

**RESOLUTION OPPOSING A CELL PHONE BAN  
IN NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (NYCPS)**

**2024-2025 Panel for Educational Policy**

**Meeting Consideration:**

12 March 2025

**Introduction Date:**

27 January 2025

**Sponsorship:**

Panel Member, Tom Sheppard

**FINAL RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, access to cell phones has become an essential tool for safety and communication in today's society;

**WHEREAS**, the ability for students to contact their parents or guardians during emergencies is a critical concern, especially in light of potential threats to their safety, including bullying in schools from both other students and adults, school shootings, potential terrorist attacks and now the possibility of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) presence in schools;<sup>1</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, President Donald Trump has declared that schools will be no longer be considered sensitive locations and can be subject to Immigration and Customs Enforcement activities;<sup>2</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, Commissioner Betty Rosa, Attorney General Letitia James and Governor Kathy Hochul have provided guidance on the protection of our students from ICE in schools across New York State;<sup>3</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, students, particularly those from immigrant families, may feel unsafe or unprotected in such situations and need immediate access to their family for support and guidance; and

**WHEREAS**, a blanket ban on cell phones in schools would disproportionately harm vulnerable populations, including students from marginalized communities who rely on their phones for safety and communication to be in contact with their caretakers; and

<sup>1</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/trump-immigration-ice-raids-school-2d899678264f44fe1021847ee385fd15>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2025/01/21/donald-trump-eric-adams-immigration-arrests-sensitive-locations-schools/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/oag-go-sed-immigration-students.pdf>

**WHEREAS**, responsible use of cell phones can be balanced with policies that minimize distractions and ensure a focus on learning;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that *we oppose the implementation of a cell phone ban* in New York City Public Schools (NYCPS);

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we advocate for policies that prioritize student safety, equity, and mental well-being by allowing students to retain access to their cell phones during the school day while maintaining reasonable guidelines for their use;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we ask New York City Public Schools, the New York State Legislature, and Governor Kathy Hochul to adopt the following recommendations for limiting screen time in classrooms during instructional time:

1. **Clear Usage Policies:** Develop and enforce clear guidelines for appropriate cell phone use during class time, such as prohibiting use during instructional periods except for educational purposes as directed by the teacher or other classroom personnel.<sup>4</sup>
2. **Designated Times and Spaces:** Create designated times or areas for cell phone use, such as during lunch breaks, recess, or in specific emergency situations.<sup>5</sup>
3. **Technology-Free Zones:** Establish technology-free zones within schools to encourage face-to-face interaction and reduce screen dependency.
4. **Educational Integration:** Incorporate cell phones into the curriculum as tools for learning, emphasizing responsible and productive usage.<sup>6</sup>
5. **Parental Involvement:** Engage parents and guardians in discussions about appropriate cell phone use and collaborate to establish consistent expectations at home and school.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/take-cellphones-out-classroom-educators-say>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/research/report/8-18-census-integrated-report-final-web\\_0.pdf](https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/research/report/8-18-census-integrated-report-final-web_0.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.edutopia.org/article/healthy-digital-habits-students/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/digital-citizenship-resource-list>