

Behavior Plan Critique

One of the school-wide behavior/discipline plans my school initiated this year was removing cell phones from the classroom. It was a long overdue reaction to a behavior issue that for years had been brought up by students, teachers, and parents.

The expectations were made clear the first day of school and reinforced that entire first week until students got used to the new rules. Phones were to be left in lockers or, if students chose to bring them to class, had to be locked in a lock box on the teacher's desk until the end of class.

Consequences were clear. The first time a student was seen with a phone out in class the teacher confiscated the phone for the class period. Second offense meant the phone went to the Dean of Students and could be retrieved at day's end. Third offense the phone goes to the office and a parent/guardian must come to the office to claim the phone. We had very few three time offenders.

I believe the plan follows due process. It is fair and not without concessions. Since phones were removed from class they are now allowed in the hallway during passing and in the lunch room. Students across socioeconomic backgrounds (our school's only true demographic divide) responded very well to the new plan.

What's good about the plan is that everyone was on board from day one. Teachers, paras, students, parents, were all sick of phone related behavior issues in the classroom. It was clear, concise, and enforcement was consistent.

What could be improved is the student body's willingness to actually lock their phones in the lock box. Many don't have locks on their lockers so they carry their phones to class. Most just put their phone on silent and keep it hidden in their pocket. Problems arise when the phone is not on silent and rings in class or vibrates and the student just HAS to answer it.