
MCPS Policy 3630

Nathan Stephens <nathan.m.stephens@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Nov 5, 2024 at 2:28 PM

Dear MCPS Board:

I am writing to express concerns regarding the proposed phone ban (MCPS Policy 3630) at MCPS and its potential impact on students with Section 504 plans. It is essential to ensure that any new policies comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits discrimination against students with disabilities and mandates appropriate accommodations to meet their individual needs.

As you know, Section 504 is a federal civil rights law administered by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education. Since the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) does not provide authority or guidance on Section 504 matters, it is critical that our school independently considers how this phone ban might affect students who rely on electronic devices as part of their accommodations.

Some students with 504 plans may use personal electronic devices for medical monitoring, access to instructional materials, or communication support. A blanket phone ban, without consideration of such individual needs, may inadvertently limit their access to necessary accommodations and resources, potentially conflicting with federal law.

I respectfully suggest that, in the process of refining this policy, the school consider the following:

1. **Creating exceptions for students with documented needs** under Section 504, allowing them access to personal devices as outlined in their accommodations.
2. **Providing guidance on how these exceptions will be managed and communicated** to teachers and staff to ensure consistent understanding and enforcement.
3. **Informing families** of students with 504 plans about how the new policy will impact accommodations, as well as outlining any steps they may need to take to ensure their child's needs are met.

Clarity and transparency on these points can help ensure that all students are treated equitably and that those with disabilities receive the support they are entitled to under Section 504.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to your response and to working together to ensure our policies support the needs of all students.

Sincerely,

Nathan Stephens

Public Comment on the working session: at 5 PM 11/12/24

Morgan Slemberger <morgan.slemberger@gmail.com>
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Nov 12, 2024 at 3:21 PM

Working Session, 5 PM:

Phones away for the day looks different district-to-district, but it is the sure way to keep kids learning academically and socially. Tobacco, drugs/alcohol, which interfere with health and academics of children, are all banned from school grounds- why are phones any different when they are almost more dangerous or endanger children even more? If the Hellgate school district can do this in days, why are we not able to do this faster?

Public Comment on the 11/12/24 General Meeting

Morgan Slemberger <morgan.slemberger@gmail.com>

Tue, Nov 12, 2024 at 3:22 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

General Meeting, 6 PM:

I am curious if anyone in the school district has crunched the numbers on families who are considering sending their children elsewhere because MCPS has an inadequate phone policy? I'm also curious if anyone has crunched numbers on teacher turnover rates. A citizen survey indicates phones are a cause for teachers dissatisfied with their job- even leaving their job in the district. Phones away for the day helps students, teachers, and the district's budget!