



PARENTS DEFENDING EDUCATION

**ACTION**

## STATEMENT: PDE Action Supports Governor Glenn Youngkin's Executive Order Creating Guardrails on Phone Usage in Virginia Schools

July 9, 2024

With declining student mental health and academic performance, elected officials, school administrators, teachers, and parents must all work together to ensure that students are using vital classroom time to learn core academic subjects—not the latest TikTok dance.

Concern about teen mental health and social media usage is rightly on the rise. Teens spend nearly five hours per day on social media, according to an October 2023 [study](#). Internal research at Facebook showed that officials there knew the negative effects Instagram had on teen girls' mental health and self-esteem, the Wall Street Journal [reported](#) in 2021. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy has [issued](#) warnings on the negative effects of social media usage among children.

Near-constant social media usage is certainly to blame for both declining mental health among youth and for distractions in the classroom. Reducing cell phone usage during the school day will help ensure that students are focused on core academic subjects, not likes on Instagram.

Governor Glenn Youngkin's executive order sets a basic floor for districts to then adopt strategies or solutions that best fit the needs of their schools and students. PDE Action is proud to support this measure to curb cell phone usage in Virginia schools.