**News Debate: Cell Phone Scramble**

***Should schools relax cell phone policies?***

More kids than ever carry cell phones these days, and schools are making tough calls when it comes to regulating the devices. Some schools have relaxed their mobile technology policies. New Manchester High School in Douglasville, Ga., is one of several schools that launched “bring your own technology” programs this year. Students at that school are encouraged to bring their own smart phones, electronic tablets, and other Internet-enabled devices to class, and teachers are incorporating them into lessons. Using personal devices to enhance education has many fans.

Many schools, however, are cracking down on cell phone use by students.

Freeport High School in Portland, Maine, for example, strengthened its anti–cell phone policy for the 2011–2012 school year. The school, which used to allow students to use cell phones during lunch, now requires students to turn off cell phones during school hours. Supporters of such cell phone restrictions argue that the devices distract students from learning and provide more opportunities for kids to cheat.

Is it time schools relax their cell phone hang-ups? *Current Events* student

reporters Peter Brosnan and Akash Bagaria each dialed up a side.

**Smart Phones, Smart Kids**

Cell phones might be smarter for the classroom than you think! Schools should allow students to carry cell phones because, if managed properly, the phones can enhance learning and become valuable teaching tools, while keeping students safe and in contact with their parents.

First, many students are excited to use cell phone technology. If schools incorporate that technology into lessons, students will become more excited about their classes.

As cell phones become more like mini laptop computers, they can be very useful in the classroom. For example, students can use cell phone technology to access online books, newspaper articles, and other materials. When you focus on the positive uses of cell phone technology, the possibilities are endless!

Finally, many parents and students rely on cell phones to keep in touch in case plans change after school. Grace Hurley, 13, an eighth grader from

Yorktown Heights, N.Y., agrees. “We should be able to carry our cell phones in school because we may need to contact our parents in emergencies,” she says.

**No Cell Before The Bell!**

Schools should ban students from carrying cell phones during classes. Cell phones can be a major distraction and impair student learning. Cell phones also give students more opportunities to cheat and cyberbully.

Kids can use cell phones to take pictures, chat, surf the Web, and listen to music. Those features can distract students during the school day. According to a 2010 study by the Pew Research Center, 64 percent of teens with cell phones have sent texts during class. Those texts are most likely distracting kids from their studies. Steven Hancock, an administrator at Princeton Day School, agrees. He says, “Cell phones have addictive qualities that will impede student engagement and learning.”

In addition, cell phones allow students to cheat during exams. Students can text friends or find answers on the Internet, for example.

Finally, cell phones in class may lead to cyberbullying. Sadly, students may use phones to take photos of other kids doing something awkward and text the pictures to friends. Gossip spreads like wildfire, after all.

**Silent Reading Comprehension Grade 9-10**

1.\_\_\_\_\_Main Idea Summarize the main point of this passage.

(presents both sides of a debate about whether or not schools

should relax cell phone policies.)

2.\_\_\_\_\_Detail What is the mobile technology policy at Freeport High School in Portland,

Maine?

(Students are encouraged to bring their own smart phones to class.)

3.\_\_\_\_\_Vocabulary What does the word “regulate mean? (to bring under the control of authority)

4.\_\_\_\_\_Inference What can you most likely conclude after reading the passage? (People have

mixed opinions about the use of cell phones in school)

5.\_\_\_\_\_Sequence What does the author think will happen if schools incorporate cell phone

technology into lessons? (students will become more excited about their

classes)

6.\_\_\_\_\_Detail What is one argument AGAINST relaxing cell phone policies? (allows students

to cheat, distraction, cyber bullying)

7.\_\_\_\_\_Inference How would Steven Hancock, an administrator at Princeton Day, most likely

feel if his school relaxed its cell phone policy? (He would most likely be

unhappy since he thinks cell phones have “addictive qualities that will impede

student engagement and learning.”)

8.\_\_\_\_\_Vocabulary In the sentence: “If schools incorporate that technology into

lessons, students will become more excited about their classes.” What does

the word “incorporate”mean? (to blend)

9.\_\_\_\_Detail How many students have sent texts during class according to the 2010 study by

the Pew Research Center? (64 percent)

10.\_\_\_\_\_Cause/Effect What does the author for cell phones say will happen if they are incorporated

into the curriculum? (students will become more excited about their classes)