits of Reduced Cell Phone Use (contained within the PYE research PDF)**: This is a graphic that Forest Hills Schools has on their website to support the cell phone policy.

*I would like to request that [SCHOOL NAME] implement an "Away for the Day" policy where cell phones must remain turned off and in lockers at the starting bell of the school day **[Note: again, important that she clearly states what she wants]**. Phones may be turned on and taken out of lockers at the dismissal bell at the end of the day. This is a great website about these policies and has a section that includes testimonials from principals, parents, and teachers from schools that have implemented Away for the Day policies.*

*As a school board member and a superintendent who are entrusted to maximize the educational opportunities and social and emotional well-being of the students, I do not believe that [SCHOOL NAME] can achieve their stated mission and goals while also welcoming smartphones into school classrooms, hallways, passing times, lunchrooms, and hang out areas. **[Note: always tie the request back to the mission]***

*I would love to begin this discussion and look forward to working together to eliminate phones in schools. If anyone would like to meet to discuss these materials or this issue, I would welcome a time to do so. I appreciate the time, work, and dedication you all give to our district and our students.*

*Have a wonderful holiday weekend*

## **Additional resources for this step:**

**[Here's a letter with more research.](#)** It was originally crafted for the Department of Education in Washington DC. But pieces of it could easily be used in something sent to school leadership if you think more hard data is needed.

[The following letter template was originally used for the Department of Education but can be adapted for local schools using the data provided]

Improving the state of education in this country is a goal we both share. Our expertise is research. We are a community of individuals and organizations who see an academic, mental health, and teaching crisis in every state of the union that can be solved automatically and effectively with a single strategy: removing students' *personal mobile devices from our places of learning* (with notable exceptions for those with special educational needs).

As you know, England is the latest country to [impose restrictions on cell phones](#) in schools. Education Secretary Gillian Keegan calls personal mobile devices "a serious challenge in terms of distraction, disruptive behavior, and bullying. It is one of the biggest issues that children and teachers have to grapple with." U.S. teachers, administrators, and parents overwhelmingly concur.

[France](#) banned phones from schools for students under 15 in 2018. [China](#) banned them for all grades in 2021. In fact, according to the [2023 UN Global Education Monitoring Report 2023: Technology in Education](#), one in seven countries has banned the use of mobile phones in schools, while several others have instituted partial bans. Many schools in the U.S. ban cell phones, but most are private institutions.

**There is no longer a debate on the impacts of cell phones at school.**

A [study in Britain of 8- to 12-year-olds](#) found that kids who sent 3+ text messages a day had significantly lower literacy scores than children who sent none. [Another study of students in two different universities](#) revealed that more than 90% of respondents reported receiving texts while in class and 86% reported texting someone from class. Respondents who sent texts received lower grades. Still, [another study](#) reveals that students who were not using their mobile phones during a class lecture "wrote down 62% more information in their notes, took more detailed notes, were able to recall more detailed information from the lecture, and scored a full letter grade and a half higher on a multiple choice test than those students who were actively using their mobile phones."

**INSERT PISA RESULTS**

**Teachers, too, need your help.**

As a former fourth-grade teacher yourself, you can likely relate to this [Montana teacher](#) who says this about his 38 years in the classroom:

**Here's a presentation with research** like what's in the Dept. of Ed letter above, but in a more visual way.



**June 6: Amber assembled a parent team and experts from the community. She prepared them for speaking at the next board meeting.**

Here's [Amber's spreadsheet with speakers and their topics](#). Notice the variety – parents, medical professionals, etc. It was very well done.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	School Board Meeting					
2	List of speakers for Away for the Day policy change					
3						
4	Speaking Approach:					
5	1 Introduce yourself, profession/credentials/school connection					
6	2 Short story/statistics					
7	3 Credible research supporting the need to remove phones. Hardcopy handouts to give to the board, if desired.					
8	4 Closing: In closing, I ask for the implementation of an "Away for the Day policy" at [insert school]					
9						
10						
11						
12	Angle	Speaker	Resources			
13	1 Introduce AFD policy, tie into strategic plan	Incoming parent				
14	2 A student's perspective	Current 5th grader				
15	3 Surgeon General Warning	Local pediatrician				
16	4 Mental Health, safety in emergencies	Local psychiatrist	Kids who get smartphones earlier become adults with worse mental health (substack.com)			
17		Former chair of Community Mental Health; current grandparent; attorney				
18	5 Community Mental Health	Parent, substitute teacher	The Case for Phone-Free Schools - by Jon Haidt (substack.com)			
19	6 Relational connection/Loneliness		Social Media Use and Adolescent Mental Health: Findings From the UK Millennium Cohort Study - eClinicalMedicine (thelancet.com)			
20			teensandtech-final.pdf (studies.org)			
21	7 Safety Concerns/Peer interaction/learning	Teacher				
22	8 Distraction in classrooms/Educational impact	Teacher	Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One's Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity   Journal of the Association for Consumer Research: Vol 2, No 2 (uchicago.edu)			
23			The Effects of Cell Phone Use and Emotion-regulation Style on College Students' Learning - The Mere Presence of a Cell Phone May be Distracting: Implications for Attention and Task			
24			The attentional cost of receiving a cell phone notification. (apa.org)			
25						
26	9 Freedom to learn/Freedom to teach	Attorney, parent				
27						
28	Additional resources:					
29						
30	9 Potential pushbacks		The Case for Phone-Free Schools - by Jon Haidt (substack.com)			
31			See the section "What Does Going Phone Free Mean"			
32			https://www.rea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/cellphone-bans-school-are-back-ho			
33			See "pushback from parents"			
34						
35	12 Example policies		Cell Phone Policy at NHS - Forms, Information, and Policies at NHS - Forest Hills Public			
36	PYE/Away for the Day	MICHIGAN:	Cell Phone Policy at Central Middle - Central Middle School - Forest Hills Public Schools			
37		Forest Hills	FHE Cell Phone Policy - Eastern High Forms, Information, and Policies - Forest Hills Public			
38		East Grand Rapids	Smart phones, Social Media, & Teens - The Greenspire School			
39		East Lansing	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AaFudaY08Nz67m7mQhwgT189rGkwnfs/edit			
40		Detroit Catholic Central				
41		GTACS				
42		Greenspire				
43		Ionia Middle School				
44		Grosse Pointe Public Middle schools				
45		Utica Community Schools	https://www.uticak12.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=237&dataid=118&			
46		Bloomfield Public Schools	https://www.bloomfield.org/about-us/board-of-education/uniform-student-code-of-conduct			
47		Haslett Public Schools	https://www.haslett.k12.mi.us/cms/lib/M102212134/Centricity/Domain/136/HMS%20Handbook			
48		Around the Country:				
49		White Hills Middle School - CA				
50		Grace Christian School - CA				
51		Roosevelt High School - WA				
52		Jefferson Middle School - FL				
53		San Mateo High School - CA				
54						
55		Highland Park Middle School - TX				
56						

## June 9: Email sent to Board letting them know their plans to speak.

Key: she didn't surprise the Board. Amber let the Board know what was coming and provided example policies before the meeting to show how feasible it is. Again, along with the specific request – phone-free, bell-to-bell.

Hello,

*My name is [NAME], a mom to 3 boys aged 8, 10, and 11. You may recall that I previously sent an email in May regarding the [SCHOOL NAME] cell phone policy. Since that email, I have connected with many other [SCHOOL NAME] parents, community members, and professionals who have expressed similar concerns and a desire for [SCHOOL NAME] to implement an Away for the Day policy in regard to smartphones and smart devices for the upcoming school year.*

*As a group of diverse community members, we have collectively come together and will be attending the board meeting on Monday. We look forward to sharing the information that we have learned with you at this meeting. We have had such a large response from parents and local professionals that we have had to limit*



*the number of people speaking at the public comment to be respectful of everyone's time. We have gathered people from many different professional backgrounds who will speak to cell phone usage in schools and its impacts from their specific areas of expertise.*

*We will all be formally requesting an Away for the Day policy be implemented in all [SCHOOL NAME] school buildings. This is a policy where any smartphones or devices are powered off and put away in lockers before the first bell of the day. They cannot come out of lockers or be turned on until after the dismissal bell and out of the school building.*

*We have found many districts in the State of Michigan that have implemented an Away for the Day Policy, or one similar, within their districts. Some of these policies are attached for your reference.*

*[Insert examples from the [policy database](#) that fit your situation here]*

*We look forward to presenting and discussing the matter with you at the board meeting on Monday. Please see my email from [DATE of first email] with the additional research supporting the removal of cell phones from schools.*

*Respectfully*

**June 12: Attended school board meeting. Had 10 presenters during open comment.**

*Note: each Board has rules about how long a speech/comment can be. Know this prior to attending. In this case, Amber did her research and all presenters were ready.*

**Example speech from concerned parents:**

*Hi, we are [NAMES] and we have three boys aged 8, 10, and 11. Our boys currently attend [SCHOOL NAME], with our oldest set to start at [SCHOOL NAME] next year.*

*[AMBER said this at the meeting] We are here today out of concern that we have for the [SCHOOL NAME] cell phone policy. I attended board/community hour a couple of weeks back with the hope of sharing some of what my husband and I had learned. I was shocked to learn when I arrived that almost every other person standing in line was there for the same purpose...to advocate that [SCHOOL NAME] remove phones from the school day. The grassroots dialogue that has transpired over the last couple of weeks has been encouraging.*

*As you will hear tonight, we have folks from all walks of life, both professionally and personally, who are here tonight to advocate for the harms that cell phones are having on the education and well-being of our children. We all understand that cell phones are a part of everyday life, but strongly believe that we are corporately doing a major disservice to our children's education by letting them remain in school.*

*[Amber's HUSBAND said this at the meeting] There is a mountain of evidence that supports that phones are terrible for kids and terrible in school settings and I have shared much of that information with you via email. Without rehashing every study, suffice it to say that I have never seen a study where smart devices are having a positive impact on children and young adults. From the [SCHOOL NAME] website, the mission of [SCHOOL NAME] is to "educate, inspire, and support all learners to maximize individual excellence and success."*

*And from the [SCHOOL NAME] strategic plan, section 1B, a goal focus area is to [INSERT more educational outcomes language] "develop and implement structures and systems of support to increase mental and emotional health and social well-being." It is our assertion that the mere presence of smartphones in the classroom makes it impossible for [SCHOOL NAME] to achieve these outcomes. And peer-reviewed research is our side. Further, as a businessperson, I struggle to understand how this school district can join a lawsuit alleging the harmful effects of social media when that very same school district allows smartphones and social media within their school buildings.*

*[AMBER] What we are asking for is simple...amend the current policy and adopt an Away for the Day policy. This policy would require that upon entering a school building, all smartphones are powered down and stored in lockers until after the dismissal bell. Many respected districts have already implemented similar policies across the state that remove phones from the classrooms. Just in Michigan alone, districts such as Bloomfield Hills, East Lansing, Farmington, Forest Hills, Haslett, and Utica Public schools have implemented similar policies to rave results....*

*In [name of their town], both [local school] and [local school] have phone-free policies. My wife also shared the actual text of these policies with all of you via email.*

*Thank you for your time.*

**Example testimony used at a faith-based school by Chris McKenna, PYE Founder, when he was asked to testify as an expert at a parent meeting**



**held by school leadership. In this specific situation, school leadership wanted the change and many parents did not. Chris was attempting to assuage their objections:**

*My name is Chris McKenna, founder of Protect Young Eyes, and father to 4, ages 19, 14, 14, and 13. I've spoken globally from Switzerland to the US Senate Judiciary Committee about the impacts of social media and digital spaces that simply weren't created for our amazing children. I'm also closely aligned with the non-profit Phone-Free Schools Movement, here in the United States and consult with schools that desire to become phone-free.*

*The research unequivocally points in one direction - that our children are the best version of themselves emotionally, relationally, spiritually, and academically without access to social media and personal electronic devices during the school day.*

*A 2023 Common Sense Media showed that 41% of teens have viewed pornography during the school day. Another study from the University of California showed it takes just over 23 minutes to refocus after checking a smartphone.*

*As a result of the research presented in Dr. Jonathan Haidt's best-selling book, The Anxious Generation, thousands of schools around the world have made the bold and common-sense decision to remove access to personal electronic devices from the school day, entirely.*

*EVERY - not just most - EVERY school that transitions from allowing them, even during passing time, to removing access during the day experiences significant benefits, including shifts in behavior, visits to counselors, incidents, grades, and decreases in cyberbullying.*

*As a parent, it can be comforting to have 24/7 access to our kids. But we also contribute to their anxiety and distraction by not leaving them alone. And with news swirling about violence at school, our natural inclination as parents is to want to stay in touch. But our children are not safer during the school day with their devices. In fact, school security experts all agree that in the event of a lockdown, the distraction, chaos, and misinformation caused by access to devices only adds to the risk of negative outcomes.*

*At [school name], forming leaders, scholars, and men for others is your admirable mission. As a Jesuit school, one of your lofty goals is to develop the whole person, including mind, body, and spirit - the cura personalis, and to foster intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth. Parents – you are making a significant*

*investment in sending your sons to this school, expecting leadership to create a learning and spiritual environment that supports these goals and your investment. A bell-to-bell phone-free policy supports these goals and points your amazing sons toward holiness.*

*Sincerely,  
Chris McKenna  
Founder and CEO, Protect Young Eyes*

**June 13: Amber sent this follow-up email to the board. She also sent links to local news articles that reported on the board meeting at the end of the email.**

*Board Members-*

*Thank you for your consideration of the Away for the Day policy by our grassroots group of community members last night. We have received an incredible outpouring of additional support from parents, community members, and teachers today asking how they can be helpful and share their voice as the discussion has made its way to the public eye.*

*Please know that there is a mountain of support for this proposal in our community behind the diverse, yet small, group that presented last night.*

*What we heard as the board discussed the matter as a group toward the end of the meeting was unanimous support for the district to implement a change in policy about cell phones. We also heard that there were a lot of "tentacles" to this policy from [SUPERINTENDENT].*

*While there are many facets to address between policy revision/approval and full implementation, the vast majority of those "tentacles" are implementation issues that will be made at levels below this board.*

*We are imploring you to use your collective power as elected board members to apply the administrative pressure needed so that this change gets implemented by the beginning of the next school year. It would be a travesty to let administrative hurdles get in the way of making this policy change prior to the beginning of next year. You have 2.5 months until the beginning of the school year...there is time to get this adopted if you put your collective willpower behind this effort now!*

*Based on some of our recent conversations with board members, given that this is a policy revision and only requires one public reading, our understanding of the next steps is that the superintendent and supporting teams should choose one of the policies that other school districts across the state are using and present that as a proposed amendment for discussion at the July board meeting. This will allow for a substantive board discussion on the matter at the July meeting. Amendments/changes could then be considered between July/August and an official amendment to the policy could be voted upon in August.*

*We are so excited as this is a change to [SCHOOL NAME] that is doable and will make such a lasting and positive impact on the learning environment for the thousands of kids/educators that we all care about and who are a part of the [SCHOOL NAME] community.*

*We will be watching and cheering hard for you to get this change pushed through! Please let us know if we can do anything else to be helpful as you guide this toward implemented policy.*

*Thank you again*

*[Included links to local news articles]*

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After that Board meeting, Amber pressed forward. Throughout the next six weeks, she stuck to her pattern of communication that was:

- Frequent
- Calm
- Consistent

She also stayed VERY connected to the cadence of regular and special board meetings, to ensure she could hear their concerns and address them.

For example:

- Amber discovered that there was a curriculum committee with a lot of influence that supported the move. The board held a special meeting with this committee and Amber attended. She then sent a powerful email to all board members, reiterating what she heard, with this “bottom line” (the bolded statements are from PYE, not Amber, but point out keywords):

*The bottom line is this:*

*The school board's responsibility is to help foster a system of educational excellence. At no point in the conversation during the board discussion in June or the Curriculum Committee discussion this week did we hear ANYONE make the case that cell phones are positive from an educational perspective for the kids. Yes, there are valid administrative and logistical issues to work through to get them out of the schools, **but those issues should not be the reason that we are impairing everyone's education in the meantime.***

*Additionally, talking about it for the next several months is not going to change any of the educational data about cell phones. **The board needs to strongly lead at the July board meeting that you all want a change in policy now if this is going to happen in time for the school year.** If you adopt a couple-sentence change in policy that gives the administrators two months of time to work amongst the buildings to make a change in time for the new school year*

- Amber attended the next board meeting where the first version of a policy was presented and discussed. It had gaps and didn't align with Amber's vision. Afterwards, she met with two board members and offered to help draft a new version, which she did.

*Note: the "I want to help you" attitude from Amber is amazing here.*

- Two weeks later, there was a special meeting to consider an updated draft. Amber sent an email to the entire board asking them to all vote in favor of the policies being considered K-12.

*Note: constant communication with similar messaging and reminding board members of the basics: mission, research, and that all school administrators want it, just waiting for the board's leadership.*

- Amber sent the following specific message to select board members making a specific ask. You don't get what you don't ask for. Ultimately, the board went a different direction, but it's good to make bold requests:

*Hello [NAMES],*

*Thank you again for taking the time to talk with us. We have been reflecting on our conversation and felt it would be beneficial to send an email.*

*We think that it will be very important to get a K-8 policy approved relatively quickly in the meeting tomorrow. Our understanding, based on talking with [middle school principal] and multiple board members, is that the middle school*

*administration is 100% behind this policy and has asked for it to be in place for the beginning of the school year. With little debate or differing opinions, getting this policy passed for K-8 will be an important way to start the meeting with leadership, direction, and progress.*

*After the K-8 policy, we do feel strongly that the 9-12 policy should start with the exact same policy as the K-8. We recognize that there is concern about implementation and buy-in. But both high school principals have stated that they will honor and enforce whatever the board tells them is required. We feel strongly that we need to take them at their word. Pass the policy for 9-12 also. It may include bumps in the road during implementation. So, [SCHOOL NAME] will need to find ways to support their staff. Hire an outside organization that specializes in this process. Find other ways to educate staff, help them to understand the data, and feel empowered to make this change.*

*We ALL acknowledge that this is for the best of our students. Just because it is hard, we should not back down.*

*Further, we strongly feel that this policy should include that phones must be kept in the lockers. It should also include that backpacks must be kept in student lockers. Lockers were used and were of sufficient size for decades, up until COVID. They have not suddenly changed size. If students do not want to use a locker, they can carry their day's materials in their arms. This is a safety issue. This should not be debated, and we should not allow the students to dictate that they can bring backpacks into classrooms simply because lockers are not cool anymore.*

*We have spoken with a teacher in Brighton Public Schools, and she stated that backpacks are not allowed in her classroom unless a student has special permission and a 'bag tag'. We believe that Forest Hills also does not allow backpacks in classrooms.*

*We cannot expect teachers to inspect student's backpacks for phones. So, let's take away the difficulty, the safety concerns, and the tripping hazards. It will help to improve the implementation of a new cell phone policy, it will follow in line with local and state law enforcement agencies' recommended practices of no bags in classrooms, and it will reduce tripping hazards in classrooms.*

*There needs to be unwavering leadership at the top. The board is that leader. The board needs to lead with confidence, and it will inspire the administration to lead at their buildings with confidence.*

*We greatly appreciate the time and attention that the board has put into this policy. We would be happy to talk again if that would be helpful. Thank you!*

**July 28: Amber sent this message to the board to express appreciation for the quick action and the new policy along with links to news articles about the new policy.**

*Good afternoon,*

*We just wanted to send a quick email of appreciation for the time and attention that has been given to the cell phone policy. The discussions have been respectful, constructive, and focused on the best outcome for the kids. We greatly respect the action that the board led with over the last two months once this need was realized. We are also encouraged by [principal name] and the leadership that she has demonstrated at the high school and her approach of first educating the students and families as to the "why" and thus have realized success with her approach.*

*We are excited about the outcome of the special meeting last night and look forward to a continuing improved social and educational environment for our students and teachers next year and into the future.*

*Thank you again,*

**Oct. 10: Amber collected feedback from multiple stakeholders and shared it with the board.**

**Note: this is an amazing step. She reached out to multiple stakeholders and gathered these statements.**

*Hello,*

*I wanted to follow up with you all now that we are a month into school and into the new cell phone policy. I have talked with parents, students, multiple teachers/staff. I wanted to share some of their feedback with you, as the policy change that you passed and implemented as a Board of Education was the catalyst to these changes:*

*From a variety of 6th grade students:*

- *No phones are seen in the hallways or at lunch.*
- *Phones are not an issue.*



- *They have never seen a phone taken away from a student because students don't bring them out.*

*From an 8th grade student:*

*"I'm happy about the cell phone policy change. It allows me to chat and hang out with my friends a lot more. They aren't just on their phone the whole time when I'm talking to them and it allows me to have more conversation walking with them especially in the morning before school and at recess. It also allows my friends to talk with me and have A LOT more fun at recess."*

*From a 9th grade student:*

*"I love not having my phone on me and in my pocket all day. I don't know why anyone would care if they didn't have them at all."*

*From Parents:*

*"We have talked about how grateful we are to people who made local change happen."*

*From staff:*

*"Every teacher is ecstatic about the phones. It's an absolutely huge culture change and it's probably the single biggest thing that has happened to make a positive change in the school. I have not had to take away a single phone so far this year."*

*"Thank you so much for your efforts to support kids and educators! I am also a teacher at the middle school, and I would echo what my colleague stated (above). I think we were prepared for a battle, but the new policy seems to have seamlessly taken effect. The rule was made. We taught the rule to parents & kids. The rule is being followed. The hallways are full of kids talking and interacting now vs. being on their phones and they travel to the next class. It's great!"*

*"I completely second the staff member quoted above! I'm not teaching in a classroom right now, but as someone who observes students and teachers in action, I have seen ZERO phones and heard ZERO conversations about phones this year. It's just simply not an issue. Teachers are so pleased, and students are perfectly fine. So much appreciation for your work to get this done! "*

*"Totally agree. I love the new policy. It is being implemented properly. The kids are following the rules, and the kids are being kids again which is so nice!"*

*"I am so appreciative of this new policy as a parent and a teacher and have also heard only positive feedback. As a fifth-grade teacher, it has been a non-issue, and we have already taken two outdoor field trips and kids LOVED every minute of being outdoors canoeing and fishing and interacting with one another. I know as a parent of a sixth grader; it has also had a tremendous impact at the middle school level and increased engagement and reduced behavior concerns according to another teacher. Keep up the great work!"*