

Cell Phone Policy

Facts & Questions

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Meridian CUSD #15 Board of Education President

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CONTEXT

- The information presented as part of the discussion around a cell phone policy within the Meridian CUSD #15 District does NOT involve the debate of individual merits of a policy position.

Facts

FACT

No problem statement has been defined regarding cell phones and our District.

- What is the exact problem that needs to be resolved/solved?
- Why is it a problem?
- Who says it is a problem?
- What data supports any problem statement assertion?

FACT

Meridian currently has a (student) cell phone policy

- **Elementary School:** No cell phones allowed for use during school hours. Students can bring to school, but they must remain off and in backpack. Cannot be used during school hours without permission.
 - Page 29 of MES Handbook
 - https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/409365/2019-20_MES_Handbook.pdf
- **Middle School:** Cell phones allowed before school, during lunch, after school. Other than lunch, cannot be used during school hours without permission.
 - Page 10 of MMS Handbook
 - https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/409542/Handbook_2019-2020.pdf
- **High School:** Cell phones allowed before school, during lunch, after school, and at each teacher's discretion during class. Students are also required to sign an "Acceptable Cell Phone Usage" agreement.
 - Pages 20-21 of MHS Handbook
 - https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/447828/MHS_2019-20_Student_Handbook_2_.pdf

FACT

Cellular Technology is established, growing rapidly, and here to stay...both locally, nationally, and globally. The prevalence of cellular based technology continues to grow globally.

Source: Pew Research Center - Global Attitudes & Trends

Smartphone Ownership Is Growing Rapidly Around the World, but Not Always Equally

In emerging economies, technology use still much more common among young people and the well-educated

These are among the major findings from a Pew Research Center survey conducted among 30,133 people in 27 countries from May 14 to Aug. 12, 2018.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/02/05/smartphone-ownership-is-growing-rapidly-around-the-world-but-not-always-equally/>

Younger, better-educated more likely to own smartphones

% of adults who own a smartphone

	TOTAL	Age			Youngest- Oldest Diff	Education		Diff	Gender		Diff
		18-34	35-49	50+		More education	Less education		Men	Women	
	%	%	%	%		%	%		%	%	
<i>Advanced economies</i>											
South Korea	95	99	100	91	+8	99	90	+9	96	95	+1
Israel	88	91	94	80	+11	95	83	+12	88	89	-1
Netherlands	87	99	98	74	+25	95	82	+13	89	85	+4
Sweden	86	98	92	77	+21	91	83	+8	88	85	+3
Australia	81	97	89	68	+29	89	77	+12	80	82	-2
U.S.	81	95	92	67	+28	88	75	+13	82	80	+2
Spain	80	95	93	60	+35	94	75	+19	81	79	+2
Germany	78	98	90	64	+34	85	76	+9	81	75	+6
UK	76	93	90	60	+33	87	73	+14	81	71	+10
France	75	97	91	53	+44	88	63	+25	79	71	+8
Italy	71	98	91	48	+50	96	67	+29	75	68	+7
Argentina	68	84	77	42	+42	86	65	+21	67	68	-1
Canada	66	90	85	43	+47	74	55	+19	71	61	+10
Japan	66	96	93	44	+52	79	58	+21	69	63	+6
Hungary	64	92	84	35	+57	85	57	+28	69	59	+10
Poland	63	93	87	35	+58	82	57	+25	65	62	+3
Greece	59	95	83	29	+66	86	48	+38	59	58	+1
Russia	59	91	76	26	+65	72	39	+33	64	55	+9
<i>Emerging economies</i>											
Brazil	60	85	63	32	+53	86	37	+49	63	57	+6
South Africa	60	73	59	35	+38	77	47	+30	61	59	+2
Philippines	55	74	50	27	+47	70	29	+41	52	57	-5
Mexico	52	66	53	30	+36	79	35	+44	57	48	+9
Tunisia	45	75	35	18	+57	70	28	+42	48	42	+6
Indonesia	42	66	32	13	+53	72	27	+45	45	39	+6
Kenya	41	51	27	18	+33	71	24	+47	47	36	+11
Nigeria	39	48	31	20	+28	51	6	+45	47	31	+16
India	24	37	21	8	+29	55	11	+44	34	15	+19

Note: Statistically significant differences in bold.

Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey, Q46.

FACT

The following stats come from a new (2019), nationally representative survey of media use among children ages 8-18, by Common Sense Media, which has been tracking this since 2003.

- 53 percent of children in the United States now own a smartphone by the age of 11.
- 84 percent of teenagers now have their own phones.

Common Sense Media is a non-profit that focuses on children, technology, and media.

U.S. Smartphone Ownership: Ages 8-18			
Age	2015	2019	+/- Change
8	11%	19%	+8%
9	15%	26%	+11%
10	19%	36%	+17%
11	32%	53%	+21%
12	41%	69%	+28%
13	50%	72%	+22%
14	59%	81%	+22%
15	71%	83%	+12%
16	73%	89%	+16%
17	74%	88%	+14%
18	77%	91%	+14%

The survey and survey infographic can be found here:

- <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/research/the-common-sense-census-media-use-by-tweens-and-teens-2019>
- <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/Media-use-by-tweens-and-teens-2019-infographic>

FACT

By Law: Cell Phones are **NOT** illegal for children to use or possess.

- For comparison, by Law: Drugs, Alcohol, Vapes, Joules & Cigarettes are illegal for children to possess

FACT

We currently have teachers within the Meridian District using mobile phone technology in their classrooms **for educational purposes.**

FACT

We currently have coaches at Meridian using mobile phone technology as a primary and effective means to communicate with their players throughout the day on any given day, especially in times where team schedules or plans change.

- Technologies used include both texting and smartphone based applications

FACT

On any controversial topic, anyone that says that they can't find evidence, information, or documentation that is credible and contrary to their opinion/position (regardless of what it is) has likely done little or inadequate research, or has done biased research. On this particular topic, there are volumes of information that take a variety of stances.

- Approximately 50 Pages of documentation has been assembled to demonstrate this fact
 - Mountains of additional information exists on this subject
- The common theme that has been observed, in a great deal of available information, is one that does not suggest an extreme or heavy-handed approach.

FACT

- The Board governs District Policy. The daily operationalization of policy falls to others....typically the Administrative Team, Teachers, and staff.
- No one on the Board works in the District as an employee. Therefore, the Board does not have to bear the repercussions of any Policy implementation and oversight on a daily basis.

Some Questions to
Consider

QUESTION

Does a heavy handed policy approach increase the risk for 4th Amendment Constitutional Violations (claims, or proof, of illegal search and seizure)?

- This could apply for the school's confiscation of a phone from a student. There would have to be irrefutable proof, or just and probable cause, to seize a phone from a violator.
- This could/would apply if going through a confiscated phone
- Nationwide, the ACLU has recently pursued multiple cases of litigation as it relates to students privacy and the digital world.....and won (easily).

QUESTION

What is the burden upon Administrators and Teachers to police and enforce a heavy-handed cell phone policy? Is it even realistically attainable and sustainable?

- How much time does this cost? The train has left the station in regards to cell phones. Common sense says a heavy-handed cell phone policy will continuously eat up a tremendous amount of time of all staff, if enforced to a heavy-handed degree. This takes time away from staff to do their primary tasks and their job.
- Would such a policy be so burdensome that it would bring about the need for new “Cell Phone” Monitor positions within the District? Much like: lunch room, playground, and bus monitors
- In either point above, is this the best use of Tax Payer Dollars?
- Would the Meridian Teachers Federation take immediate issue with such a heavy-handed policy, or take issue during the next contract negotiation cycle? What if Teachers and/or Administrators were held accountable by the Board for lack of compliance? Given the burden and restriction that such a policy could place on teachers, this could be something that has to be collectively bargained due to regulations from entities such as the NLRB?
 - What would be the boundaries of such a policy approach? Many teachers have mobile phones. Should they then be permitted to use phones while working during school hours, as they are not being paid to use their phones on work time?

QUESTION

What are the legal rights of the District to retain a cell phone confiscated from a student with respect to parental cell phone ownership?

- Most owners of phones are parents, and that can (and has) create potential legal issues for schools to retain a cell phone possessed by a student

QUESTION

Parents and students cannot be forced into an agreement/contract regarding cellular devices with the schools.

- In such a scenario, a District (legally) retains the right to suspend or expel students who do not agree and/or violate a cellular policy.
 - Is this viable, reasonable, and the vision of a heavy-handed cellular device policy/tactics?
 - By law, students have legal rights in a suspension or expulsion process. Part of the expulsion process involves the Board. Is a heavy handed policy approach on this matter something of such high importance to where the Board would potentially be prepared and willing to spend its time?

Question

- As in many other educational aspects, do students need to be taught online safety, the use of judgment in determining good quality sources of information, and restraint from personal use in the classroom?
- In other words, instead of banning, do students instead need to learn about digital literacy and digital citizenship in order to help facilitate future success once they become adults?
- Furthermore, should teachers instead be provided additional guidance and support in terms of training, professional development, curriculum, planning, collaboration, and governance as the world and technology advances?

QUESTION

Meridian is a public educational service provider that serves all who live within its boundaries. This includes: students, parents, taxpayers, and voters. The Board is elected by the voters to be good stewards and representatives in regards to the interests of the public residing within the School District.

Is a heavy-handed policy, such as this, truly representative of the majority public interest and those that are being served, or isolated singular opinions that forego true public sentiment and accurate representation?

QUESTION

Heavy-handed policy approaches in cases where there is not a widely supported problem statement, verified by data, will likely be an element that invites divisiveness within the District for many reasons.

- Have we not endured enough challenges within Meridian over the recent times?
- Why invite more challenge by “poking a sleeping bear” through a potentially heavy-handed policy approach without a clear problem definition that is supported by data & facts?
- Would a lack of realistic policy vision, result in a lack of credibility, and produce an outcome that lacks both the confidence & support across the spectrum of our District?
- Is this Board a data driven, fact based, and reasonable decision-making entity.....or something else?
- Would there really be any true and meaningful net effect after everything was said and done?

Declaration of Admittance to Public Record

- In order for all to be able to consume this initial round of information that has been shared, this presentation shall be added as an addendum artifact of this meeting to the public record and made publically available in it's original version.

Sources

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Sources Continued

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- <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/02/05/smartphone-ownership-is-growing-rapidly-around-the-world-but-not-always-equally/>
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- https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/409365/2019-20_MES_Handbook.pdf
- https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/409542/Handbook_2019-2020.pdf
- https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/447828/MHS_2019-20_Student_Handbook_2_.pdf

Associated Artifact

- Cell Phone Policy: Research Project (approx. 50 pages)

Feedback

For any individual's feedback to be most effective & broadly heard, please send **ONE** email and include **ALL** of the following recipients:

- All Meridian CUSD #15 Board of Education Members
- Meridian CUSD #15 Administrative Team (Superintendent & Building Principals)
- **Note:** All of the above email addresses are publically available on the Meridian CUSD #15 District Website