

NW Youth Times

What a time to be doing youth ministry!

WEEKLY EDITION — THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2026 — BY MATT HARDER

1 · CULTURE PHONES & SCHOOLS · SPOKANE

Phones away all day? Washington is about to decide.

The governor wants phones off all school day, statewide. Both sides have a point.

BY MATT HARDER

Last Friday in Spokane, Gov. Bob Ferguson laid out his Phone-Free Schools Act, a top ask for the 2027 legislative session.

The plan: starting in September 2027, every public school would keep student phones and smart-watches off and out of reach all day. Lunch too. Pouches, lockboxes or caddies. Not backpacks.

Medical needs and IEP and 504 plans would get exceptions. No suspensions the first year. It isn't law yet. He'll prefile the bill Dec. 7.

It's a national wave. At least 31 states and D.C. restrict phones in school, and 22 go bell to bell, according to Education Week.



A Youth Alive campus club. NW Youth photo.

THE CASE FOR. Spokane schools already limit phones in class. "We've become better friends because we put screens away," said Lewis & Clark student Elijah Wissing.

THE CASE AGAINST. Parents want to reach their kids in an emergency. The bill has no money for pouches or staff time. And it would override local choices.

Sources: Spokane Public Radio (Oct. 2) · Office of the Governor (Oct. 2) · KOMO News (Oct. 2) · Lynnwood Times (Oct. 4)

2 · BIBLE

"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12, NIV

3 · LEADERSHIP

Model it before you mandate it.

Your Gen Alpha students (born 2013 and later) are watching your Gen Z leaders. They copy what we live before they follow what we say.

USE THIS IN YOUR TEAM TIME

Takes 10 minutes. Print this page or pull it up on the screen.

READ

"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12

TALK

1. What's one thing on your phone that's allowed but isn't helping you lead?
2. On youth night, what do students see us doing with our phones?
3. Should youth night go phones-away? What would we give students instead?

DO THIS WEEK

Every leader puts their phone away from doors open until the last student leaves. Then tell one student why.

WEATHER · THURSDAY, OCT. 8

Seattle/Renton	70/54	Partly sunny
Yakima	81/51	Sunny
Spokane	77/48	Mostly sunny
Coeur d'Alene	75/50	Mostly sunny

National Weather Service forecast for Thursday.

COMING UP · NW YOUTH

NOV. 6–7, 2026

NEXT UP

CTRL Next Gen Conference: "No Longer I"

New Life Church, Renton. Junior high through college. \$60 group tickets through Oct. 15. nwyouth.com/conf

FEB. 25–27, 2027

NW Youth Summit Stone Church, Yakima. Leaders 18+. nwyouth.com

APRIL 17, 2027

Create Northwest University. Student fine arts. nwyouth.com

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