



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

# CELL PHONE USE IN CLASSROOMS SURVEY RESULTS

*For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight.*  
- Proverbs 1:2

**Drafted**

**May 7, 2024**

**Meeting Date**

**May 16, 2024**

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## INFORMATION REPORT

**Vision:** *IN GOD'S IMAGE: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope.*

**Mission:** *Nurturing the faith development and academic excellence of our Catholic learning community through the love of God, neighbour, and self.*



**MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN**  
2022 - 2025

**IN GOD'S IMAGE:** Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope



Brendan Browne  
Director of Education

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## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide the results of the cellphone use in classrooms survey.

**The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 40 hours.**

## B. PURPOSE

1. The report addresses the January 30, 2024 Board motion “That staff engage with impacted stakeholders including all principals, classroom educators, union partners, students, Catholic School Parent Councils (CSPC), Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (CPIC), Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE), parents, and families regarding student use of cellphones in the classroom during instructional time, and that staff report back on the findings of the engagement for further consideration of the Board.”

## C. BACKGROUND

1. In 2019, the Ministry of Education announced the restriction of cellphones and other personal mobile devices during instructional time.

2. On January 30, 2024, the Board approved the following motion:

WHEREAS: Cellphones can be tools used by students at the discretion of the teacher and;

WHEREAS: Cellphones can also be a significant distraction to both students and the classroom which can impact learning and student focus and;

WHEREAS: Evidence suggests social media apps are highly addictive and;

WHEREAS: Many teachers enable student cellphone use for research, engagement, and participation in learning and;

WHEREAS: Teachers may not want to “police” the use of cellphones in the classroom, nor be in the position of having to confront, confiscate, and care for a student's cellphone and;

WHEREAS: The TCDSB does have an Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (A-29) intended to protect students, staff, and other TCDSB community members regarding responsible use of technology services and;

WHEREAS: In the TCDSB Student Internet Agreement Form which all students sign annually, students agree to parameters around the use of personal devices in the classroom;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: That staff engage with impacted stakeholders including all principals, classroom educators, union partners, students, Catholic School Parent Councils (CSPC), Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (CPIC), Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE), parents, and families regarding student use of cellphones in the classroom during instructional time, and that staff report back on the findings of the engagement for further consideration of the Board.

3. A survey was conducted between April 18, 2024, to May 2, 2024, to gather information about students' use of cellphones in schools during instructional time.
4. On April 28, 2024, the Ministry of Education announced additional measures in Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 128 Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct that require boards to restrict cellphone use during instructional time and access to social media.
5. At the May 7, 2024 GAP meeting, staff presented information about the Ministry's updated PPM 128 and its implications on TCDSB's policies.
6. The Ministry of Education expects school boards to have updated policies in place by September 1, 2024.

#### **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

1. A total of 14,215 surveys were completed by the TCDSB community.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Parent/Guardian	10,232	72.0
Student	2,161	15.2
Secondary Teacher	793	5.6
Elementary Teacher	729	5.1
Elementary Administrator (VP/P)	121	0.9
Member of a Parent Group <sup>1</sup>	119	0.8
Secondary Administrator (VP/P)	60	0.4
Total	14,215	100.0

2. Respondents were split on whether or not cellphones can be a useful tool for research and participation in student learning.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agree	7,573	53.3

Disagree	6,233	43.8
N/A	409	2.9

3. Most respondents disagreed with the statement that cellphones can have a positive impact of student mental health.

Response	Count	Percent
Agree	3,999	28.1
Disagree	9,151	64.4
N/A	1,065	7.5

4. Most respondents believe that cellphones can have a negative impact of student mental health.

Response	Count	Percent
Agree	11,875	83.5
Disagree	1,407	9.9
N/A	933	6.6

5. Most respondents disagreed with the statement that cellphone use in the classroom positively impacts a student's ability to focus on learning

Response	Count	Percent
Agree	3,433	24.2
Disagree	9,998	70.3
N/A	784	5.5

6. Most respondents believe that cellphone use in the classroom negatively impacts a student's ability to focus on learning.

Response	Count	Percent
Agree	11,506	80.9
Disagree	1,937	13.6
N/A	772	5.4

7. Most respondents disagree with positioning that cellphone use has a positive impact on student/teacher interactions.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agree	3,026	21.3
Disagree	10,008	70.4
N/A	1,181	8.3

8. Most respondents are concerned about the impact of cellphone use in the classroom on learning and academic performance.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agree	10,942	77.0
Disagree	2,443	17.2
N/A	830	5.8

9. Most respondents believe that there are challenges in enforcing cellphone use in the classroom.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agree	10,463	73.6
Disagree	2,412	17.0
N/A	1,340	9.4

10. About two thirds of respondents believe that cellphone use during instructional time should be at the discretion of the teacher.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agree	9,029	63.5
Disagree	4,316	30.4
N/A	870	6.1

11. Survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments. Concerns were noted about:
- a. Cellphone use contributes to distractions and ability to focus in class;
  - b. Issues with social media;
  - c. Negative impacts on mental health;
  - d. Addiction to phones;
  - e. Privacy concerns with cellphone use in schools;
  - f. Bullying; and

