

Dear Committee Members,

The monumental shift that has occurred within the school needs to be shouted from the rooftops! My students have ONLY benefited from removing cell phones from the classroom, let alone the school as a whole. I firmly believe that it takes a campus-free phone policy to fully reap the benefits. The positive turn towards increased social communication and the ability for all students to share their voice, their ideas, and their questions has been transformational. Over the last 3 years, I have had one student in particular who has had such difficulty engaging in class discussions and assignments. Now that we are cell phone-free, the student is an integral part of the classroom community. They are not competing with peers in this strange, silent tension that phone use insidiously took over in my room. Many students felt isolated like outsiders peering in as peers needlessly disassociate from the classroom and engage in their virtual social group.

As far as academic progress, I am able to cover an increasingly greater amount of material. We have eliminated the need to redirect students. Redirection and prompting to task was at an all-time high, now students are ready to start class, and it is a huge relief to have to redirect students simply from healthy social conversation, particularly students who were never socializing! I would much prefer students having a conversation with their peers versus what we used to witness, which was lethargic silence and students snapping nonsense furiously, or scrolling videos endlessly. Students are sharing stories-story telling is so important. It is how we extend our histories and make connections among our community of peers.

I want all schools to have this privilege and reinvigorate their learning community.

Thank you,  
Sarah Wilbur  
Special Education Teacher  
Morse High School