



Dear Legislators:

Re: Ensuring a Distraction-Free School Day for Ohio Students

We applaud Ohio's efforts to provide students with a school environment where they can flourish academically and emotionally—free from digital distractions, able to build strong interpersonal relationships, and protected from the harmful content found on many online platforms. Creating focused, device-free schools is a critical step in supporting student learning, mental well-being, and social development.

However, to fully achieve these goals, **it is essential to establish clear and consistent “bell-to-bell” policies that apply to all personal electronic devices.** The presence of cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, and other personal devices during school hours disrupts learning, reduces face-to-face interaction, and exposes students to unnecessary digital risks, including cyberbullying and social media addiction.

Research confirms that **“bell-to-bell” personal device-free policies lead to higher test scores, improved focus, and stronger problem-solving skills.** Schools that implement these policies not only see academic benefits but also experience fewer behavioral issues, including reduced cyberbullying and disciplinary infractions. Without constant digital distractions, students engage more with their peers, strengthening relationships and fostering a healthier school environment.

Ohio must prepare a **cutting-edge workforce** trained to meet the demands of the future, Yet Ohio student test scores continue to decline in math and reading, in part because students are distracted from academics and focused on the quick brain stimulation from social media. Employers report that young employees are entering the workforce lacking critical problem - solving skills, sustained focus, and the ability to effectively communicate and collaborate—skills that are weakened by excessive screen time and digital distractions in the classroom.

For these reasons, we strongly support the following measures:

Personal electronic device-free schools from “bell to last bell” Devices should be turned off, securely stored, and inaccessible to students during school hours and while under school staff supervision.

A prohibition on all personal electronic devices, including but not limited to: smartphones, cellular phones, Bluetooth-enabled devices, tablets, smartwatches, or other wearable or gaming devices. Exemptions include medical reasons, such as diabetes monitoring and learning plan (IEP) applications.

This initiative is a collaboration between **Unite for Safe Social Media**, the **Becca Schmill Foundation**, and **SmartPhone Free Childhood US** committed to protecting students from digital harm.

Together, we can create a learning environment where Ohio students can truly thrive. Please sign today and share this with friends and family!



Sincerely yours,

Christine Vineis

Chief Executive Officer and Founder
Unite for Safe Social Media

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Becca Schmill Foundation
Smartphone Free Childhood US
David's Legacy Foundation
Talk More. Tech Less
Devin J. Norring Foundation
SAVE - Suicide Awareness Voices of Education
Parent Collective Inc
Matthew E. Minor Awareness Foundation
socialmediaharms.org
Ohio Christian Education Network

OK to Delay
CyberSafety AI
Everyschool.org
David's Legacy Foundation
Talk More Tech Less
Devin J. Norring Foundation
SAVE - Suicide Awareness Voices of Education
The Anxious Generation.
Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation
Hopewell Health Systems
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