Cell Phone Use and Social Media Education: A District-Wide Approach

This presentation explores the impact of cell phone use and social media on our students' well-being and shares the ISD742 framework for district-wide education and policy. We are here to share our experiences, not to advocate for specific legislation.

Cell Phone Policy in 2024-25

On December 3rd, The U.S. Department of Education is called on every state, district, and school to adopt policies that guide the use of student personal devices in schools.

Policy Considerations

Age Appropriateness: Younger students may require more structured guidance and restrictions than older students, who are developing greater self-regulation skills.

Equity and Accessibility: The policy must avoid disproportionately impacting specific student groups and must not create or exacerbate existing barriers to learning.

Consistent Enforcement and Communication: Clear communication of rules, expectations, and consequences is crucial for all stakeholders (students, parents, and staff). Consistent enforcement across all classrooms and grade levels ensures fairness and minimizes confusion.

Resources:

- CoSN: Navigating Student Cell Phone Use in Schools (November 2024)
- U.S. Department of Education: Planning Together: A Playbook for Student Personal Device Policies (December 2024)

Three Approaches from U.S. Dept of Education

No Formal Policy

(Restrictions Based on Personal Judgement of Use)

In this approach, decisions regarding personal device use are left to the discretion of individual teachers or staff members. This can lead to inconsistencies across classrooms and challenges in communicating clear expectations to students and parents.

Schedule-Based Restrictions

These policies prohibit device use during specific times, like instructional periods, while allowing limited use during breaks, lunch, or transitions. Reinforces responsible use and self-regulation. Allows flexibility for all student groups.

Full-Day Restrictions

These policies prohibit personal device use throughout the entire school day, including instructional time, breaks, lunch, and passing times. Reduces distractions and promotes social interactions during unstructured time for fostering social connections and communication skills.

Current 742 Policy: Elementary and Middle School

Current Policy- Full Day Restriction

Elementary and middle schools currently implement an "Away for the Day" policy, where cell phones are kept in lockers during the school day.

These grade levels encompass critical periods for brain development, particularly in areas related to attention, self-regulation, and executive function. Combined with digital citizenship education, this policy helps to establish healthy technology habits early on.

Benefits

This policy fosters a positive learning environment, encouraging students to engage in classroom activities and interact with peers, reducing distractions.

Provides the structure and boundaries needed to support their cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development.

Current 742 Policy- High School

District Policy- Schedule Based Restriction

Our district's "Away for Learning" policy allows for responsible cell phone use in high schools, emphasizing appropriate usage and guidelines for students and educators.

Students keep cell phones in backpacks during class. This avoids the costs and logistical challenges associated with pouches or lockers.

Clear expectations and consistent enforcement by teachers are crucial.

High School Trend

High schools across Minnesota are generally moving away from blanket bans on cell phone use, recognizing the need for digital literacy skills and the role of technology in learning.

Schedule based restrictions help students develop responsible technology habits by modeling responsible use through balancing online and offline activities.

Impacts of Social Media on Student Well-being

Mental Health

Social media can exacerbate anxiety, depression, and body image issues due to unrealistic comparisons and cyberbullying.

Sleep

Exposure to blue light from devices can disrupt sleep patterns, leading to fatigue and reduced academic performance.

Attention

Constant notifications and the allure of social media can lead to decreased attention spans and difficulty focusing on learning.

American Academy of Pediatrics- Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health.

Educating Students on Responsible Social Media Use

Digital Citizenship

Teach students about online safety, privacy, and responsible online behavior, including cyberbullying awareness and prevention.

Mindful Use

Encourage students to practice mindfulness and limit screen time, promoting balance between online and offline activities.

Media Literacy

Develop students' critical thinking skills to evaluate information, recognize bias, and understand the influence of social media algorithms.

Incorporating Technology Literacy into the Curriculum

1

Technology Integration

Integrate technology into curriculum in a meaningful way, promoting responsible use and ethical practices.

2

Digital Skills Development

Equip students with the skills and knowledge to create, share, and consume digital content responsibly, fostering creativity and critical thinking.

3

Project-Based Learning

Utilize online tools for project-based learning, fostering collaboration, communication, and digital literacy skills.

Engaging Families in Social Media Education

Parent Workshops

Organize workshops to educate parents on the risks and benefits of social media for teens, providing guidance on setting boundaries and fostering healthy online habits.

Family Media Plans

Encourage families to develop their own media plans, setting screen time limits and establishing rules for responsible online behavior.

**1** ———— **2** ———— **3**

Open Dialogue

Encourage open communication and dialogue between parents and students regarding social media use, creating a safe space for concerns and discussions.

Common Sense Media: <u>Family Engagement Resources</u>

Overall Trends

Policy Milestones:

2022: No Formal Policy | 2023: Initial Restrictions | 2024: New DoE Guidelines | 2025: Adjusted Implementation
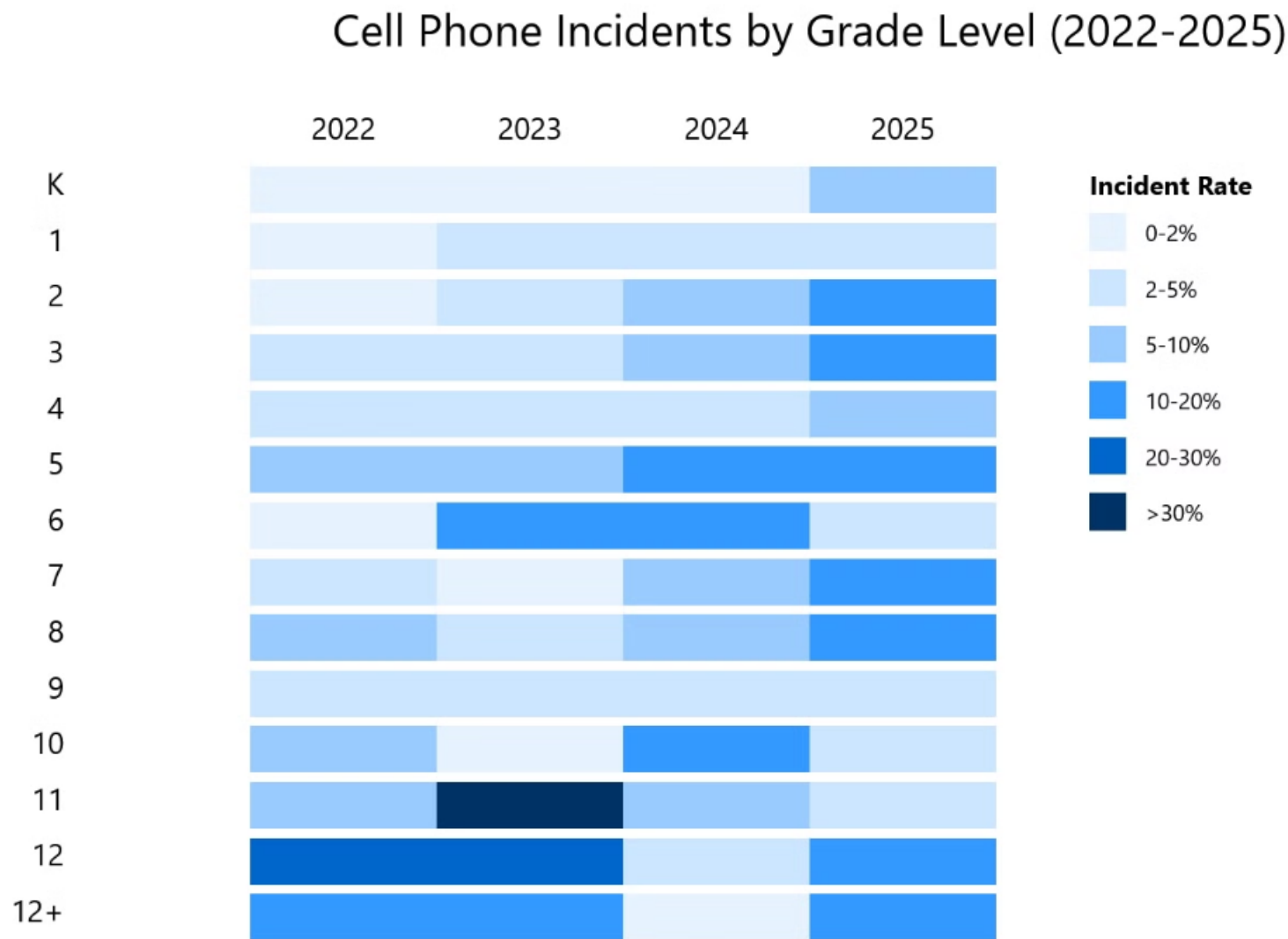
Cell Phone Incident Rates (2022-2025)
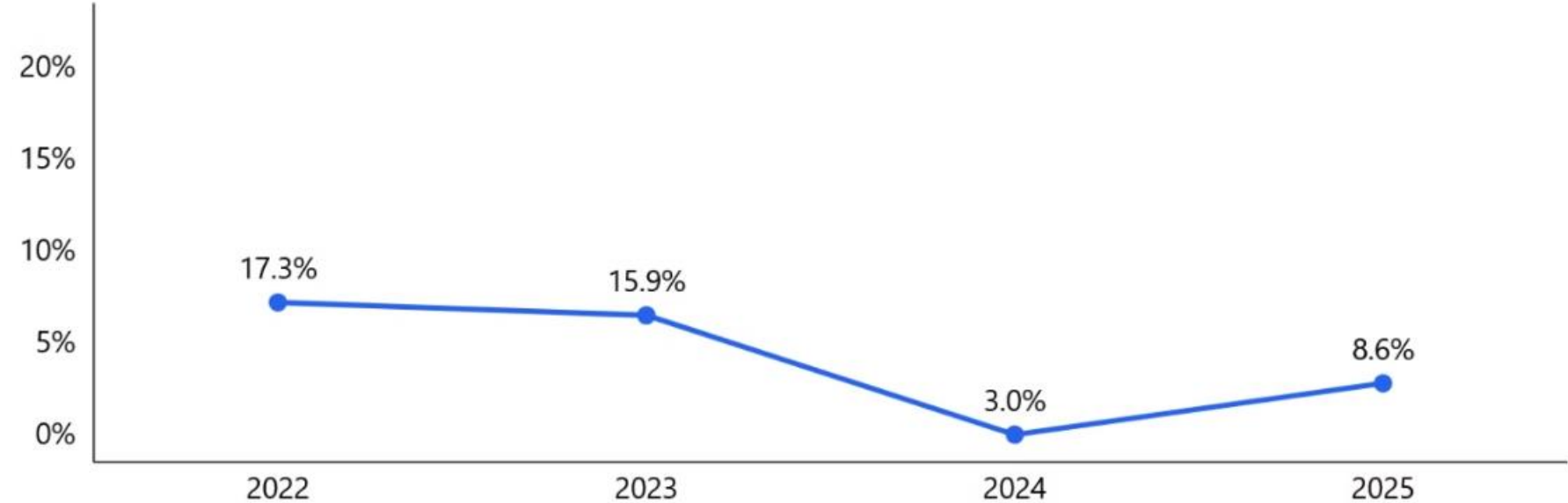
Key Impact

The overall trend shows significant improvement from 2022 (17.3%) to 2025 (8.6%), representing a 50.3% total reduction in incidents over the four-year period.

Local Trends by Grade

Cell Phone Incidents by Grade Level (2022-2025)

- Highest rates of recorded cell phone incidents were at Grade 11 in 2023.

- Lower rates are typically observed in the Elementary.

- Incident rates reflect the percent of all incidents recorded.

- Overall, cell phones incidents are more likely in the upper grades

Year Over Year Rate of Change

Policy Milestones:

2022: No Formal Policy | 2023: Initial Restrictions | 2024: New DoE Guidelines | 2025: Adjusted Implementation

Year-over-Year Rate of Change

- 2022-2023: -1.4%
- 2023-2024: -12.9%
- 2024-2025: +5.6%