

## **NASRO statement and testimony of support for phone and social media free schools - Executive Director Mo Canady**

### **Statements for Media:**

According to Mo Canady, Executive Director for National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), “When students can access their phones during the school day, they are less safe. Not only are they less safe in a school emergency situation, where they should be paying attention to their teacher or first responders’ instructions, but they are less safe during ordinary school days. Phones allow for social media drama to unfold, cyberbullying to take place, fights to be planned and privacy violations to occur every school day.”

### **Written testimony for legislative hearings:**

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) is dedicated to making schools and children safer by providing the highest quality training to school-based law enforcement officers.

NASRO, the gold standard in school-based law enforcement training, is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1991 for school-based police, school administrators, and school security and/or safety professionals who work as partners to protect schools and their students, faculty, and staff members.

I have been the Executive Director of NASRO for the last 14 years and prior to that I was a School Resource Officer for 14 years.

NASRO is extremely supportive of a statewide bell to bell phone and social media free policy for grades k-12. We do not support an exception for emergencies. We know that schools, students and staff are safer when student cell phones and personal devices are not present during the school day. For this reason, if students are allowed to bring personal devices to school they should be securely locked away and inaccessible to the student from the first bell to the last bell of the school day.

We often hear parents say they want to be able to contact their student in an emergency situation such as an active shooter in the school. However, outside communication during this critical time makes students less safe.

In an emergency situation that requires a lock down the following are essential safety procedures:

**1) Students need to be focused on the adults giving instructions.** During this critical time, students need to listen to the teacher and/or first responders for guidance. Messaging or calling their parents who are not in the building could distract students from life saving instructions.

**2) If in hiding, students need to remain quiet.** Noise and/or light from students' phone could alert an assailant to the location where students are hiding.

**3) Phone lines need to remain open for communication between staff and first responders.** If hundreds of students are calling their parents then the communication channels may be overwhelmed and impede necessary communication with first responders.

**4) Clear access to the school allows for faster response times by first responders.** If parents are alerted by students and rush to the school, the extra traffic could potentially block access routes for emergency response vehicles.

**5) The fewer people approaching the building, the more secure the surroundings.** Parents rushing to the school can risk being mistaken as an assailant.

**6) Schools are equipped to manage emergency communication with first responders and with parents.** Misinformation can quickly spread over social media. If students are texting and posting on social media during an emergency situation it could lead to a more hazardous situation.

For the best outcome it is essential for students NOT to be on their phones during a lockdown.

In addition to phones placing students in more danger during emergency situations, they also contribute to a less safe school environment in general. A significant portion of discipline referrals result from students having access to phones and social media during the school day. These concerns include privacy violations, social media drama, cyberbullying, and fights. All of which are significantly reduced in schools that require students to lock up their phones for the entire school day. If students have access at any point during the day, lunch or passing periods for example, then these infractions still occur. Therefore, it is prudent that legislation be passed so all students can have a safe and distraction-free learning environment.