

EDUW 695
September 28, 2013
Eric Wedemeyer

An issue that is very interesting regarding technology in our society and especially in education is the use of cell phones in school. This is an issue that has many angles to it. Should students be allowed to have them at school at all? Can they have them at school but for use only between classes? Should they be allowed in the classroom but to be used only in emergencies? Can they actually be used as a tool of learning? The variables go on and on. One thing that is certain about the issue is that in this day and age, where nearly every student from middle school through high school has a mobile phone, every school district in the country will have to address it at some point if they haven't already.

The school where I teach does not have a written policy regarding cell phones. Each teacher deals with the issue the way they see fit for their class. The school as a whole does allow cell phones to be used for personal use by students between classes. I personally do not allow cell phones in my classes. In my experience they become a distraction and do not add anything to the learning process. However, other teachers not only allow students to have cell phones on them, but they also use them as part of their lessons.

The school board in the Chicago suburb of Plainfield, the Community Consolidated School District 202, put in place a policy that requires students to turn off cell phones and store them in their lockers. At the beginning of this school year some administrators and principals of the district tried to work a deal with the board that would let high school students only, to use their phones between classes. The board stood firm and stuck to their policy. (1)

I think that each school district should have a definitive and consistent policy in place that the students are clearly informed about. I think that leaving it up to each teacher causes confusion and puts a lot of pressure on the teachers to enforce a policy that is not school-wide. I respect a school board that drafts a policy and sticks to it, even under pressure from administrators. With that said, I think that this is a living issue, one that should be looked at nearly every year. Decisions should be made based on what the people in charge feel is the best interest of their district from year to year.

I also believe that the decision on the level of use of cell phones in a particular school district should be made with the consideration of many factors. Some of these factors include the personal safety rights of the students, possible inappropriate use of the devices by the students, whether or not they are a valuable tool of learning and unintended detractors from school safety & crisis plans.(2) There are without a doubt, arguments for both sides of this issue. But, with any issue where the decision is not clear and easy, the key is to have the adults that are in charge of making the decision, sit down and honestly look at both sides of the issue and create the policy that best suits them.

- 1.) Peunte, Micheal. "Schools consider whether cell phones pose too much of distraction for students". WBEZ 91.5 Chicago. 23 August 2013 Web. 1 Oct. 2013.
- 2.) Dunn, Jeff. "How should students use cell phones in school?" edudemic. 9 May 2011. Web. 1 Oct 2013.