



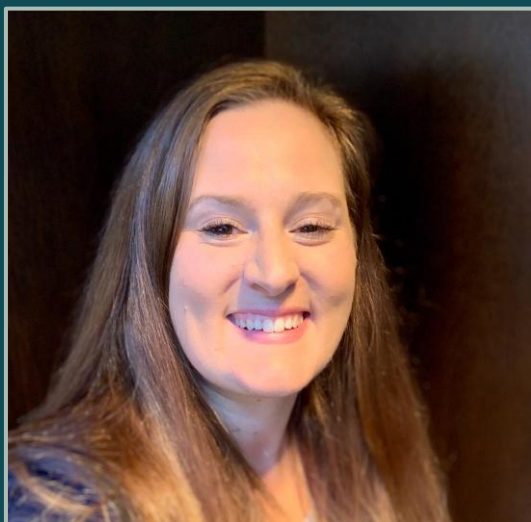
Oklahoma State Senate Education Interim Study on
"Cell Phones in Classrooms/Schools"

PHONE-free

PHONE-FREE SCHOOLS MOVEMENT



Sabine Polak



Mileva Repasky



Kim Whitman

Phone-Free Schools Movement Mission:

To provide youth the freedom to excel academically and develop socially without the pressures and harms of phones and social media during the school day.



Define the Problem



How phones negatively impact students and the school day

Phone Use by Teens



97%

of students use phones during school hours



35%

of teens admit to using their phone to cheat



43

minutes per school day spent on social media, YouTube and gaming



65%

of students report they are distracted by devices



1/3

of teens report being exposed to pornography during the school day



72%

of HS teachers say phone distraction is a major problem

Sources: [Common Sense Media 2023 Constant Companion Report](#), [Common Sense Media Teens and Pornography](#), [PISA 2022 results: The impact of digital distractions on classroom learning](#), [Pew Research Center](#)

NEA Poll: Social Media, Personal Devices and Mental Health



80% of members support prohibiting cell phone/ personal device usage during the entire school day.



Over 90% of educators feel students' mental health is a serious issue at their school.



[nea-member-polling-on-social-media-personal-devices-and-mental-health-june-20-2024.pdf](#)

Social Media Use and Teen Mental Health



95%

of teenagers are on social media; **40%** of 8-12 year olds



134%

increase in teen anxiety since 2010



5 hours

teens spend nearly 5 hours per day on social media apps



106%

increase in teen depression since 2010



3+ hours

per day on social media doubles the risk of poor mental health



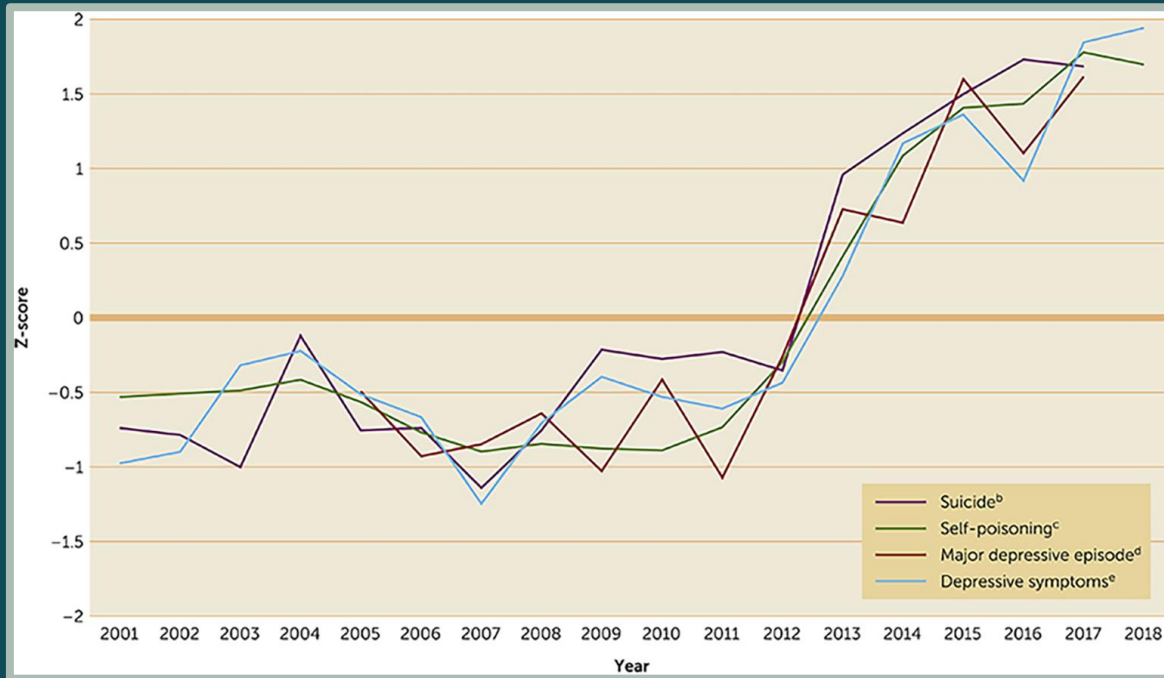
2x

rates of loneliness has doubled since 2012

Sources: [Surgeon General's Advisory: Social Media and Youth Mental Health](#), [American Psychological Association](#), [The Anxious Generation](#), [NIH: Worldwide increases in adolescent loneliness](#)

Since 2012

Steep increase in Depression, Self Harm and Suicide



Dr. Jean Twenge:
Increases in
Depression, Self-Harm,
and Suicide Among
U.S. Adolescents After
2012 and Links to
Technology Use:
Possible Mechanisms

2023 – The U.S. Surgeon General issued an Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health



“At this time, we do not yet have enough evidence to determine if social media is sufficiently safe for children and adolescents.”

-Dr. Vivek Murthy

2024 – The U.S. Surgeon General calls for warning labels on social media platforms



“ Schools should ensure that classroom learning and social time are phone-free experiences. ”

-Dr. Vivek Murthy

The New York Times

[Opinion | Surgeon General: Social Media Platforms Need a Health Warning - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

Common Pushbacks to Phone-Free Policies



"Parents need to reach their children during the day"



"Phones are essential for learning"



Communication policies allowing access in emergencies.



Highlight alternative tools designed for education without the distractions.



"Students need phones for emergency situations"



Evidence shows phones can hinder crisis management.

Phones Compromise Student Safety During a Crisis

- Distract students from following safety instructions
- Could alert an intruder to their location
- Spread rumors, causing confusion and delaying the response
- Influx of parents to the school, interfering with evacuation efforts
- High call volumes can overwhelm communication systems; hindering communication systems

For more information, refer to:
[National School Safety and Security Services](#)



Define the Solution



How to protect students and the school day and what is your role as state legislators

Best Practice Definition:

The best practice definition of a phone-free school is a "first bell to last bell" policy that requires all personal electronic devices (cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, AirPods, fitness trackers and Bluetooth connected headphones, etc.) are securely locked away and inaccessible for the entire school day.

Storage Options:

- Phones are to be securely locked away and inaccessible for the entire school day in:
 - Secured baskets with phones stored in pencil pouches, padded envelopes, etc.
 - Locked phone lockers
 - Locked pouches such as Yondr
- Phones cannot be stored:
 - On the person
 - Backpack
 - Student's locker



Instructional Time ONLY Benefits



- More Engagement
- Increased Focus
- Improved Academics
- Less cheating

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME ONLY Benefits



More Engagement
Increased Focus
Improved Academics
Less cheating



ALL DAY Benefits

- Social Emotional skills develop
- Mid-class absenteeism decreases
- All day absenteeism decreases
- Students practice independence
- Safety improves
- Teacher morale/retention goes up
- Classroom time benefits
- Mental health improves

What are we hearing? The Anecdotal Evidence:



- Teachers report being ahead of schedule on their lesson plans because they aren't spending time policing phones
- Students are completing classwork and assignments faster
- Increase in books checked out from their libraries
- Lunchrooms/hallways are markedly louder because students are having face-to-face conversations with their peers
- School counselors are seeing a decrease in the rate of mental health related student visits
- Administrators report spending significantly less time on discipline referrals
- Peer conflicts are deescalating quicker as social skills improve
- More after school club participation

2024 Norway study

Smartphone Bans, Student Outcomes and Mental Health

- **46%** of girls and **43%** of boys experienced a reduction of bullying
- Girls from lower socioeconomic backgrounds saw the greatest benefits with **reduced visits for mental health care and improvement in grades**



[Smartphone Bans, Student Outcomes and Mental Health by Sara Abrahamsson :: SSRN](#)

Road Blocks for Schools

- Fear of Parent Pushback
- Overwhelmed by implementation processes
- Lack of historical resources
- Budget Concerns

Phone-Free Schools Administrator Toolkit

What's Included



Supporting Data

SECTION 1:

Research Infographic
Benefits



Implementation Materials

SECTION 2:

Rollout Timeline
Implementation Guide
Model Phone-Free Policy



Stakeholder Communications

SECTION 3:

Frequently Asked Questions
Common Pushbacks
Letters
Surveys

Sign up to receive a free copy at phonefreeschoolsmovement.org

Oklahoma has the opportunity to lead the way in drafting comprehensive legislation that supports the social, emotional, and academic development of our children by going phone-free in schools

Call to Action

- **Statewide support** for bell-to-bell phone-free policies in schools
- Address the **public health crisis**—local control does not work
- **Encourage school districts** to adopt these policies for student well-being
- Provide **resources and funding** to support schools during the transition
- Leverage existing tools—we already have the resources to **support legislation**
- Help draft bell-to-bell legislation that considers **social, emotional, and academic needs** of students

PHONE-free

PHONE-FREE SCHOOLS MOVEMENT

The Phone-Free Schools Movement is dedicated to helping schools create healthier, more focused, and supportive learning environments by removing the distraction of phones. By supporting phone-free policies, you're contributing to the future success and well-being of students across our state.

For more information, visit www.phonefreeschoolsmovement.org.

Learn



Engage



Thrive

