



Off and Away Survey: Wakefield High School
January 2024

Please note that the below is not a formal evaluation, needs assessment, or data analysis. This information was obtained to monitor progress on a pilot program at Wakefield High School.

In January 2024, Wakefield High School students, staff and families were invited to participate in a survey to look at their impressions of the implementation of “Off and Away” protocols at the school for the 2023-24 school year. Provided here is a review and analysis of the response data. In addition, Student Services reviewed student behaviors and responses (SBAR) data through the year at Wakefield as it pertained to incidents involving students and their electronic devices.

Summary of Results

SBAR Data

During the 2023-24 SY, there were the total number of distinct instances that rose to the level of administrator attention due to a student and their electronic device:

	Wakefield	Washington-Liberty	Yorktown
# of incidents involving electronic devices	25	1	1
# of suspensions for incidents involving electronic devices	0	0	0

Survey Themes

1348 students responded to the survey, representing about 50% of the student body. 126 families and 63 staff members also completed the survey. Respondents were asked to respond to several statements and were also given the opportunity to answer open-ended questions about what strategies worked or might work in the future to support the protocol. Please note that full survey data is available in the appendix.

There were significant differences in the opinions and evaluation of the pilot program by survey group:

- 63% of families strongly agreed that students were keeping their cell phones off and away during instructional time, but only 13% of students and 6% of staff strongly agreed with this statement. 84% of staff either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

- When asked if having cell phones off and away during instructional time was successful, very few respondents from any group strongly agreed with this statement (11% of families, 3% of staff, 9 % of students), with 48% of staff strongly disagreeing with this statement.

Key findings included:

- Most students and staff did not feel that students were keeping their phones off and away
- Most families, staff and students did not feel that the protocol to have cell phones off and away was successful

Additional themes expressed by all three groups when asked to share strategies that were helpful or could be helpful included:

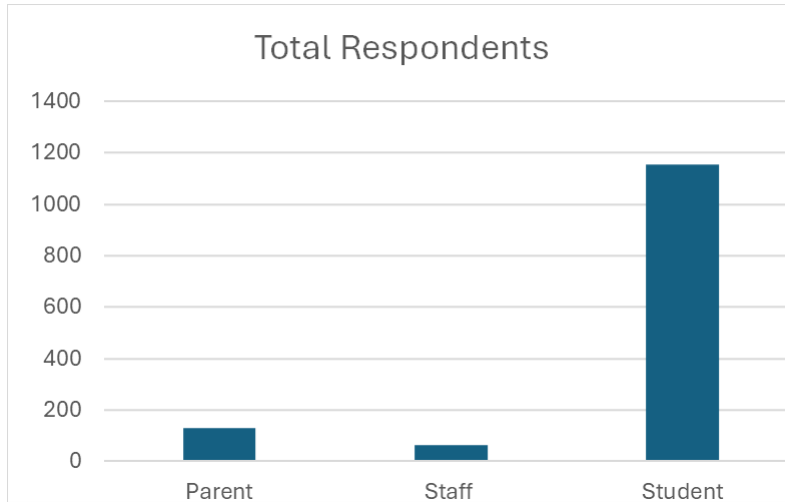
- Having clear and consistent consequences (families and staff)
- Collecting cell phones during class and having designated storage strategy for phones in the classroom (students, families, and staff)
- Family involvement in the implementation of the protocol (families and staff)
- Reminders from teachers (students)
- Designating a time when students can use cell phones (students)

Due to the different impressions and priorities of the three stakeholder groups, it would be important to have the voices of students, staff, and families included when cell phone protocols are established in schools.

Appendix: Full Survey Data

Demographics

1153 students (approximately 50% of the student body), 64 staff members and 131 families responded to the survey. The total respondents were 1348 individuals.

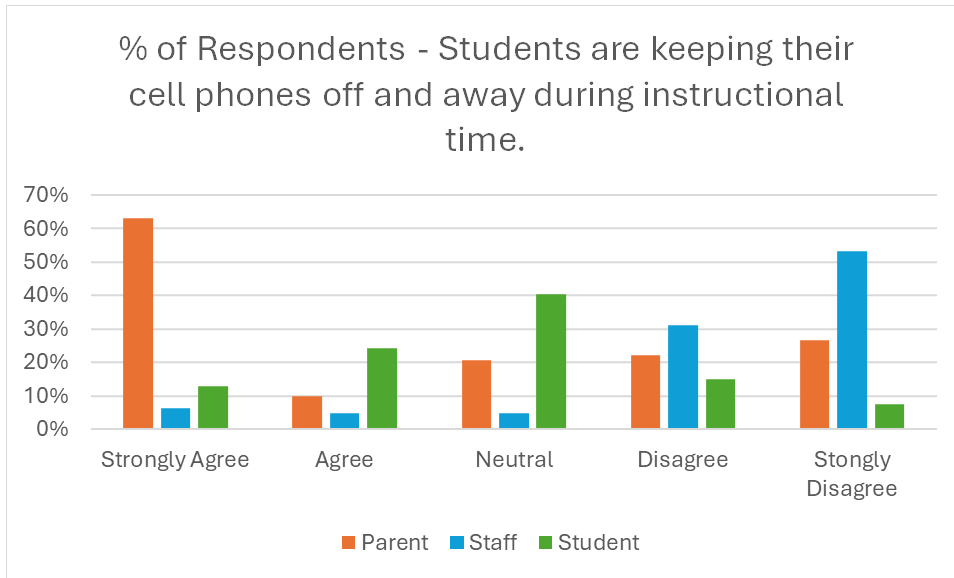


The total enrollment of students at Wakefield High School on 1/15/24 was 2315 students. 1153 respondents represent approximately 50% of the student body. This number of students responding to the survey ensures a good sampling of student opinion. 191 students are currently identified as English Language Learners at Wakefield. 131 students and 1 staff member took the survey in a language other than English. 95% of respondents chose to respond in English. The following table delineates this breakdown:

Response Languages Used

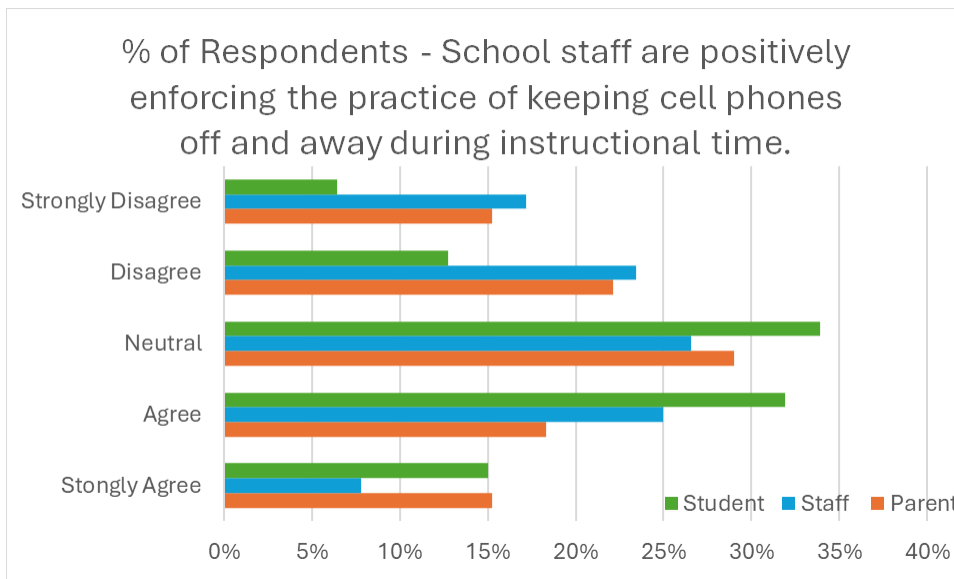
Respondent	English	Spanish	Arabic	Amharic	Total	% English
Family	126	5	0	0	131	96%
Staff	63	1	0	0	64	98%
Student	1091	57	3	2	1153	95%
Total	1280	63	3	2	1348	95%

Response 1: Students are keeping their cell phones off and away during instructional time.



This graph depicts opinions of respondents to the prompt, “Students are keeping their cell phones off and away during instructional time,” by the percentage of respondents in each category. There is a significant difference with families being much more likely to strongly agree that students are keeping their cell phones off and away during instructional time, and staff being much more likely to strongly disagree with this statement. Most students had a neutral response to this question.

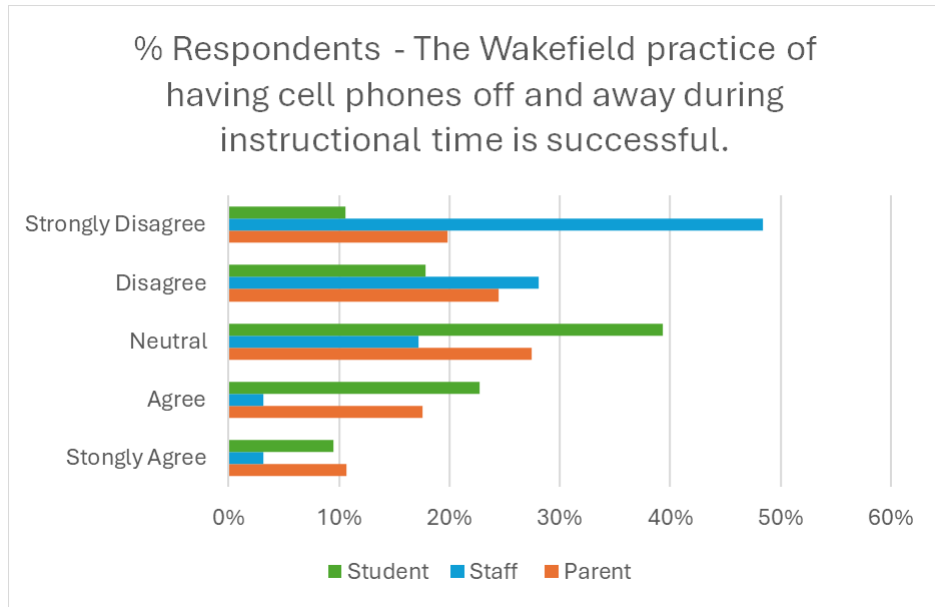
Response 2: School staff are positively enforcing the practice of keeping cell phones off and away during instructional time.



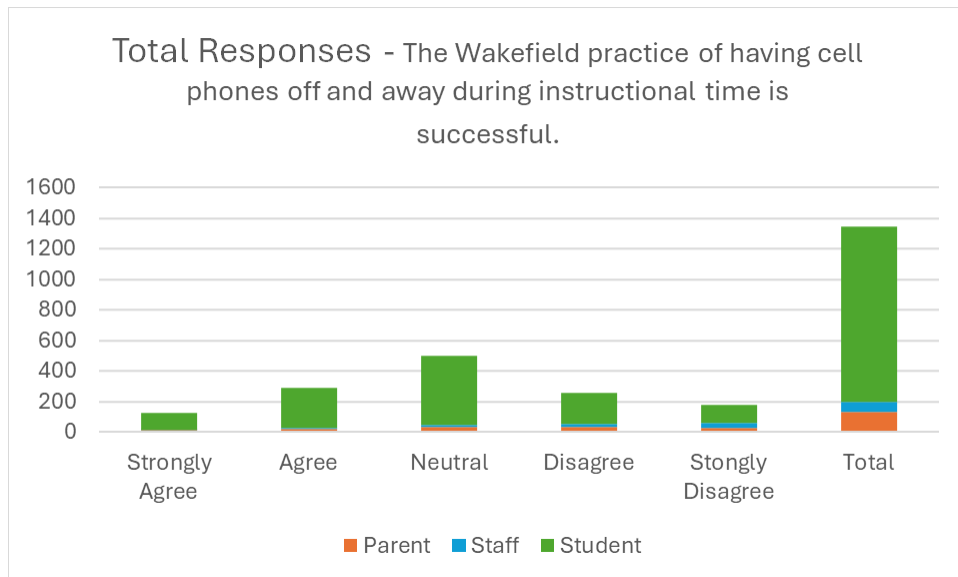
When asked to respond to the statement, “School staff are positively enforcing the practice of keeping cell phones off and away during instructional time,” we see a more even distribution from strongly agree to strongly disagree by all three categories of respondents. Most respondents were either neutral or agreed with the statement, with more strongly disagreeing than strongly agreeing.

Response 3: The Wakefield practice of having cell phones off and away during instructional time is successful.

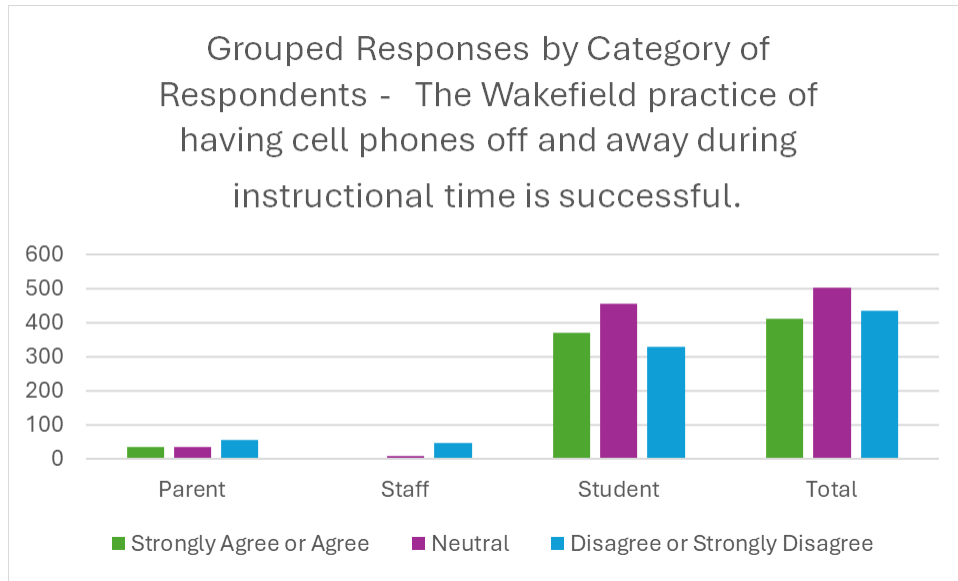
The following graphs show each group’s response to the prompt: “The Wakefield practice of having cell phones off and away during instructional time is successful.” The first graph looks at the percentage of each group responding to the prompt. Staff were much more likely to strongly disagree with this statement than students and families. Students were more likely to have a neutral response and families were more evenly distributed from strongly disagree to agree.



The graph below is an aggregate of raw responses revealing more of a bell curve with most being neutral and slightly more agreeing than disagreeing.

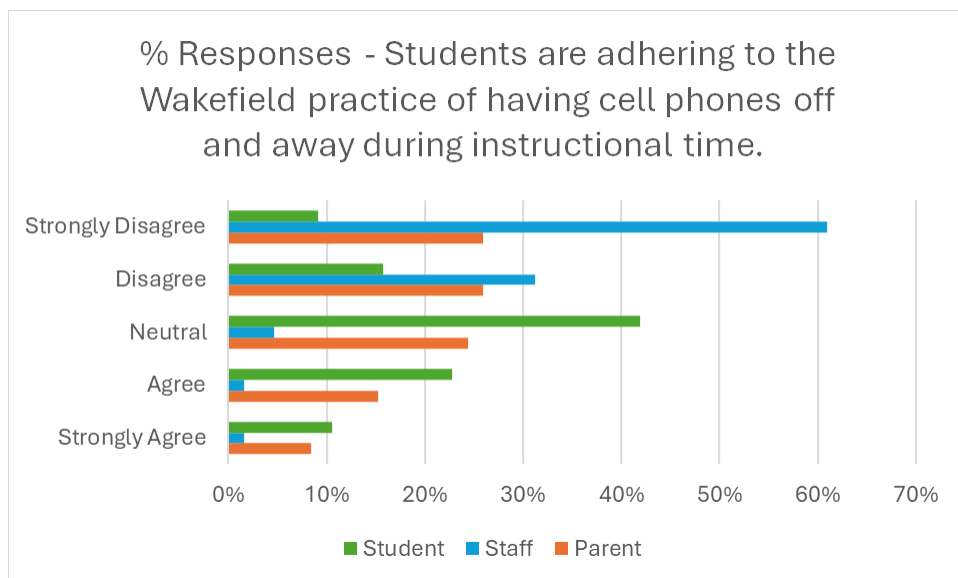


Finally, the third graph below shows the numbers of respondents when the categories of strongly agree and agree are combined and disagree and strongly disagree are combined. Here we see the relative even breakdown across the three response categories.

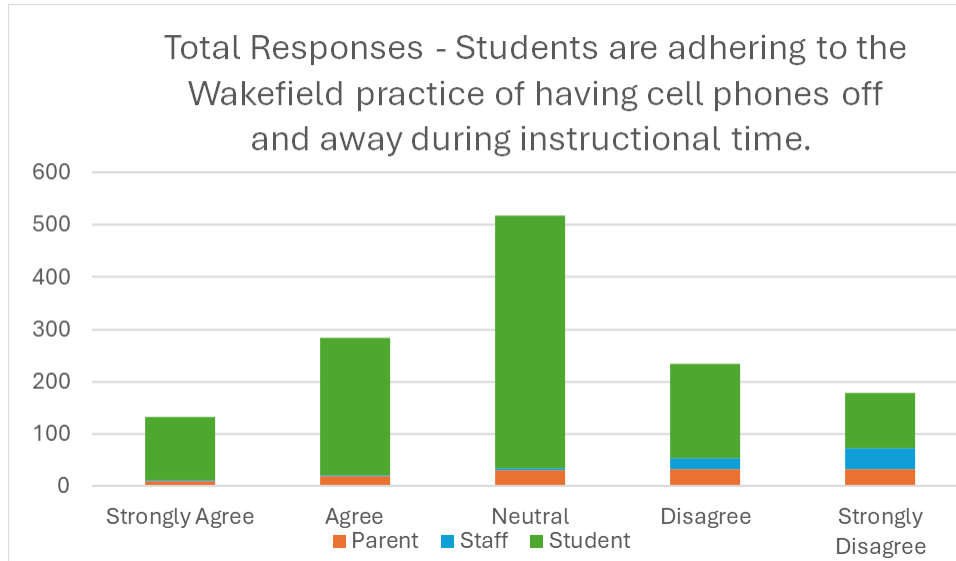


Response 4: Students are adhering to the Wakefield practice of having cell phones off and away during instructional time.

The next two graphs depict the responses to the prompt, “Students are adhering to the Wakefield practice of having cell phones off and away during instructional time.” The first graph below is looking at the percentages by response group. Here we see that a much larger percentage of staff strongly disagree with this statement than families or students. Students were more likely to be neutral and more likely to agree or strongly agree than staff or families.



The graph below aggregates the group responses, showing a bell curve in the responses with neutral being the predominant response followed by agree and disagree.



Response 5: What strategies are helping the Wakefield "off and away" practice? (Response Themes)

The survey also included three open-ended questions. Below are the themes that arose from the written responses to the first question, "What strategies are helping the Wakefield "off and away" practice?" The tables show the raw number responses and the percentage of total survey respondents represented by the theme.

Family Response Themes (N=131):

Family Themes	Number/%
Clear expectations/consequences	9 (7%)
Teacher Enforcement	8 (6%)
Collect cell phones	6 (6%)
Turn off cell phones	5 (4%)

Sample Family Comments:

Clear expectations from school leadership, teachers, and families. Consistent guidelines and consequence for those who do not put phones away.

Teacher enforcement in class. Informing families on policy to support.

My kids seem to always have their phone on them. I can tell from my backend.

According to my kids, "Off and away" sometimes, while they follow the rules many others don't.

Staff Response Themes (N=64):

Staff Themes	Number/%
No strategies are working	11 (17%)
Collect cell phones	8 (12.5%)
Teacher reminders	7 (11%)
Teacher enforcement	7 (11%)
Clear expectations/consequences	7 (11%)
Give students a designated time to use cell phones	4 (6%)
Announcements	4 (6%)

Sample Teacher Comments:

Consistently ask students to put the phones away. Also giving them a designated time to use the phones is sometimes helpful.

The majority of the students in my class do keep their phones away during class but only because I tell them to put it away every single day at the beginning of class and if they bring it out, I ask them to give it to me for safe keeping in my desk until the end of class.

The "off and away" practice has little effect. Individual teacher classroom policies work in some cases, though.

I don't see evidence of this working.

Student Response Themes (N=1348):

Student Themes	Number
Teacher reminders	141(10%)
Put phones away	116 (9%)
Teacher collects cell phones	64 (5%)
Teacher enforcement	42 (3%)
Give students a designated time to use cell phones	30 (2%)

Sample Student Comments:

Nothing, teachers who enforce it cause student frustration, and those who don't just end up with half the class on phones.

Our teachers positively enforcing us to put our cell phones away.

When the teacher is polite about putting them away and even offers small breaks to give us a chance to relax for a few minutes.

I feel like the strategies haven't really been working because people don't really care about the rules.

None, y'all don't realize that people have attachment and anxiety when it comes to phones and it makes me laugh that while y'all are worried about cell phones there's people doing drugs in the bathrooms.

A bag by the desk and it helps if the teacher does it too so it doesn't seem hypocritical

Response 6: What new strategies would help make Wakefield's "off and away" practice more successful? (Response Themes)

Family Response Themes (N=131)

Family Themes	Number/%
Collect cell phones/put in classroom bin	18 (14%)
Clear and consistent consequences	15 (11%)
Put phones away (locker, backpack)	11 (8%)
Teacher enforcement	8 (6%)
Engagement of students	6 (5%)
Communication with families	6 (5%)

Sample Family Comments:

Have teachers with a basket, where kids drop off their cells as they walk into class.....

School policy should be if a student is on the phone during class, the teacher will take the phone and the student can pick it up at the office at the end of the day.

Everyone has to enforce it consistently with real consequences (phone confiscated for the day).

The primary strategy I would recommend is making sure that lessons are engaging, challenging, and meaningful to students. They won't be on their phones if they are otherwise engaged.

Staff Response Themes (N=64):

Staff Themes	Number
Uniform policy with consistent enforcement/Teacher buy in	15 (23%)
Consequences/Take away phones	14 (22%)

Collect cell phones in class/classroom storage devices	11 (17%)
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Sample Staff Comments:

Make it required to collect phones so it is consistent throughout all classrooms. When I try to enforce this, I get a lot pushback because other teachers don't do it. If we all had a uniform policy, it would be easier to implement.

In my opinion, there needs to be a common procedure for every classroom. For example, perhaps every classroom has the same receptacle where students are required to place their phones during class. Similarly, there needs to be clear and immediate consequences for inappropriate phone use.

Asking families to shut off phone applications when students are in school

Student Response Themes (N=1348):

Student Themes	Number
Designated time to use cell phones	60 (5%)
Put phone away (locker, backpack, pocket)	54 (4%)
Put phone in classroom bin or pouch	46 (3%)
Engage students in learning	44 (3%)
Enforcement	38 (3%)
No policy needed	35 (3%)
Take away phone (consequence)	33 (2%)

Other less frequently cited student responses included being more lenient, providing incentives, and allowing phones for emergencies or to listen to music.

Sample Student Comments:

Providing a time during class that students can have their phones out, this will reward them by getting through instruction then have time on their phones.

Teachers can have students put their phones in their backpacks or put them in a designated area. Collecting phones when coming in. Whether that's with a box holder or etc.

Make topics more interesting so we don't get on our phones, prevent before it happens by bettering classes and enjoyment.

Instructing staff members to help enforce the rule in the beginning of every class. Staff can have punishments for students who don't follow the rule repeatedly.

Response 7: What additional help do you or others need with the "off and away" practice? (Response Themes)

Family Response Themes (N=131):

Family Themes	Number/%
Communicate and partner with families	10 (8%)
Consistent enforcement	6 (5%)
Teach students good habits	4 (3%)

Sample Family Comments:

Inform families about the policies, practices, and how things are going. Then we can help reinforce.

To be better informed about the details of the program and what is working/not working, so we can do what we can as families to support the initiative.

None - I'd rather they have access bc the laptops provided sometimes block content the teachers assign (videos on YT, etc), so having the phone is sometimes useful. And blocking their use just kicks their ability to function as adults into college years - then they will have to learn to balance work, lectures, and phone distractions on their own without support. Why not teach good habits in HS? Unless all teachers/staff also have to hide phones all day (not what I see in my office, so I expect teachers don't store their devices either.)

Staff Response Themes (N=64):

Staff Themes	Number
Clear and Consistent expectations and consequences	19 (30%)
Family Involvement	5 (8%)
Classroom bins or pouches	4 (6%)

Sample Staff Comments:

I personally do not want to take a students phone away from them because I do not want to be held personally responsible for such an expensive device. I would like to have a system/school wide practice of how to handle the situation and any infractions. My job is to educate students, not to be the cell phone police.

Provide families the recent studies of the damaging effects of cell phone use and children's brains. I don't appreciate the, "it's here to stay" mentality. We are in the profession of educating and protecting children.

In the past, I have written many referrals for inappropriate phone usage. None of these referrals was effective. Students would return to class and simply continue the behavior. Moreover, my AP advised me not to take a student's phone due to liability issues, so I stopped using a shoe organizer to store phones during class. Administration needs to have a clear and consistent policy. I favor a box or other receptacle that is common in every room where students are required to place their phones at the beginning of class. If a teacher writes a referral, administration should confiscate the phone and require a family member to retrieve it.

Student Response Themes (N=1348):

Many fewer students responded to this question or indicated there was nothing else needed, and the responses that were made mirrored the themes of the other open-ended questions, including having a designated time to use cell phones, enforcement, student engagement, and having bins, pouches or other locations to place phones during class time. Many students continued to respond that they did not want the policy.

Sample Student Comments:

If they want us, students to be less on are phone. Simply change the way on how class works like shorter class time, breaks and more fun that'll not make It like working on a 5 to 9 office shift as a teen. (Which Is what school feels like.)

Making classes less of a waste of time and more informative and useful so we don't get on our phones.

Everyone is using their phones, focus on bathrooms and security and late passes because y'all are dumb