

Dear **PRINCIPAL NAME**,

Due to the growing body of research showing that digital learning is not as effective as analog learning, I would like to request the option to opt out of iPad activities for my child: **STUDENT NAME (grade level)**.

Given the detrimental effects of screens on children's mental health, physical health and brain development, all parents should be provided with options related to screens, whether that be a full opt-out or a lower screen experience.

Screen overuse is common in today's school system and I believe it would be in the best interest of students to reflect on when the school-issued device is needed and when it is not.

Here are a few studies to show the benefit of analog learning over device learning:

- A study called "[How We Learn](#)" by researchers for Scientific American Mind reviewed more than 700 scientific articles on ten common learning techniques to identify the most advantageous ways to study. Of those deemed most advantageous for learning, exactly ZERO used any sort of advanced digital technology
- The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development [studied millions of HS students](#) around the world and found that those who used computers heavily at school "do a lot worse in most learning outcomes, even after accounting for social background and student demographics."
- [A recent study](#) found that 92 percent of students found it easiest to concentrate when reading in hard copy vs digital.
- [A recent study](#) found that writing on physical paper can increase brain activity when remembering the information an hour later.
- [A recent study](#) examined the importance of students using pencil and paper to show their math work. They found that those who were encouraged to work with paper and pencil outperformed their peers by about 13 points, showing greater accuracy in their work.
- [A global survey](#) found that when it comes to learning reading, math and science, the best results come when students are in classes where teachers alone use tech as an aid in their teaching (not students).

If we set aside the studies above and just look at **the effects of screen time on kids**, dozens of peer-reviewed studies show a strong correlation between excessive technology use and a decline in mental health (especially in adolescents). In my personal experience, my child reported to spend nearly 2 hours of screen time during their school day. This amount of screen time is detrimental to not only their education, but their social and emotional development, even the development of their brain ([supporting NIH study here](#)).

I also have concerns about the distractions and inappropriate content available on the school-issued devices. Often, school-issued devices give kids access to YouTube, Safari internet and websites that I find to be inappropriate for their age level. If we cannot lock down

the devices sufficiently, cutting back on the amount of time the kids spend on them will decrease the chances of them accessing inappropriate content.

Given all of the information above, I would request that all parents are given the option to opt out of school-issued devices. At a minimum, there is room to offer parents a low-screen experience. Maybe one class per grade could be no-screen or low-screen, depending on parent demand?

An open discussion is needed here and I hope that you will be proactive in communicating with our parents about the risks associated with screens, in addition to the benefits.

I would also like to inquire about our smartphone policy. Many states are demanding more strict phone policies, especially with the growing risks that social media poses to our youth. Governor Newsom has indicated that this is an area where urgent attention is needed.

A recent quote from Governor Newsom: "As the Surgeon General affirmed, social media is harming the mental health of our youth. I look forward to working with the Legislature to restrict the use of smartphones during the school day. When children and teens are in school, they should be focused on their studies — not their screens."

With the nationwide movement to phone-free schools, what is our school's plan for protecting children from the consequences of having smartphones at school?

Will you be implementing a stricter policy around smartphones and communicating that to parents? Given that our school's students are just **12 and under**, I should think that a bell-to-bell phone free policy would be reasonable, where phones are not available to students. I recommend the resources and guide [available here](#) through the Phone Free Schools Movement.

I am readily available to help develop or implement screen improvements within our own school, whether it's related to updating policy, communication with parents or elsewhere.

There is a lot laid out above and I'd love to discuss in person or on a phone call. Let me know when would be a good time.

Thank you,

NAME

Parent of CHILD NAME

CONTACT INFO