

# Cell Phone Free Schools

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# Phone Free Classrooms/Schools - 14 years history/data

1. 2010-12- Midway Public Schools
  - a. No phones in buildings
  - b. 149 day calendar
  - c. Ranked #4 out of 18 regional schools on OPI scores
  - d. Consolidated with Boynton-Moton in 11/12 school year (closed due to poor performance)
2. 2012-18 & 2019-24 Warner Public Schools
  - a. No phones in buildings
  - b. Moved from #15 of 18 regional schools to consistent top 15 state school
  - c. Less than 110 cell phone violations
3. 2018-19 Sallisaw Public Schools
  - a. No phones in classes
  - b. Phones allowed during lunch
4. 2024-25 Pocola Public Schools
  - a. No phones in classrooms (hallways and lunch permitted)
  - b. Decreased discipline & vandalism

# School Culture- Positive Student Impacts due to Cell Phone Free Schools

1. Reduction in fighting/bullying/harassment
  - a. Reduced opportunities for “viral” fights/altercations
  - b. Better student health as anxiety is reduced
    - i. Students report not being as worried about negative posts on social media
2. Reduction in vandalism
  - a. TikTok Trends
  - b. Social Media Trends
3. Students learn math facts
  - a. Are not able to rely on PhotoMath, WolframAlpha, etc
4. Students transition to reading/independent practice vs cell phones
  - a. Students read library books once finished with work instead of being on phones
5. Improved performance on state assessments
  - a. Students felt prepared to succeed

# School Culture- Teacher Impacts in Cell Phone Free Schools

1. TLE- Evaluation Conferences produced following results consistently
  - a. Teachers felt safe
  - b. Reported not being worried about being “set-up” by students
  - c. Empowered to teach bell to bell
  - d. Were not fighting the distraction of cell phones and students off-task
2. Teachers LOVED not fighting cell phones
  - a. Improved teacher retention (did not want to return to schools who allowed cell phone use)
3. Average or Struggling teachers improved
  - a. At Warner, teachers with a 55-80% success rate, grew to greater than 90% with removal of cell phones and consistent learning environment
4. Relationships are better
  - a. Students interact more with teacher vs being on their cell phones

# Campus Free vs Classroom Free Differences

1. Hallways empty quicker in campus free environments
  - a. Students stand in hallways or restrooms on phones when phones are allowed on campus
  - b. Bell ringers are able to be started quicker because students enter classrooms quicker
2. Lunch Time- Authentic Conversations in campus free
  - a. Students speak to each other vs heads down in games and social media
  - b. Less stress (one student reported not having to worry about who was trying to talk to his girlfriend)
  - c. Students play games and interact with each other instead of playing on phones
3. Commons areas/Restrooms
  - a. Reduced issues in areas when students do not have cell phones at all

# Personal Historical Conclusions

1. Schools should be Cell Phone Free to improve student academic outcomes.
2. We will need legislative assistance to improve student learning in all 77 counties. Many local boards and/or administrators will not make the change independently.
3. The more the restriction on cell phones, the greater the increase in student achievement.
4. Student mental health seemed to improve where cell phones were more restricted.
5. Parent concerns regarding contact in an emergency situation could create an unsafe environment if students are hiding, speaking on phone or phone is ringing in an active shooter situation.