

Jackson Center Schools

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Written Testimony for Senate Bill 158 - Cell phone ban in schools

4/28/25

I am urging all Senators to vote against Senate Bill 158 if it comes to a vote.

In my role as a superintendent of schools, it is not my job to tell other superintendents how to fulfill their duties or manage their school systems. It is also not my job to try and urge the Ohio General Assembly to create laws and rules that are meant to shift blame or burden to them when I am asked to make a tough decision. My colleagues and I have chosen tough careers where we could possibly upset segments of our population each day, but that is our *choice*.

There is no denying that the use of cellphones in school *could* lead to disruption, distraction and conflict, but that does not mean it happens that way in *every* school. There are school districts that have trustworthy students that follow the rules and only use their phones during appropriate times or for educational purposes. If that trust is broken, there are procedures in place that remedy the situation.

I thought we learned our lessons during the Covid period. There were school districts that could have held their prom, conducted their graduation and gone maskless because their communities supported them, but a few loud voices wanted a scapegoat and the state legislature complied. As a result, we all did ignorant things, ruined businesses and took away student experiences. We should not make that mistake with Senate Bill 158 and any other "one size fits all" provision that makes its way to Columbus. With a Republican majority and general belief that government should be small, I would think that less interference would be the default.

Thank you for reading.

William Reichert



Superintendent
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