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TO: Board of Education
FROM: Dale Ellis
DATE: December 5, 2011
SUBJ: INFORMATION ITEM (Cell Phone Update)

Attached is the feedback received on the cell phone policy. As you can see, the reviews are mixed at best. Obviously, students were vehemently against the ban. The adults were mixed. According to some staff, some teachers do use them as part of instruction.

From personal experience, we had a ban in Iredell-Statesville schools that was relaxed due to the toughness of enforcing an outright ban. At the very least, I feel we need a more detailed list of expectations and enforcement options when those expectations are broken. Right now, we have a very loose, school-based policy which is what a lot of districts have until issues arise. I think we need a consistent district policy. We did not prepare a policy revision because we want your feedback before moving forward. I felt it was important for you to review the feedback prior to a policy recommendation as well. In short, the policy will change and we will present that in January. We just want your feedback to decide how much it will change.

I will be available to answer any questions you may have.

**Community Area Advisory Meeting
West & East Montgomery High Schools
Oct. 17 & 25, 2011**

Cell Phone Ban? Pro

- Can't use them to cheat during class. (7)
- Minimize interruptions during class – ringing and beeping. (8)
- Will allow students to be more focused in class/pay attention. (13)
- Teachers/administrators won't have to police them. Zero tolerance.
- Less likely to be stolen.
- Students don't need cell phones for emergencies – they can use the office telephone (5).

Cell Phone Ban? Con

- In case of emergency students can reach parents or administrator of school. (30)
- The wave of the future is technology based/Google and other information that is useful to students can be reached via a cell phone. (12)
- Students use cell phones to stay in contact with parents – i.e. practice changes after school. (13)
- Cell phones are used in many online classes/contact with helpdesk and professors. (7)
- Sometimes cell phones are used for instructional purposes: texting answers, class surveys, research tool, etc. (12)
- If you try to ban cell phones, administrators will spend a lot of time disciplining students/teachers will have to focus on enforcing the ban. (6)

General Policy Feedback

- Ban cell phones from schools. (3)
- The current policy is good. Students just need to be more respectful of the rules. (9)
- Allow phones whenever they do not interfere with classroom instruction. Students can use at break and lunch. Deal with issues created by misuse of phones instead of banning them. (19)
- Keep cell phones locked in lockers – no classrooms, hallways, etc. (6)

Feedback from Classified Staff Advisory discussions – Cell Phone Ban?

Pro:

- Cell phones are negative distractions to the learning environment
- Cell phones are used at inappropriate times
- Certain emergencies may occur where students do not need to use a cell phone – ex: bomb threat
- There is a phone available after school for students who participate in activities

Con:

- Students who participate in after school sports need them
- A child may have a medical emergency or be under a physician's care
- If cell phones are banned, students may overload the office needing to use the phone – ex: cancelled sports, staying after, etc. (2)
- More parents will call the office if they can't reach their child on their cell, instead of just texting their child and receiving a response (2)
- Some teachers use cell phones to communicate with students during lessons
- Just in case there is a parent who doesn't speak English and there is no translator available, it may be easier for a child to just call home and speak with his/her parent

Other Feedback:

- Cell phones should only be used after regular school hours and they should be kept in lockers or cars during school hours
- What about iPod Touch devices? They can text and call on those, too!

Feedback from Certified Staff Advisory discussions – Cell Phone Ban?

Pro:

- Respect between teacher and student
- Eliminate/reduce class distractions (3)
- Will stop students from videotaping fights and/or teachers and posting them online
- Fair for all

Con:

- It will make it more difficult for club members, sports coaches and team members to easily communicate information about games and practice changes
- Administration will be overloaded with ban/confiscation
- Use of phone = technology tool that reduces paper usage
- Sometimes phones are used in class as a part of their lesson/assignment

Other feedback:

- Policy should be set by faculty sponsor for extracurricular activities
- Require cell phone policy to be signed by student and parent, with penalties spelled out and enforced
- Need consistency throughout the school