

Good AM – I am Kevin McCaskill, Principal of Brockton HS in Brockton, MA, home of the largest high school in New England with nearly 3,900. This school year, we have adopted the cell phone free school approach and have seen marked differences in our school from last year. Benefits of our policy have been substantial reduction in fighting, increased student discourse across the board, and more attentive students in classroom settings. We look forward to improving upon our cell phone-free school structure to improve the student experience.

Full day cell phone-free schools offer a range of potential benefits that can improve the overall school environment and enhance students' academic performance and well-being. Here are some of the benefits of cell phone free school environment:

1. **Reduced Distractions:** Without the constant temptation of checking social media or texting friends during class, students can stay focused on instruction, assignments, and interactions with peers.
2. **Increased Face-to-Face Interaction:** Students are more likely to engage in face-to-face conversations, which fosters better social skills and strengthening relationships with classmates and school staff.
3. **Improved Academic Performance:** With fewer distractions from texting, gaming, or browsing the internet, students are able to concentrate on the task at hand (learning), which leads to better retention of information and improved academic outcomes.
4. **Better Mental Health:** Reducing screen time, particularly during school hours, can help decrease stress, anxiety, and the pressure to stay connected online for extended periods of time, which has been linked to better overall mental health in students.
5. **Encourages Active Participation:** Without phones, students are more likely to engage in classroom discussions, activities, and hands-on learning activities, contributing to a more active and participatory learning environment.
6. **Increased Safety:** Limiting cell phone use during school hours can reduce issues such as cyberbullying, as well as prevent the spread of inappropriate content, rumors, and misinformation.

7. **Improved Sleep:** By reducing phone use during the day, students may have a better chance of winding down at night, leading to healthier sleep patterns and better rest.
8. **Promotes Equity:** Not all students have the same access to smartphones or the internet. By not relying on phones for schoolwork, it helps level the playing field for students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.
9. **Fostering a More Focused Learning Environment:** Teachers can better facilitate the learning environment and prevent disruptions that might occur when students are distracted by their phones.
10. **Better Time Management Skills:** Students may learn how to better manage their time when they don't have the constant distraction of their phone, helping them prioritize tasks and responsibilities.