

**Cell Phone Ban in Classrooms**  
**Statement by the Ontario Principals' Council**  
**March 12, 2019**

Today the Minister of Education announced a ban on cell phones in the classroom beginning in September 2019, except when used for educational purposes, health and medical needs or to support special needs. The ban appears to be directed only at the potential distraction that they may cause for some students.

According to Statistics Canada (February 2018), nearly 100% of youth use the Internet on a daily basis and own a smartphone. Three-quarters use the Internet to follow news and current affairs. One half conduct transactions over the Internet at least weekly. All of these stats are higher than for older Canadians. Today's students have grown up with cellphones and use them in a variety of ways, including learning.

As the use and ownership of cell phones have exploded in the past several years, school boards have developed policies around their appropriate use. Schools have been actively involved in teaching digital citizenship and safety. Teachers have developed classroom management strategies that incorporate their supervised use during instruction. Students have learned about ensuring positive digital citizenship and creating personal digital footprints.

Teachers have the training, expertise and experience in classroom management and dealing with distractions in the classroom. Principals and vice-principals have the necessary skills and professional responsibility to implement board-directed policy in respect of cell phone use in the classroom. This practice should continue. As such, we would not support a further ban on the use of cellphones in classrooms.