

assessment, and utilizing it to access the thousands of educational sites while researching topics their teachers have put in front of them.

The last piece I share is that cell phones are increasingly becoming medical devices. I know this because I live this. I have a child who was diagnosed with Type I diabetes roughly 4 years ago. He wears an insulin pump and a continuous glucose monitor. Both devices are connected to his phone and will give him a constant reading of his blood sugar and release micro doses of insulin to minimize the occurrence of highs and lows. Simply put, he cannot be away from his phone for long periods of time and need to make sure he has a charge on his device at all times for his pump to operate correctly. Him having his phone also gives my wife, his sister, his girlfriend, and myself a reading and alarm if something has gone sideways with his levels. Definitely not fun when our phones alarm at 3 in the morning for a dangerous low but knowing we have this saves us from a lot more sleepless nights. This legislation as written would prohibit these devices which would be taking a step backwards with management of these chronic autoimmune conditions.

In closing, there is no question that cell phone use in the classroom coupled with mismanagement of a clear 'acceptable use policy' is going to cause great disruption and distractions to student learning. The phone is the dynamite, the policy is the wick and the management of that policy becomes the lighter or the extinguisher. Teachers who draw the line in the sand regarding how our policy is going to be enforced in their classroom have rare instances of non-compliance. If bullet 2 line 18 were written as

2. *A school shall prohibit a student from using a cellular telephone during instructional time unless the learning activity during this instructional time can be enhanced through utilization of a cellular telephone.*

it would support the acceptable use approach we have followed for many years and give sensible concessions to the innovative ways that these devices are used to enhance learning.

Steve Madler
Principal – Century High School

January 15th, 2025

Re: HB 1160; Opposition as written

Members of the Education Committee:

The forthcoming dialogue is a response in opposition of HB 1160. My name is Steve Madler and I am currently the Principal at Century High School within the Bismarck Public School district. My experience in dealing with cell phones in schools dates back a few years. I began my career in school administration more than 20 years ago and in the infancy of this duration, cell phones were not common place amongst students and 'unlimited' plans were not commonplace so 'financial restrictions' provided some guardrails. However, it did not take long before cell phones became an issue within the classroom and created many unnecessary distractions in the classroom. The building I was in at the time (Bismarck High) made the decision that an all-out ban was going to eradicate the issue. Our rules were quite explicit and aligned with the way HB 1160 is written. Cell phones were not be used during class and if a student tried to use it or simply took it out to check the time, a teacher was directed to confiscate the phone and turn it into the office. The first time it happened, the phone was delivered to the office and administration would work through the consequences which ensued if it happened again. Which it did. When it happened a second time, a parent would need to leave work and come to the building to pick up the child's phone because of their refused compliance. When the third time rolled around the student was required to turn in their phone at office for the school day and pick it up at the end of the day. We operated that way for one year and the next fall during our fall administrators conference several Class A admin got together and management of cell phones was a hot topic. Every school who had policies like we had was buried in management of the policy, tracking who had a violation and who didn't and were dealing with a myriad of conflict between parents and students over whose rights trumped possession of the phone. We were also experiencing loophole games...(turning in a burner phone, 'forgot phone at home', 'parents took my phone away from me', etc.) It was a grim reality check that we were spending far more time on cell phone management then we were on addressing chronic absenteeism or student learning. Other schools were using an 'acceptable use' model whereas students were directed to the acceptable times when the phone could be used and when it is unacceptable. We were apprehensive but after making that change, it was the best move for the operations in our building.

I share this background only to offer insight of having seen how 'acceptable use' provided far more harmony amongst faculty, students and families than the all-out ban of use. In my current building, our policy is very straightforward. Cell phones are not to be used during instructional time unless the teacher is utilizing them for instructional intent. With that being said, students are carrying them on their person and I would liken telling them to not use them is like putting candy in a 5 yr. olds pocket in the morning and telling them not to eat it until bedtime. Because of this many faculty have a 'cell phone jail' where students put their phone in some caddy when they arrive to the classroom. It works, it is effective, and if a need arises they have quick access to the devices. The other piece we like about allowing for educational intent is to allow teachers to use them as a powerful learning device. We happen to be a 1 to 1 district and our district issued device is a Chromebook. The Chromebooks have a purpose and work but they simply do not have the power and speed of the cell phones kids are carrying around. Subsequently, students are far more apt to use their phone for their preferred digital device than their Chromebook. Beyond that, I have witnessed countless examples in the classroom where students are using these devices to do language translation to communicate with a multilingual classmate, utilizing powerful topic reinforcement apps to prepare for formative and summative