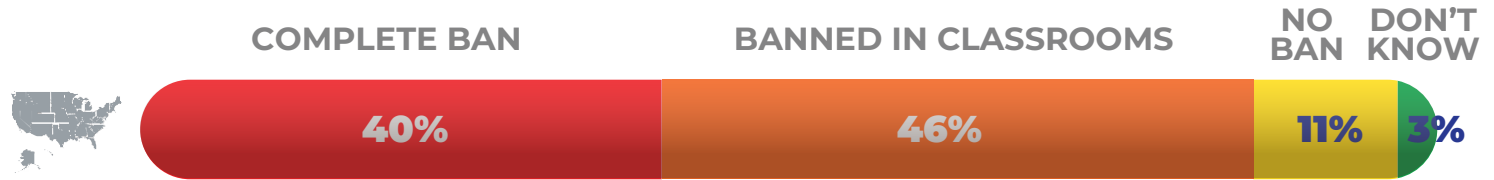


Do you support banning access to cellphones for students in school?



86% of Americans supported some kind of cellphone ban in schools.

Our 2025 winter edition of *Kappan* included an article exploring the impact of restricting students' cellphone access in the commonwealth of Virginia. At the time our poll was released, 29 states had policies or mandates to limit student access to cellphones during the school day. Some advocates have endorsed student access to personal technology for its ability to aid students with their work, but as many schools today provide technology for use in school, this advocacy has lost traction as politicians have made the case for schools to become distraction-free zones to support learning.

Nearly 95% of teens aged 13-17 in the U.S. have access to a smartphone.¹ According to a RAND study (2024-2025 school year),² the same percentage of U.S. schools allow students to bring phones to campus, although over two-thirds of principals reported instituting "bell to bell" bans.

A 2023 Pew survey reported that 72% of U.S. high school teachers considered cellphone distraction a major problem.³ According to data from the Institute of Education Statistics, 77% of public schools now prohibit phones during class, with 38% of schools restricting phone use in hallways, at lunch, or during extracurricular activities.⁴

A 2025 study published in *JAMA Network Open*⁵ found that American youth spend a median of 35 minutes per school day actively using their cellphones, with the majority of use taken up with social media. A Pew report indicated that 60% of high school teachers reported that enforcing policies was difficult.⁶

The national move toward cellphone bans in schools is supported with research. An experiment conducted in the U.K. showed that exam scores increased by 6% with cellphone bans in place.⁷ And a Harvard study indicated that student comprehension, memory, and task performance suffers when they attempt to multitask.⁸

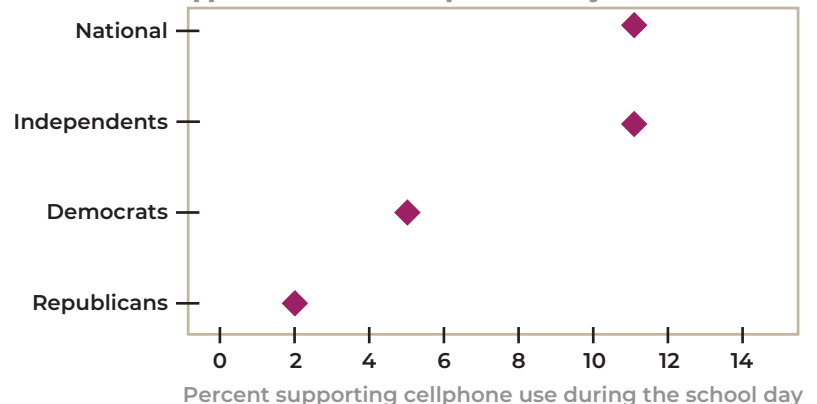
Despite the drawbacks of having a cellphone in school to compete with student engagement with learning, there are some obvious convenience and safety benefits associated with providing teens with smartphones. At the same time, limiting access in school does not prevent associated negative behaviors to flourish among teens, including bullying and phone use eating into sleep time.⁹

A study by the Paragon Institute demonstrated some positive benefits of limiting cellphone access reported by educators,¹⁰ including 62% improvement in disruptive student behavior and related safety and climate improvements.

Additional studies are still underway in an attempt to measure the impact of limiting cellphone use during the school day as both parents and educators grapple with teens' use of this personal technology as an omnipresent part of contemporary life.



Support for Student Cellphone Use by Political Affiliation



Access the references and additional reading about student cellphone use in American schools by visiting our website: pdkpoll.org/cellphones

