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My name is Atticus Mitchell. I am a 15-year-old sophomore student at Danville Area High School. As a 15-year-old I've grown up in a world where phones have been all around me. I myself did not have a phone until I was at about the age of 10.

As a student, I've seen phones be used as great tools in education, to be able to be used at ease when needed and to communicate easily with parents. I've also seen phones used non academically in terms of cheating, distractions, and other non-academic practices. Phones are such a large part of our society now, so much so that to completely remove phones from schools, I feel, would be impractical.

As more and more kids grow up with cell phones, they will be going through school and then graduating into a world of technology. If we take this opportunity to implement ways to teach students that phones are tools and how to be used as such, I promise you that students growing up in this new age of technology will learn how to properly use them.

Currently Danville school district has a bell to bell no cell policy. This means students are free to use phones between classes, at lunch and when a teacher may permit them to in class. This policy creates a sense of freedom for the student, allowing them the trust to use their phones. This policy, at least from what I've seen around me, works. Phones become an afterthought of worry, your not constantly worried about using your phone you simply use it in necessity and it creates a mutual respect between student and administration that the student feels comfortable to ask when they may need to use their phone, and to not use their phone in a non academic or untrustworthy way.

That aside, phones do pose physiological concerns. Phones and social media have been known to create anxiety with young adults and I have seen this with my own eyes. I've seen peers be concerned if they can't access their phone and worried that they may miss something. I myself have been the victim of this to the point I had to take a long look at my values and realize a screen is a tool and not all that important otherwise.

I feel if we teach students this, through, perhaps a technology knowledge course or even an assembly or simply providing students who feel reliant on their device or have other psychological effects from phones help to overcome this and see their device as a tool not a chokehold, students growing up in this generation and others to come will graduate having a phone in their pocket but using it for what it is, a tool of communication and knowledge.

Additionally, I also believe that showing the phone as a simple tool takes reliance away from it. Teaching students that phones are simple tools and could be gone at any time implies that you yourself must learn and not be reliant on a phone. I also believe that offering after school programs and funding our school more in terms of forensics, model UN, and our libraries could provide spaces for students to put a phone down and enjoy the things around them.

Furthermore, I fully believe that school libraries are some of the most important places in schools. Not even just for reading but as a space to study or sit with friends and talk about anything can help students interact with each other. I will use the Danville High School library as an example. In my high

school right in the center on the second floor is a large open library and I can speak personally to the fact that I use it as much as I could. If one of my teachers is out, I'm going to the library. It's a quiet space to be able to go to and complete any assigned work.

I will say that our school district has about 1 librarian who moves anywhere she's needed, she's usually at the middle school till 12 and then goes to the high school till 2:45. Her name is Samantha Samatos and she works really hard in the community and when she's not at the high school till 12, if a teacher is out we can't use it unless there is a study hall.

So that all boils down to the fact I believe that if you provide and fund programs in schools and allow phones with some restrictions such as the bell to bell policy, I believe you can create an environment that helps students understand phones as a tool but also allows them to put the phone down and do other things like, forensics, Model UN, sports, and going to the school library.

In conclusion, creating these policies that allow phones but also teach an idea of restriction from constantly issuing it and creating environments in schools that breed ideas of putting the phone down and being in the moment is necessary to build strength in understanding technology and the future to come. Phones will always and continue to be a large part of our lives and the quicker we beat any hold technology may have on us and use these devices as tools and not any other thing the sooner we as a society can better itself and continue to grow.