



BENTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

A California Gold Ribbon Award School

April 4, 2019

Hello Wolverine Families,

Benton begins state testing next week in English Language Arts classes. Following Spring Break (April 19-28), students will be testing in their math classes. We have reorganized this year's testing plan and we are confident our students will see positive gains this year. Our students and staff have worked very hard and we are excited to receive our results.

As part of our focus on testing, we are temporarily instituting a new cell phone policy from April 8 through May 18. Beginning next Monday, students will be prohibited from using their cell phones on campus during the day. Students will be spending a significant part of their day on a computer for their testing and this new policy will help students minimize their screen time so their brains can rest and recover. Cell phones must be off or in "Do Not Disturb" mode from the time they enter campus until 3:00. Phones should be kept in backpacks. If you need to get in touch with your students, please contact the office. If your student needs to contact you, they may use the office phone or a teacher's phone.

This policy will also address the interpersonal conflicts that many students experience in middle school. Nearly all of the negative issues on campus are traced back to unmonitored social media use. Most middle school students are not emotionally mature enough to manage the vast content of social media and they are deeply affected by what they read about themselves or their friends. Even minimal use of unmonitored social media can culminate in verbal and physical conflicts on campus. As such, we must take the necessary steps to increase students focus on their academic progress and decrease the distractions in their lives. Legislation has been introduced at the state level (AB 272, Muratsuchi) to ban cell phones from all campuses in California to address the negative impact of smartphones on the development of teenagers.

This is a very challenging time to be a parent of a teenager. Our kids have many things competing for their time and their attention. Technology can be a great benefit for education and a huge distraction to a teenager's personal development. Our goal over the next few weeks is help students disengage from their phones and to re-engage with their family and friends on a more personal basis.

We thank you for your support in this new policy and we look forward to a new level of positive interaction on campus.

The Benton Staff