



Date: April 29, 2025

Dear Chairman Brenner and the members of the Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 158. My name is Evan Eagleson, and I am the Legislative Director for the Great Lakes Region with [ExcelinEd in Action](#), a national non-profit focused on education reform and improved student outcomes in the states.

I want to first thank Chairman Brenner for giving SB 158 a hearing and express our gratitude to Governor DeWine and Senator Timken for making this issue a priority. This effort may seem small, but it can be one of the most impactful bills of the session.

According to Dr. Jonathan Haidt, a social psychologist who has studied this issue extensively, smartphone usage has been adopted faster than any other technology in recent history.

Most kids in 2010 did not have a smartphone, myself included. Back then, I was in eighth grade and had just gotten my first cell phone, a flip phone with no apps that could only send 100 texts a month. Just five years later, nearly everyone had smart phones. I was lucky enough to receive my first smartphone during my junior year of high school, and when I compare it to the powerful tool in my pocket now, that 2015 version pales in comparison to what we have today. The apps that we use have become more powerful, popular and downright addictive. This has led to more time on all of our devices, but especially with our young students.

As the father of young children, I worry about what they will have to contend with when they are old enough to have access to this technology. At the very least, I hope they will be able to learn in a distraction-free schooling environment.

The University of Michigan Medicine's CS Mott Children's Hospital conducted a [study](#) on student's cell phone use that found that on average, 97% of students use their phones during the school day. Additionally, they receive 237 notifications a day, with 25% of those occurring while at school. Most students spend 7-9 hours a day on their phones, which has very real implications both inside and outside the classroom.

Sleep deprivation is up among students since 2013. The time they spend with friends is down 65% since 2010. Students' attention is fragmented.

All these statistics are troubling, especially when you begin to think about the required student learning that is supposed to happen throughout these important years.

Just last year, Ohio took a step towards implementing distraction-free learning environment policies with the passage of HB 250. This legislation took us in the right direction, but now it is time to ensure students have phone free schools by passing SB 158.

States like Louisiana, South Carolina and Virginia have passed similar legislation prohibiting cell phone usage from bell to bell, which further cuts down on distractions, cyberbullying and social media-related conflicts. Studies have shown that it takes 23 minutes on average to regain complete focus following an interruption. Something so small as checking a quick text during class can lead to a student falling off track very quickly. Because of this, these states decided to completely remove the distraction from the school building throughout the day.

We support SB 158 and applaud Ohio for taking on this issue. Students deserve to learn, and educators deserve to teach, in a distraction-free environment. This legislation will make that goal a reality.

Thank you again to Chairman Brenner, the members of the Senate Education Committee and Senator Timken. I appreciate your time and consideration, and I look forward to tracking this legislation throughout the process.

Respectfully,

Evan Eagleson
Legislative Director, Great Lakes Region
ExcelinEd in Action