

Merrimack School District/SAU 26
School Board Meeting
Preliminary Agenda
August 25, 2025
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room

5:00p.m. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – Merrimack TV Training Classroom

- Staff Welfare

PUBLIC MEETING

- | | | |
|-----------|--|---------------------------------|
| 6:00 p.m. | 1. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE | Lori Peters |
| | 2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION | Lori Peters |
| | 3. RECOGNITIONS | Lori Peters |
| 6:10 p.m. | 4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES | Lori Peters |
| | a. Superintendent Update | |
| | b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update | |
| | c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update | |
| | d. School Board Update | |
| | 5. OLD BUSINESS | Lori Peters |
| 6:30 p.m. | 6. NEW BUSINESS | Lori Peters |
| | a. Implementation of Cell Phone Law | Everett Olsen |
| | b. Data Collection Update | Kathleen Scholand/Bonnie Henson |
| | c. FY27 Budget Timeline | Everett Olsen |
| | d. Enrollments | Everett Olsen |
| | e. School Safety Posters | Everett Olsen |
| | f. Overview of August Leadership Retreat | Everett Olsen |
| | g. January 20 and February 16 School Board Meeting Dates | Lori Peters |
| | h. Special Education FY26 Budget Update | Everett Olsen |
| | i. Other | |
| 7:30 p.m. | 7. POLICIES | Lori Peters |
| | a. Second Review of Prohibition on Use of Student Cell Phones and
Personal Electronic Communication Devices Policy (JICJ) <i>(fast track)</i> | |
| | b. Second Review of School Guidance and Counseling Program Policy (JLD) | |
| | c. Second Review of Revised Behavior Management and Intervention (JLDBA) | |
| | d. Second Review of Accommodation of Lactation Needs Policy (ACN) | |
| | e. Second Review of Revised Daily Physical Activity Policy (IMAH) | |
| 7:45 p.m. | 8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES | Lori Peters |
| | a. July 14, 2025 Public Minutes | |
| | b. July 15, 2025 Non-Public Minutes | |
| | c. July 23, 2025 Non-Public Minutes | |
| | d. August 11, 2025 Public Minutes | |
| 8:00 p.m. | 9. CONSENT AGENDA | Kathleen Scholand |
| | a. Educator Resignations | |
| | b. Educator Nominations | |
| 8:10 p.m. | 10. OTHER | Lori Peters |
| | a. Committee Reports | |
| | b. Correspondence | |
| | c. Comments | |
| 8:30 p.m. | 11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS | Lori Peters |
| 8:45 p.m. | 12. ADJOURN | |

* These times are estimates and may vary depending on discussion.

Merrimack High School Cell Phone and Smart Device Procedure

Introduction: In alignment with the newly enacted state law RSA 189:1-a, V, Merrimack High School is committed to fostering a focused, respectful, and academically engaging environment for all students.

To support this goal, the use of cell phones and smart devices will be restricted during school hours. This initiative is designed to reduce distractions, encourage meaningful in-person interactions, and enhance students' overall learning experience.

We appreciate your partnership in helping us create a school environment where every student can thrive.

Educational Benefits of a Cell Phone-Free Environment:

- **Reduced Distractions:** Without constant access to cell phones, students are less likely to be distracted by social media, games, or non-educational content during instructional time.
- **Improved Focus:** Students can concentrate more effectively on their lessons and engage actively in classroom activities without interruptions from notifications or calls.
- **Enhanced Social Skills:** Encourages face-to-face communication and interaction among peers during non-instructional times, such as lunch and between classes.
- **Promotion of Responsibility:** Learning to manage cell phone usage appropriately teaches responsibility and respect for school policies, preparing students for future workplaces and social settings where similar rules may apply.

Procedure Details:

1. **During Class Time:** Cell phones and personal communication devices must be turned off and stored out of sight from the first bell of the day sending students to class until the dismissal bell at the end of the day. They may not be used for any purpose during instructional time.
2. **Between Class Periods:** Students may not use cell phones or personal communication devices during the transition time between classes. Phones need to be away, out of sight and may not be held in students' hands.
3. **During Lunch:** Cell phones and personal communication devices may not be used during lunch periods. This time is intended for social interaction and relaxation without digital distractions.
4. **Emergency Situations:** School administration may permit the use of cell phones or smart devices by students only in the case of an emergency situation as deemed appropriate by administrators.
5. **Confiscation and Retrieval:** If a device is confiscated, it will be stored securely in the school office. Students or parents/guardians may retrieve the device at the end of the school day.

6. **Responsibility:** Students are responsible for complying with this procedure and ensuring their devices do not disrupt the learning environment or school activities.
7. **Modification of Procedure:** The school administration reserves the right to modify or update this procedure as necessary to address changing circumstances.

Consequences for inappropriate use: Violation of this procedure will result in progressive disciplinary actions as follows:

- **First Offense:** Verbal warning and confiscation of the phone/smart device until the end of the school day. Parent/guardian notification.
- **Second Offense:** Detention and confiscation of the phone/smart device until the end of the school day. Parent/guardian notification and parent/guardian must pick up the phone from the school.
- **Third Offense:** Detention and confiscation of the device with the parent/guardian being required to pick up the phone/smart device and a meeting with school administration to determine the next steps for the student to ensure meeting of school expectations.
- **Subsequent Offenses:** Confiscation of phone/smart device and mandatory meeting with school administration, parent/guardian, and student to discuss compliance options including possible daily phone/smart device turn in to office.
- **Failure to comply** with the confiscation request will result in immediate parent contact and progressive disciplinary consequences that may include suspension.

Conclusion: By adhering to this cell phone and personal communication device procedure, Merrimack High School aims to create a positive and conducive learning environment where students can thrive academically and socially. We appreciate the cooperation of students, parents, and staff in maintaining these standards for the benefit of all.

Effective Date: This procedure will take effect at the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year.

Merrimack School Board
2026-2027 Budget Meetings

Date	Location	Start Time	Agenda
Monday, 12/01/2025	Matthew Thornton Room	6:00 p.m.	<u>School Board Special Meeting</u> Budget Presented to School Board
Monday, 12/08/2025	Memorial Room	6:00 p.m.	<u>School Board Meeting - Special</u> Food Service, MES, RFS, TFS, JMUES,
Monday, 12/15/2025	Matthew Thornton Room	6:00 p.m.	<u>School Board Meeting</u> Maintenance, Technology/Library, Student Services, District
Thursday, 12/18/2025	Memorial Room	6:00 p.m.	<u>School Board Meeting - Special</u> - MMS, MHS - Additional Sessions with Departments, if needed - Work Session and Warrant Article Discussion
Monday, 1/12/2026	Memorial Room	6:00 p.m.	<u>School Board Meeting - Special</u> Snow Date, if needed. - Work Session and Warrant Article Discussion if needed.
Monday, 2/02/2026 (2/05/2026 Snow Date)	Matthew Thornton Room	6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	<u>Bond Hearing</u> <u>School Board Meeting</u> Vote on Warrant Articles

Merrimack School District
K to 12 Enrollments
August 19, 2025

Mastricola Elementary School

Grade	Classrooms	Students per Classroom	Total Students
PreK	1	20	20
K	4	15, 15, 16, 16	62
1	4	16, 16, 16, 16	64
2	4	16, 16, 16, 16	64
3	5	15, 14, 14, 16, 14	73
4	4	20, 20, 21, 21	82
			365

Reeds Ferry Elementary School

Grade	Classrooms	Students per Classroom	Total Students
PreK	3	19, 19, 18	56
K	5	17, 17, 17, 18, 18	87
1	6	16, 16, 16, 16, 16, 16	96
2	6	18, 18, 18, 18, 19, 19	110
3	5	17, 17, 17, 18, 18	87
4	5	18, 18, 18, 17, 17	88
			524

Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

Grade	Classrooms	Students per Classroom	Total Students
PreK	2	21, 20	41
K	5	16, 16, 17, 15, 16	80
1	5	17, 17, 16, 16, 16	82
2	5	20, 20, 20, 19, 19	98
3	6	16, 16, 16, 17, 18, 15	98
4	6	16, 16, 15, 16, 16, 20	99
			498

Mastricola Upper Elementary School

Grade	Classrooms	Students per Classroom	Total Students
5	12	19-20	237
6	12	22-23	261
			498

Merrimack Middle School

Grade	Classrooms	Students per Classroom	Total Students
7	15		275
8	15		248
			523

Merrimack High School

Grade	Classrooms	Students per Classroom	Total Students
9			230
10			256
11			255
12			271
			1012

Merrimack School District
Leadership Team August Retreat Agenda
Thursday August 7, 2025 – Friday August 8, 2025
Location: Merrimack Middle School

Day 1: Thursday August 7, 2025

Please plan to arrive by 8:00 a.m., a light breakfast with coffee will be provided from Hot Rize

8:00 – 9:30 Welcome and Icebreaker*

** Introductions and a brief slideshow. Please send Melissa 1-5 photos of yourself, your family, pets, travel, or anything that represents you that you would be willing to share out with the group.*

9:30 – 12:00 Kelly Driscoll – SupportedEDU, “Leading with Connection: Grounding Leadership in Purpose, Trust and Joy”

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch – will be provided from Pressed Café

1:00 – 2:30 Review of School Safety Procedures

- Revised Crisis Management Plan Language
- Review of Evacuation/Reunification Sites
- Classroom Posters
- Simulated Evacuation/Reunification Drill
- Radio Training

2:30 – 4:00 Leadership Team Meeting (part one)

- Fire/Evacuation Drills
- Consistency around Bullying Investigation Process and Paperwork and Policy
- Administrator Certification Renewal Process
- District Goal - Communication
- Cell Phone Policies and Procedures

Day 2: Friday, August 8, 2025

8:00 – 9:00 Arrival and Light Breakfast and Coffee will be provided from Buckleys

9:00 – 10:00 Review of the 2025-2026 School Board Goals

10:00 – 12:00 Work with Kalise Warnum, Topic TBD

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch – will be provided from Carrabbas

1:00 – 3:00 Leadership Team Meeting (part two)

- Website Redesign/AI Policy Updates
- Communications Plan and Next Steps
- Professional Development for 2025-2026
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Guide
- Budget Timeline and Updates
- Special Education Contract Services
- Electronic PARs in ERP
- Update on Library Records
- Other



Everett Olsen <everett.olsen@sau26.org>

Re: Cell Phone Form Responses

1 message

Jason Pelletier <jason.pelletier@sau26.org>

Wed, Aug 6, 2025 at 9:05 AM

To: Everett Olsen <everett.olsen@sau26.org>

Cc: SchoolBoard <SchoolBoard@sau26.org>, MSD Leadership <MSDLeadership@sau26.org>

Thank you for sending this Bill!

Looking at the individual results will give you a more complete understanding of the community but using a little AI help, here is the AI Summary report from all of the responses if anyone is interested:

- **Support for the Ban:** Many respondents support a complete ban on cell phones in schools, especially for K-8, citing reduced distractions, improved focus, enhanced social skills, and the belief that phones are unnecessary during school hours.
- **Allowance During Non-Instructional Time:** A significant number of responses suggest allowing cell phone use during non-instructional times, such as between classes, during lunch, study hall, and free periods, particularly for high school students.
- **Safety and Emergency Concerns:** Several respondents emphasize the importance of students having access to phones for emergencies, safety, and to communicate with parents about changes in plans, anxiety, or personal needs.
- **Enforcement and Policy Details:** Concerns were raised about the enforceability of a complete ban, the clarity of consequences for infractions, whether the policy applies to staff, and the logistical challenges of confiscation and parent pickup.
- **Technology as a Tool and Skill:** Some responses argue that phones can be useful learning tools, that students should learn responsible technology use rather than having devices banned, and that a complete ban is unrealistic in today's digital age.



8-18-2025
Input On Draft Cell PI



Questions Responses Settings

154 responses

View in Sheets

Summary

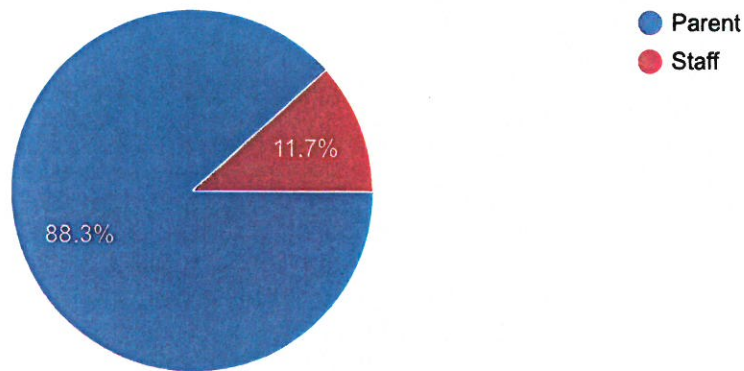
Question

Individual

Role

Copy chart

154 responses



Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy

154 responses

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
7/31/2025 14:50:59	Parent	I'd love to see this implemented in our schools!
7/31/2025 14:51:39	Parent	I am against the cell phone ban
7/31/2025 14:52:38	Staff	Beneficial to all.
7/31/2025 14:52:52	Parent	As long as the students device is not impeding their educational performance I do not feel a "ban" is necessary. Given the amount of instruction that is electronically provided via chrome books I find this to be more of an issue than carrying a personal cell phone or wearing a smart watch. I am not in favor of any policy restricting my child's ability to carry their cell phone while in school.
7/31/2025 14:53:15	Parent	as long as my child has his phone before and after school im ok with it not being used during school.
7/31/2025 14:53:30	Parent	I think it looks great. Simple and straightforward. You may want to add what specifically will happen for a 3rd infraction (i.e. detention or 1 day suspension and device confiscated with required parent pickup). I think it's too vague what happens after the 2nd infraction which may lead kids to test it out and inadvertently result different sanctions for the same offense
7/31/2025 14:53:34	Parent	Students should be allowed to use their phones between classes and at lunch.
7/31/2025 14:55:29	Parent	I like it for big kids, but for the little ones who need watches not for communication but to keep track of their location I am concerned about them. I have 2 special needs children.
7/31/2025 14:56:09	Parent	For the second offense, I would prefer a call to the parent for permission to give the phone back to the student. Seems excessive to make parents drive to pick up a phone.
7/31/2025 14:57:58	Parent	I would add in references to district and/or school policies regarding the use of communication devices on the school bus to/from school.
7/31/2025 14:58:32	Parent	This change is going to be hard but is in the best interest of kids. I would urge all the adults to stop complaining about the anticipated noncompliance and focus on the goal of helping children and teachers learn without the burden of constant cell phone use. This is the best decision for kids and this should remain the focus. I support the teachers and administrators in doing everything they can to ensure that the adults take back control of the classroom.
7/31/2025 14:58:32	Parent	Does this apply to staff as well?
7/31/2025 14:58:46	Parent	Agree with policy
7/31/2025 15:01:54	Parent	How will this be enforced? Everyone needs clear guidance on that, as well as expectations for what teachers and staff are/aren't allowed to do, what consequences students face if they break the rules, and how parents should contact their kids if they need to during the school day. 'm concerned about the decision to ban cell phones entirely at the high school level. While I support minimizing distractions during class, a full ban—especially during non-instructional time—misses a valuable opportunity to teach responsible device use.
7/31/2025 15:02:45	Parent	High school students are nearing adulthood. Rather than removing phones altogether, we should be helping them learn how to manage technology appropriately, just as we teach them to drive responsibly rather than banning cars to prevent accidents. A clear policy with consequences for misuse would be more effective and realistic preparation for the world they're about to enter.
7/31/2025 15:05:45	Parent	Yes please
7/31/2025 15:08:09	Parent	Looks great
7/31/2025 15:08:09	Parent	Agree

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
7/31/2025 15:08:30	Parent	I am in full support of a K-8 complete cell phone ban in schools. However, in the case of high school, I believe that students should be able to use their cell phones during any non-academic times. This might include times when they are passing between classes or during their lunch period.
7/31/2025 15:09:00	Parent	I support banning them.
7/31/2025 15:09:08	Parent	Can kids still have their phones on the bus?
7/31/2025 15:11:18	Parent	Please make these responses public
7/31/2025 15:12:14	Parent	I think the kids should be able to use their phones during transition times and/or downtime like lunch at least at the high school level.
7/31/2025 15:12:59	Parent	I don't like this because of emergency situations and not being able to communicate. I do believe that during class they should be put away.
7/31/2025 15:16:00	Parent	Absolutely agree. There is no need for cell phone use in school.
7/31/2025 15:16:59	Parent	I agree with it. Children do not need to have a cell phone or other electronic devices during the school day when they should be focusing and learning. There are adults and telephones available during the day in the school for emergencies or other needs.
7/31/2025 15:18:44	Parent	My opinion is that this policy is very reasonable. These devices are a distraction in so many ways. Students have access to the resources they need with their Chromebooks. I'm actually very happy about this.
7/31/2025 15:19:13	Parent	I'm 100 percent on board for not using cell phones during school learning. I think students should be able to have access to phones during lunch or breaks. I have extremely shy children, who would suffer through a problem rather than ask for help. Sometimes if they're not feeling well or have an injury from one of their sports, it's nice to check in with them during the day to make sure they are doing ok. If my daughter gets her first period during school hours I'd like for her to be able to reach out to me if needed. We have a large family and often our plans change after school. Being able to send a quick message to ensure our kids are aware of these changes is imperative. If my child forgets something they need after school for sports practice or a homework assignment, I like for them to reach out to be able to tell a parent during the day. I do not think cell phones should be brought into classrooms to distract from learning. If kids have a break or lunch that's their time during the day. I don't think going to locker and checking their phone and putting it right back is detrimental to their learning. I'd also like to know if this rule pertains to teachers and staff as well? I volunteer in the schools and see many staff members spending a lot of times on their phones. I think it would be a bad message to tell kids they can't use their phones in schools and watch their teacher check their phones all day.
7/31/2025 15:19:36	Parent	Love it!
7/31/2025 15:19:46	Parent	I feel students should have access to their phones or smart watches between classes, at lunch and study hall. Teachers can collect the phones at the beginning of class and give them back at the end. That way, if there is an emergency, the phones are available for students to contact their parents. Seems smart. I grew up with the same policy, likely unwritten, when I had a cell phone in 2005 in High School. Banning them outright was bad for student drivers.
7/31/2025 15:22:18	Parent	Only catch I see is as a study tool during free periods for non disabled people. By allowing it for disabled but not disabled kids, that seems like a discrimination against able minded students. That could just be because the law was probably crudely written to address other issues, but a valid critique none the less.
7/31/2025 15:24:22	Parent	I support no phones at school. However, I do not think smartwatches should be included in the ban. The policy does not specify if earbuds, such as AirPods are allowed to be worn. Also it should clarify that this does not affect students riding on the buses.

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
7/31/2025 15:25:04	Parent	This is completely ridiculous. I am all for students not using cell phones during class instruction. But to entirely prohibit them from having /using them at any time is a violation of their civil rights. Not to say that we are expecting an emergent situation, but in the case of something like that, the students should all have ample access to their phone for emergent situations and not have to rely on the time it takes for someone else to contact first responders. If cell phones will be 100% banned, we will be calling the school multiple times a day to check on the well being of our child. I hope this "law" will be reconsidered by the district. This is 2025 and technology is a part of our culture. Again, I am for prohibition during instruction, but to fully prohibit use for several hours should not be up to the government nor the school district.
7/31/2025 15:27:15	Parent	Yes
7/31/2025 15:27:27	Parent	They should be allowed to have phones.
7/31/2025 15:30:47	Parent	I disagree with this especially having a child with high anxiety who uses a Fitbit watch to tell time along with wanting their phone to text their parent when they need to. I agree with not using a phone in class but at lunch and recess it should be allowed.
7/31/2025 15:31:19	Parent	This is ridiculous government overreach. I like that my student has their phone – for many reasons. The district needs to adopt an opt-out policy. Parents can opt-out of kids learning certain subjects. They can opt out having their kids exposed to literature. Why not this waste-of-time policy? There are far too many other concerns that the district should be addressing vs policing student cell phone usage.
7/31/2025 15:32:11	Parent	Electronic devices should not be used during the school day
7/31/2025 15:32:44	Parent	Leave up to teacher discretion
7/31/2025 15:33:09	Parent	Love it! Kids should not be using their phones during the day unless its some kind of emergency.
7/31/2025 15:34:02	Parent	Do your job and teach the kids. If the phone becomes a issue then it can be addressed then.
7/31/2025 15:35:09	Parent	I think this is great
7/31/2025 15:41:00	Parent	Love it
7/31/2025 15:44:23	Parent	This seem unenforceable.
7/31/2025 15:47:11	Parent	I don't like it. Technology is a learning tool. Also, with the rise of violence in schools, I prefer that my child be able to contact me immediately if something happens.
7/31/2025 15:47:47	Parent	Approve... Not needed in schools
7/31/2025 15:50:22	Parent	Unnecessary
7/31/2025 15:51:30	Parent	I don't like it. :(Should at least be allowed to use in study halls/lunch/free time.
7/31/2025 15:58:09	Parent	That's so stupid let the kids be able to communicate with each other
7/31/2025 16:02:01	Parent	I understand why there would not be cell phones permitted during academic or other structured time such as extra curricular activities, but I am confused as to why this is important during down time. My son has autism, ADHD, and anxiety, he has not been disruptive with his phone at school. But it does provide some relief and some connection to us during the day on days that he has been anxious.

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
7/31/2025 16:04:51	Parent	<p>Absolutely support. I just told my 10th grader he's not bringing it to school regardless of school policy. Technically they weren't allowed last year and multiple teachers told me he kept bringing out his phone during class and I wasn't happy. He actually had "burner" phones he was using to be able to play games because we have multiple parental controls on his phone. We grounded him from using his phone for 3 months.</p>
7/31/2025 16:05:30	Parent	<p>I think the banning of cell phones during the school day is fabulous! It will limit distractions and keep the kids engaged with each other therefore strengthening their social skills.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to submit feedback on the policy.</p> <p>As I'm sure you're aware, the only peer reviewed, scientific study on cell phone bans in school showed there is "no evidence that restrictive school policies are associated with overall phone and social media use or better mental wellbeing in adolescents. The findings do not provide evidence to support the use of school policies to prohibit phone use during the day in their current form, and indicate these policies require further development" it continues:</p> <p>"In addition, adolescents attending schools with restrictive phone policies did not differ in their sleep duration and efficiency, physical activity, academic attainment, and disruptive classroom behaviour, compared to pupils who attended schools where phone use was permitted during the school day. " *</p> <p>With that data in mind, I'm not sure why the governor passed a cell phone ban except that to the uneducated and uninformed, it sounds like a good idea and could garner some easy votes and catchy talking points for the governor.</p> <p>Clearly further research is needed. I recommend delaying a policy until the required enforcement date and in that time utilize data from the states that foolishly had to go before NH to determine a policy that is flexible and allows teachers to meet the unique needs of their classroom without burdening them with enforcement of a policy clearly not intended to put students first. I recommend following states like Michigan that refused to enact their toothless ban or Maine that simply used the latest interest in catchy 'bell to bell' bans as an opportunity to support the already existing rules regarding distractions in classrooms.</p>
7/31/2025 16:07:01	Parent	<p>To try to enact a policy now or attempt to "prepare" students by burdening families to remove devices is shortsighted at best. The draft policy attempts to outline a variety of internet enabled devices and categorize those as "acceptable" or "unacceptable". This is a path that will cause administrators to drown in exception requests and offer up to most teens an opportunity to find a device that will skirt the rules. The time spent determining if each calculator, watch, smart pen, eyeglass is acceptable or not will divert from our already anemic resources. When the simplest, most fitting response would be to continue to empower our teachers to limit distractions as they find necessary in their classrooms.</p> <p>To summarize, I do not support using our students as propaganda. Please support teachers and students and focus on policies that will have an outcome on student success. Allow teachers to set policies for their classrooms that best support outcomes.</p> <p>Content</p> <p>*School phone policies and their association with mental wellbeing, phone use, and social media use (SMART Schools): a cross-sectional observational study Goodyear, Victoria A. et al. The Lancet Regional Health – Europe, Volume 51, 101211</p>

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
7/31/2025 16:07:08	Parent	I'm kind of in shock that a phone is not allowed to be used during a lunch break. Also that smart watches will not be allowed. I think it makes sense to not be allowed to use the phone during classrooms, and possibly even while walking through the hallways. But if a child is on a lunch break, especially a high schooler, I think they should be allowed to use their phone.
7/31/2025 16:10:01	Parent	Agree with policy
7/31/2025 16:11:29	Parent	I personally think phones are now a staple in not only children but also adults lives. I understand how phones can be a distraction but I feel if certain rules are in place that help the proper use of cell phone use such as maybe breaks in class time or during study halls. Especially because sometimes it's also easier to use your phone for class work instead of a computer. And sometimes students need to check on their personal life. Just as adults do. If teachers can take a call in class or text then children should be able to as well but only at the appropriate times.
7/31/2025 16:12:52	Parent	I don't agree with this new policy. My daughter struggles to remember some important information given to her in the school day and uses her phone to set reminders to help her remember. It's not that easy to write it down and then remember to add to the phone once she gets home because of her after school schedule and her homework demands. This will just be one more thing to "remember" to do at the end of an already long exhausting day for her.
7/31/2025 16:13:37	Parent	Until schools in this country can demonstrate that they can keep students safe they should continue to be allowed to carry cell phone devices. One concern I have with the policy is not allowing personal computers. My child takes VLACS classes because they are not offered at the school or do not fit into her schedule. She brings a personal computer to use during study hall so she can work on her VLACS when she has no other homework. Now I feel like she will have unneeded down time with no access to doing something constructive.
7/31/2025 16:14:47	Parent	Another concern would be communication about changes in practice or transportation. My daughter plays field hockey and due to the soccer team and field hockey team sharing a field, sometimes she has practices at other fields. Currently all sports communication is through the Sports U App but now they will not have access to that. If there are last minute changes (there have been in the past). How will that be effectively communicated to both students and parents in a timely manner?
7/31/2025 16:15:22	Parent	I think that as long as kids can wear their smart watches as many do use it for tracking health progress, and if they can have their cell phone on them in case of an emergency, as long as they are not using these devices during the day, I think it is good.
7/31/2025 16:16:11	Staff	As a staff member of Merrimack high school I think phones can and should be used during school hours. I know some teachers use canvas still and when uploading in canvas sometimes you need to take a photo and that is easier to achieve using your phone same with Google classroom. Students may also need breaks from time to time. And when students are being disciplined for using phones which are now a lifestyle of today, it doesn't help there looks on staff and school if phones were aloud with certain rules in place I think students might behave better.
7/31/2025 16:16:37	Parent	I agree
7/31/2025 16:43:01	Parent	we are totally in favor of this law.
7/31/2025 16:48:41	Parent	Phones should not be allowed during school Hours. Use of smart watches I feel Is okay

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
7/31/2025 16:52:24	Parent	I am In support of electronics not being a distraction during school hours. I am happy to see that a cell Phone can still be brought but shut off. The only reason I support this is in event of an emergency like a lock down of some sort that we have seen in the media that phones were helpful. I appreciate the email and the chance to provide feedback.
7/31/2025 16:52:42	Parent	I believe that it will be fine during classes however during lunchtime and passing through class is a little excessive. My son has a 504 plan that does not include him using his cell phone to contact me when he feels overwhelmed so if he has a chance to send me a quick text from class to class or at his lunch, I believe he should have the right to.
7/31/2025 16:53:06	Parent	100% in agreement with the policy
7/31/2025 17:02:31	Parent	All for it they shouldn't be on their phones unless calling a parent
7/31/2025 17:07:51	Parent	I believe it is in the best interest of students and staff.
7/31/2025 17:09:33	Staff	This worked at the middle school when I was there especially with the progression of consequences, and I am hopeful that staff will follow through to make this happen. Thank you for doing this.
7/31/2025 17:23:43	Parent	I think during classroom time is very important to have cell phone sleeves that each student must utilize or face consequences. A total ban during the day feels like a large first step.
7/31/2025 17:26:34	Staff	In the plan it says that phones will be confiscated for the remainder of the school day. While the classroom teacher may be the one to do this, it seems inappropriate for the classroom teacher to hold the device until the end of the day. The device is much more likely to get lost, stolen, or damaged in a classroom, than if admin holds it.
7/31/2025 17:29:36	Parent	I have no problem with it but am concerned students are going to use them anyway with no consequence.
7/31/2025 17:31:49	Parent	They should be able to have it during non instructional time
		I think it is unreasonable for a student to be unable to use their phone during lunch.
7/31/2025 17:38:08	Parent	I don't agree with the "ramifications" of not following the RSA, especially a parent having to come pick up the device for a 2nd offense. You don't know what families/ guardians are doing at the end of the school day - most are at work. The 3rd offense is possibly being held accountable to student code of conduct.
		None of the 3 consequences seem like they're deterrents to student behavior with cellphone use.
		Otherwise the policy is fine.
7/31/2025 18:04:36	Parent	Do not require schools to take or secure the phones across the board.
7/31/2025 18:06:35	Parent	I don't agree with this. The kids should be able to use their phones during non instruction time.
7/31/2025 18:07:37	Parent	Fantastic!
7/31/2025 18:09:52	Parent	I disagree with this policy. There are times my child needs to communicate with me and as long as it's not disruptive she should be able to. I'd rather she has access in case of any kind of an emergency a way to reach me.
7/31/2025 18:19:11	Parent	go for it.
7/31/2025 18:29:33	Parent	This policy has no teeth. Students should be suspended for one day on the first offense, and an additional day for each subsequent offense.
7/31/2025 18:55:45	Parent	I think it's fine as long as student is allowed to store it on silent

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
7/31/2025 18:58:02	Parent	I think this is great !! I fully support !! Please help us parents protect our children!
7/31/2025 19:00:14	Parent	I agree with this policy, however, I do not believe that there will be much benefit from it considering that students will still possess electronic devices (i.e., laptop computers) provided by the school districts, and thus, will still become easily distracted by technology during instruction time.
7/31/2025 19:05:06	Parent	I agree
7/31/2025 19:09:20	Parent	While I wholeheartedly agree that students' focus should be on education and not their phones, I find this ban to be nonsensical. How are you going to ban phones when the school secretaries need the parents to text their children to be dismissed because the admin can't find the student. How do you ban laptops when your schools solely function on laptops? I think we should spend more time enforcing no tolerance for bullying policies, seeing how we can ensure our students are successful in a crumbling society, and focusing on our children who need extra assistance with their learning. This is a waste of time, gives teachers another thing to waste their time policing, and poses safety concerns with not being able to contact my child.
7/31/2025 19:16:44	Parent	This is not a good idea for anyone (students, teaches, parents). The students are too old for this type of oversight. At a minimum they should have access to their phones outside of the classroom. Phones are also email, calendars, research, calculators. Chromebooks can only partially fill the gap for what they'd be losing. Will the school provide calculators? How much time will be wasted by teachers talking about phones, monitoring for them, or taking them away, etc?
7/31/2025 19:19:58	Staff	Will their first job take their phones from them from being distracted? Or will they need to know how to manage this on their own? Would the school district provide headphones for students to use if a lesson involves individual video viewing within the classroom? Sometimes students use their own headphones to connect to chromebooks, but this could lead down a slippery slope regarding connection to content on their own silenced and away cell phones.
7/31/2025 19:58:32	Parent	Love it!
7/31/2025 20:00:38	Parent	I am in full support of this policy and appreciate the thoughtful approach to minimizing distractions during the school day.
7/31/2025 20:01:02	Parent	Positive
7/31/2025 20:11:32	Parent	Reviewed and no changes to suggest at this time. Would support use of phone/electronics lockboxes in the future (realizing this would yes, require funds to acquire them) as this would mitigate / reduce the need for teachers to have to 'police' the policy which will take also time away from instruction.
7/31/2025 20:12:58	Parent	I am glad they can't use their phone in class. Not sure yet how I feel about during down time.
7/31/2025 20:13:22	Parent	I feel during class time it should be prohibited, but in between class and at lunch should be allowed.
7/31/2025 20:16:14	Parent	I'm a parent of a student that attends merrimack high school. I do not agree that cell phones should be outlawed. I do understand that during classes it should not be used but a law is pushing this too far. This is a public school not a private school. Our young adult children should be able to communicate with their parents or loved ones between classes. School should not be treated as a jail and students still have rights under the constitution. Thank you for listening to our opinions in this matter and I hope we can come to a resolution without stripping away our child's rights.
		Sincerely,
		A concerned parent

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
7/31/2025 22:13:23	Parent	<p>As a parent, I strongly oppose the draft cellphone policy in its current form. While I understand the intent behind the new state law is to reduce distractions and promote academic focus, this draft goes far beyond what is necessary or helpful. Completely banning all student use of personal electronic communication devices — even during lunch, recess, advisory and passing periods — is overly restrictive and does not take into account how students learn, communicate, and manage their day-to-day responsibilities in today's world. That includes staying in touch with family during non-instructional time to share how their day is going, stressful situations or how they did on a test, using technology for organization by inputting assignments or checking schedules, and taking brief, healthy breaks to reset and recharge during the school day.</p> <p>Comprehensive research also shows that while some schools report short-term behavioral improvements after implementing strict cellphone bans, the long-term academic and mental health benefits are far less clear. A 2025 international review of more than 20 studies found no consistent evidence that cellphone bans improve grades, mental health, or student behavior. A UK study of over 1,200 students found that banning phones during the school day did not improve academic performance or well-being. These findings suggest that blanket bans may not achieve the intended outcomes and could instead create new challenges.</p> <p>This policy also places a significant burden on teachers and school staff, expecting them to monitor and enforce an all-day ban that has proven difficult to implement effectively in many schools. Prior attempts have often resulted in inconsistent enforcement, increased disciplinary conflict, and strained teacher-student relationships. Escalating enforcement to the level of confiscation and discipline over non-disruptive use only adds to the stress on educators who are already stretched thin.</p> <p>While the draft includes exceptions for students with IEPs, 504 plans, and medical needs, it fails to acknowledge students who rely on personal devices to manage anxiety, executive functioning challenges, or emotional regulation, but who may not have formal documentation. These students deserve understanding and flexibility, not blanket restrictions.</p> <p>Rather than adopting a rigid, one-size-fits-all policy, I urge the district to take a more balanced approach. Allowing responsible use of devices during non-instructional time, equipping students with digital literacy skills, and supporting teachers with flexible, classroom-level management would be far more effective in preparing students for success both academically and socially.</p>
7/31/2025 22:22:36	Parent	Love it
7/31/2025 22:22:55	Staff	Love it
7/31/2025 22:57:24	Parent	Not sure
7/31/2025 23:04:39	Parent	<p>This is a HUGE blessing!!!</p> <p>It may take a bit of time for the kids to be okay with not having their phones glued to them but, this will be a positive thing for kids as far as focus, learning and even friendships go!!!</p> <p>This is amazing!!</p>

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
7/31/2025 21:08:25	Staff	The rules for even having a phone visible during the school day need to be as clear as those for vaping and other extreme offenses. There must be a rule that teachers must immediately confiscate the device and send it to the office or that an administrator comes to collect the device or student. This must include in the halls, bathroom, etc. Confiscation/punishment must be very clear and obligatory for staff so there is no gray area. Otherwise, the law will be unenforceable, and teachers will have to choose between attempting to uphold the law by asking students to put phones away or teaching their classes. Hallway/bathroom enforcement needs to be obligatory for all staff to ensure compliance.
7/31/2025 21:28:41	Parent	My husband and I are 100% in support of this - ban - based on the findings from numerous research insights and real-world examples that overwhelmingly conclude that devices in school are a detriment to students, and challenging for teachers.
7/31/2025 21:33:54	Parent	Love the policy, please enforce it actively!
7/31/2025 21:52:30	Parent	I wish the kids could use their cell phones before school starts and at lunch time. My high schooler doesn't have a lot of friends at school so uses his cell during lunch. It will be awkward to eat alone and have nothing to look at. I completely agree with not using phone during school hours aside from lunch time.
7/31/2025 21:57:40	Staff	Are staff still allowed to have cell phones for emergencies--i.e. my childcare calling about a sick child?
7/31/2025 22:06:06	Parent	Agree
7/31/2025 22:10:03	Parent	I think it is thorough and clearly stated

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
8/1/2025 1:28:01	Parent	<p>We must acknowledge that there are legitimate, sometimes time sensitive reasons for a child to communicate with their parent (could be as simple as a program/practice time changes or cancellation dictating a pickup) and that this is achieved most simply, efficiently, and unobtrusively through a quick message via a personal device. You cannot put the genie back in the bottle - the digital age is here to stay. This reality is demonstrated in how the district itself has embraced the efficiency and ubiquity of personal devices in its own processes and systems for communication, dismissal, lunch balances, sharing documents, QR codes etc. Thus the policy must include a procedure where students can either use their device briefly in the rare, exigent circumstance they need to contact a parent or the school must accept the burden of making that call/contact on their behalf. A better policy would set goals relating to outcomes and address issues rather than dictating an overarching, blunt one size fits all mandate on "how"</p>
8/1/2025 6:26:32	Parent	<p>I fail to understand why cell phones would be banned from being used during non-learning time, especially for high school students. There is a need for them to be able to communicate with parents, employers, each other, etc. during the school day. If they do not have designated times to use their phones, I think there will be a lot of negative effects.</p>
8/1/2025 7:20:55	Parent	<p>Glad no cell phones in class but they should be allowed at lunch and other free times</p>
8/1/2025 8:02:33	Parent	<p>I support this policy</p>
8/1/2025 8:51:45	Parent	<p>Kids should absolutely have access to their cell phones</p>
8/1/2025 9:44:07	Staff	<p>I think it's a great idea as many students try to sneak their phones to play games or even ask parents to pick them up without going through proper channels of parents dismissing students without reason</p>
8/1/2025 10:59:09	Staff	<p>To be effective, a strong tone needs to be set from the get go and consequences followed through with and increased repercussions. I understand 1st time to office, 2nd parent pick up, subsequent offenses detention up to suspension after x number. It will be a challenging year for all school districts, once the standard is set and accountability applied, we'll all benefit from this change and each year will get easier.</p>
8/1/2025 11:20:40	Staff	<p>There should be guidelines for including cellphone use in 504s. There is significant research to show that cell phone use contributes to anxiety and depression in children so allowances should not be made for children simply because of anxiety and depression. Instead, there should be provisions for them to communicate with their parents as needed, in another way.</p>
8/1/2025 11:38:52	Parent	<p>I have a law as well. My law states that my high school children are permitted to contact me using their cell phones at any time in an emergency while at school. Please refer to RSA1.1: Nobody tells my children they can't contact me.</p>
8/1/2025 12:05:06	Parent	<p>Allow students to use phones during lunch and allow them to use their phones for research.</p>
8/1/2025 12:32:21	Parent	<p>I think the current policy for the Merrimack School District works well. Completely taking away phones will most likely cause more headaches than it's worth (i.e., increase in discipline; which may put a strain on detentions and/or in school suspension- among other things). There could also be other unintended consequences, such as</p>
8/1/2025 13:33:47	Parent	<p>I think cell phones should be allowed between classes as long as the student isn't late for their class.</p>
8/1/2025 13:51:55	Parent	<p>This should not be a law and should be up to the classroom teachers for appropriate use. We do not need government intervention on the use of cell phones in schools</p>
8/1/2025 14:16:30	Staff	<p>Administration needs to strictly and consistently enforce this for it to work</p>
8/1/2025 15:28:34	Parent	<p>I fully support this policy. Cell phones are an unnecessary distraction in the classroom.</p>

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
8/1/2025 16:15:05	Parent	<p>Love it</p> <p>District schools should establish a standard for phone collection/placement in each classroom, i.e. a basket at the front of the class, or as my daughter described, a clear pocket shoe organizer hung on a wall where the kids can slip their phones in. This seems to be more supportive and conducive to learning and adherence to the statute than a culture of concealment and enforcement. Students and staff will know where the phones are, and class simply moves on. Without a process, mutually respectful and proactive solution, kids are just going to find ways to access and use their phones-perpetuating the distraction for both students and staff who are being asked to watch for violations and respond with disciplinary action.</p>
8/1/2025 16:46:34	Parent	<p>As for the policy, if such a standard existed, language could say how the school is going to support students by implementing measures to promote expectations, accountability, and equity for student and classrooms. I support the intent behind the law and the policy, and have spoken to my children about the issue, but think as adults we can also role model creative solutions that yield positive results. Thank you!</p>
8/1/2025 19:25:19	Parent	<p>I disagree with this policy. Certainly it's not ok if the kids are on them during a lesson where they aren't using them to participate, but sometimes they are helpful in discussions in class. Also there are times that it might be important for a student to reach a parent on their cell. We will not be agreeing to follow any policy dictated about this. My child knows not to pull out their phone during class unless it is to help them with their lesson or to relate to the lesson, or if something happens or his iep isn't followed and he needs to get ahold of me. I would be very angry to find out it might have been taken away! Why not implement a policy where the students face a consequence if they use the phone in a distracting way during class? The consequence be something like stay after to clean or something and a call to the parents. What happens if Merrimack chooses to ignore this and make their own cell policy?</p>
8/1/2025 19:57:22	Parent	<p>I don't agree. But I will certainly call the school whenever I need to get a message to my child so make sure you have resources on hand to handle the multiple calls to the school. I can also email through the use of the school laptops. So are they going to get rid of them as well? Either way works for me. Besides the phone is his property and if you take it away or lose it you will be financially accountable for replacing it as it is not your property to take. Let's be clear on that. It's not illegal to carry a phone or use it when needed. What would happen in an emergency situation and the kids need to call 911???? If the kids can't use phones etc the teachers shouldn't have them either. So again what would happen in an emergency situation. So what they can only use it when they go to the bathroom?</p>
8/1/2025 20:14:12	Parent	<p>I think it should depend on the age of the student. Also, if there is an emergency, god forbid a shelter in place etc, I want my child to have a device to contact me or emergency personel</p>
8/1/2025 22:18:57	Parent	<p>Just concerned about how many students (high school) who do not have an IEP or 504, rely on the power school app on their cell phones to check their schedules regularly during school hours, grades, assignments, scan assignments to hand in (in class to be handed in on canvas or google classroom - many teacher have students do this and assignments must be handed in during class time this way)....how will this be addressed? How do we teach high school students to be responsible with technology - cell phones are not going away and part of how society is developing with technology. If anything it will teach kids to be more sneaky - just like vaping and or doing drugs in the bathroom. Kids will find a way to use cellphones and this will certainly burden teachers more. I can understand banning completely for younger grades, but high school students should have access to this technology to aid in their day and learning.</p>
8/2/2025 0:31:02	Parent	<p>Great idea</p>

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
8/2/2025 8:09:31	Parent	It's great! Kids should be talking in halls and lunch not on cellphones. And go back to collecting actual papers by teachers and not scanning papers. Phones should be completely turned off and away for the whole day. Parents can always call into office or Even email their child.
8/2/2025 8:45:42	Parent	I agree with the no electronics from bell to bell policy. However each school and EVERY teacher enforcing it doesn't seem realistic to me. Every staff member needs to be on board in order for this to truly be a reality. Parents can get in touch with their kids through the school if they need. Thank you Everett for sending out a survey for our input. This way you can't interrupt us and use up our time, like you do in public board meetings.
8/2/2025 8:49:01	Parent	This is a public institution that is paid for with my tax dollars. I do not think my son should be without his phone. How can this be enforced? So many kids will get in trouble and for what. No phones during lunch or hallways? Good luck.
8/2/2025 9:16:33	Parent	I think this is good idea. Hope fully they will socialize with each other more
		I, a parent, am in agreement with the Cell Phone Policy prohibiting students from using it and with the confiscation should a student try to violate the policy.
8/2/2025 17:53:41	Parent	I also have seen in various discussions surrounding Cell Phone Bans that the administration team must be the ones who are full teeth about this policy. Student Cell Phone usage has been shown to be incredibly distracting to teaching, it may be what is causing our youth who are going out to the workforce to be subpar workers compared to the young adults who did not have smart phones.
		So in order to be effective the admin team must be on the same page and they must be the ones who each and every time administer the laid out response to students violating the policy. This is the only way for such an important yet polarizing policy to be upheld.
8/3/2025 0:05:28	Parent	A law is excessive in my opinion. I'm all for limiting distractions to support a focused classroom. Nonetheless, we as a society need to adapt to the tech boom we find ourselves in, and our schools need to provide the education to generations growing up in a world with vast amounts of accessible information. Why can't it be part of learning to manage and be responsible with a phone, tablet, etc? It's arbitrary to outlaw, and each school should be accountable for its policies, not a politician who changes their stance to suit their agenda for power. How about laws to protect schools from violence as a more pressing issue, instead of focusing on writing laws against having a phone? Something our kids/students might need in such an emergency.
8/3/2025 0:14:28	Parent	Looks good!
8/3/2025 12:45:27	Parent	My children are young and don't have cell phones, but I still feel like this is somehow a violation of freedom of speech. While I understand and agree kids need to be paying attention in class and that is most likely the reason for this, as a parent if an emergency were to be happening in the school I would want to be able to get in touch with my children. I don't think it is the states job or the schools job to be deciding if my child can have their phone or not. That is my job as a parent.
8/3/2025 14:06:25	Parent	Looks good
8/4/2025 9:24:33	Staff	In science we have thermal imaging cameras that attach to cell phones, we have spectrometers that attach to cell phones, and we use the high speed video function to record rocket flights in order to calculate speed and acceleration. It is nice to know we spent over a thousand dollars to upgrade the thermal imaging cameras and now they will collect dust in a closet.
		Also, chromebooks are a device - so no chrombooks any more?

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
8/4/2025 9:46:10	Staff	Are students allowed to wear smartwatches at all? If so, how should we handle use of such a smartwatch if we see it (direct student to stop, take the watch, let parents/admin know)?
8/4/2025 10:02:19	Parent	We are fine with the new policy.
8/4/2025 11:19:36	Parent	I think students should be able to use their phones during lunch and in the hallways– we went to no cell phones in our school last year and we met kids half way and listened to them– it worked! They were able to talk with parents/jobs/whoever during lunch time and check phone in the hallway during passing time.
8/4/2025 13:06:31	Staff	I think it's wonderful! I don't think students should have their phones on them during the school day to allow for texting/snapchat/apps/etc. while they are in class.
8/5/2025 10:28:07	Parent	As a parent to 2 children i am strongly against this policy. I believe children should have the right to carry their cell phones on their person or in a backpack. In case of an emergency and my child needs help or needs to talk to me immediately i want them to be able to reach me immediately. I believe it makes my child feel safer in the building knowing if they need me they can get me. Or if they forget if they are bus or parent pickup and need a quick text to remind them at the end of the day. I know it noOt only makes my kids feel safer having their phones on them but it also eases my mind knowing. These days are scary and hard for these kids and knowing if they need me they can get me without having to ask a teacher or the office esp if it is an emergency
8/6/2025 8:04:01	Parent	I agree and will be in accordance with this cell phone policy
8/6/2025 8:57:51	Staff	I think this is an excellent policy and well written. My only concern is if the teachers will actually enforce this policy and provide swift and immediate consequences. That is the only way that this will be taken seriously, if day 1, consequences are handed out to ensure this is followed. Teachers need to be held responsible, as well as students. Also, will smart watches also be confiscated, along with phones? This needs to be made clear to staff as well.
8/7/2025 10:31:14	Parent	While I understand that there is a law requiring the placement of a policy against cell phone use, however, I find it extremely frustrating that the district has chosen to include personal laptops as well. With appropriate configurations of firewalls in place with the wifi internet that the school allows students to access, there is no more communication capabilities than the issued chromebooks. Including this restriction just prevents the students from being able to utilize a device that isn't infuriatingly slow and has better programming to complete their necessary school work, especially once in the high school honors and AP courses. We would not have made the choice to purchase a laptop lightly, as it is not a cheap expense, however the issued chromebook was making my child's work very time consuming and extremely difficult to complete at a level that he would prefer. Now he is being once again limited from being able to create/complete work that truly reflect his abilities. Further, being able to utilize a personal computer allows students that will be needing the same/similar device to become more familiar and prepared with programs that are standard to typical laptops, but not available on the chromebooks. A school policy should never limit skill building opportunities, especially ones that will be crucial to their success after moving on from the School District.

Timestamp	Role	Input On Draft Cell Phone Policy
8/8/2025 13:55:56	Parent	<p>The school should then be liable to provide land line services like payphones where students can tell parents about rides and activities and making arrangements or forgotten items that need to be brought to school. My High School had a landline/payphone and even "back in the day" we had daily issues where we had to contact a parent. If not, a dedicated landline should be available to all students during the day in the office and watch out for that line...you can't expect kids and special needs kids like mine who don't do well with scheduling to never need to contact a parent during the day.....activities change, items are forgotten and parents need to be notified.....the school needs to put forward solutions, not just a note saying "we're taking it all away", nothing like pretending important phone calls during the school day don't happen.</p>
8/8/2025 20:52:20	Parent	<p>Please make this an available IEP accommodation for Students with disabilities - we have tried to add the flexibility to IEP but the school said we could not do that. It's a true concern for neurodivergent students who have a mental connection and learn better with less anxiety if they can have their phone available.</p>
8/11/2025 16:30:27	Staff	<p>This is unrealistic to expect students at the high school to not be on their phones This is going add a lot more stress to the teachers who have to enforce this I agree phones should be away during classes</p>
8/12/2025 8:14:22	Parent	<p>Only question I have is if and after school program is canceled or changes to the</p>
8/13/2025 16:03:45	Parent	<p>I think this is absolutely absurd. My child should be able to contact me especially</p>
8/16/2025 18:33:10	Parent	<p>Please make up your minds. I understand that life is always changing and every</p>
8/18/2025 11:13:58	Staff	<p>What is the protocol for not violating student IDEA law? And also, how do we not</p>

PROHIBITION ON USE OF STUDENT CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

In accord with State Law, the use of student cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices in schools is prohibited. The Merrimack School District respects and acknowledges the legitimate role that personal electronic communication devices may serve in emergency scenarios, or to address the medical, educational, or language needs of a student. However, it is also the responsibility of the Merrimack School District to ensure that students' use of personal electronic communication devices does not become a distraction in the educational environment.

Definitions

Personal electronic communication device: Any wired or wireless device that is capable of transmitting or receiving telephone communications, email, electronic data, text messages, videos, and/or photos. Personal electronic communication devices include, but are not limited to: cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, laptops, portable video game consoles, satellite phones, and two-way radios. Personal electronic communication devices include devices which are not actively connected to a mobile phone, internet, satellite, and/or radio network.

A personal electronic communication device *does not* include a device owned by the Merrimack School District, such as a Chromebook or other device issued to students for use during the school day.

Use of a personal electronic communication device: Any operation of a personal electronic communication device, including operating a personal electronic communication device for purposes other than communication.

Use of a personal electronic communication device does not include:

- Use of a personal electronic communication device to support the learning of a student with disabilities as identified by their individualized education program (IEP) developed pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- Use of a personal electronic communication device to support the learning of a student with disabilities as identified by their Section 504 Plan developed pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act;
- Use of a personal electronic communication device to support emergent multilingual students with appropriate language access programs and services pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- Use of a medical device, including but not limited to insulin pumps and glucose sensors; or
- Any other use approved by the Superintendent or designee with respect to student medical, disability, or language proficiency needs.

PROHIBITION ON USE OF STUDENT CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES (continued)**Expectations**

The use of personal electronic communication devices by students is prohibited between the start and end of the academic school day.¹ This includes passing time between classes in the hallways, as well as lunch, recess, and any other time during the academic school day when the students are not actively engaged in academic tasks. Throughout the school day, students should keep their personal electronic communication devices either turned off or on “silent” and personal electronic communication devices shall be kept out of view in their pocket, backpack, or locker. The district is not responsible for loss, damage or theft of any personal electronic communication device brought to the school.

School staff shall enforce this policy consistently and equitably in accord with existing district policies and any applicable building or program-based student handbooks. The Superintendent or their designee is authorized to develop procedures to enforce this policy.

A student who violates this policy will be reminded of the prohibition on the use of personal communication devices and their device shall be confiscated for the remainder of the school day. For a second offense, and subsequent offenses, the personal electronic device shall be confiscated for the remainder of the school day and the student’s parent/guardian will be required to pick up the device from the principal or superintendent’s office. In addition, repeated violations of this may result in student discipline pursuant to the Student Conduct Policy (JIC).

Exceptions

As set forth above, this policy *does not* prohibit the use of personal electronic communication devices to address student medical needs, such as insulin pumps and glucose sensors, students with disabilities that require a device to support their learning, as identified by their individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan, or when required to support emergent multilingual students with appropriate language access to programs and services. The Superintendent or designee is authorized to approve additional exceptions for student medical, disability or language proficiency needs.

This policy *does not* prohibit students from contacting 911, 988, or any other emergency hotlines in emergency situations.

¹ If the school has a bell to signal the start and end of the academic school day, the academic school day shall begin when the first bell rings to start instructional time and end when the dismissal bell rings to end the academic school day.

**PROHIBITION ON USE OF STUDENT CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES (continued)****Annual Review**

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall review this policy on an annual basis, in collaboration with parents and teachers, and shall report any recommendations for policy revisions to the Board by _____ of each school year.

Legal References:

RSA 189:1-a, VI, Cell Phone Use Policy

20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.

29 U.S.C. § 794

42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.

42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.

1st Reading: August 11, 2025

2nd Review: August 25, 2025

Adoption:

SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELOR AND COUNSELING PROGRAM

The School Board is committed to ensuring a high quality school guidance program that is comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, fosters academic achievement and personal growth, and is provided to all District students in an equitable manner.

The program will include the following:

- Distribution of information and support to students and families about academic programming, community supports, and other relevant information
- ~~Coordination~~ Conformance with national standards, including “The ASCA National Model: A Foundation for School Counseling Program,” published by the American School Counselor Association (“ASCA”) in ~~2012~~ 2025.
- Prevention, intervention, and crisis response services
- Promotion of personal, interpersonal, health, academic, and career development for all students through classroom programs and other services
- ~~Periodic assessment of this guidance and counseling program will be the responsibility of guidance counselors and the building administrators.~~ A summary report of student performance in achievement, attendance, and behavior shall be provided to the board at least once a year, addressing the effectiveness of the school counseling program.
- All provisions of NH Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306, Minimum Standards for Public School Approval.

It is the policy of this Board that, at all grade levels, school counselors collaborate with parents, families, students, staff, and community to remove barriers to learning and provide opportunities and supports to which empower students to embrace their full potential and achieve their academic and personal aspirations. The guidance school counselor is responsible for developing a program or plan that ~~identified~~ identifies student success in academic performance, social awareness, and career planning.

The Superintendent shall develop and have on file a comprehensive K-12 school counseling program implementation plan consistent with this policy and kept current biennially.

Legal References:

NH Code Admin. Rules Ed 306.30

~~NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.13, Guidance Plan~~

~~—NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.15(b), Provision of Staff, Guidance~~

~~—NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.39(c) and 306.39(d), Guidance Program~~

1st Reading: April 6, 2009

2nd Review: May 4, 2009

Adoption: May 18, 2009

Revision

1st Reading: June 16, 2025

2nd Review: August 25, 2025

Revised:

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AND INTERVENTION

It is the policy of the Board to promote ~~good~~ **expected** behavior in a safe and orderly environment where all students can be fully engaged in the learning process. To ensure that our students and staff are protected against disruptive behavior, the board directs the superintendent to set forth procedures for behavior management and interventions that are designed to maintain a positive environment conducive to learning.

Student conduct that disrupts class work, involves disorder, or invades the rights of others will not be tolerated and may be cause for suspension or other disciplinary action.

The administration of disciplinary action will focus both on consequences **and remediating and on changing** or managing inappropriate behavior.

It is important that there be careful evaluation of the individual situation so that the school's response to the student is appropriate.

If the student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the process will follow federal and state laws governing special education.

All available resources should be utilized, including preventive and responsive interventions to support students' needs. These interventions should include psychological, curricular, and behavioral services, which should take place within classrooms, schools, and alternative settings. Exclusion from the classroom should be the disciplinary action of last resort.

The superintendent will ~~also ensure that~~ provide staff with professional development in classroom behavior management skills. ~~are addressed through professional development, and that there~~ The District will ensure there is an adequate system of recordkeeping regarding disciplinary infractions and interventions.

The use of corporal punishment is prohibited in District schools.

~~This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in accordance with the Board's policy review process.~~

Legal Reference:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. ~~306.04(16)~~ **306.04(b)(15)**, Behavior Management and Intervention for Students

1st Reading: February 19, 2008
2nd Review: March 3, 2008
Adoption: March 17, 2008

Revision

1st Reading: June 16, 2025
2nd Review: August 25, 2025
Revision:

MERRIMACK SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

ACN

ACCOMMODATION OF LACTATION NEEDS

A. Statement of Purpose.

The District provides a supportive environment as to time and place for { students } and employees (collectively “people with lactation or lactation related needs”) to express milk and address other lactation related needs. Subject to the terms and exceptions set forth in this policy, the District will accommodate the needs of people with lactation or lactation related needs by providing reasonable times and suitable spaces ~~for people with lactation or lactation related needs~~ [lawyer question] to express milk during school and work hours for one year after pregnancy. Lactation for purposes of this policy will include expression of milk by manual or mechanical means, medical conditions related to lactation, and other lactation related needs.

No person with lactation needs will be discriminated against for milk expression or related activities as provided in this policy, and reasonable efforts will be made to assist people with lactation needs in meeting their lactation needs while at work or school.

B. Accommodation Notice and Plans.

A person with lactation needs should contact the building Principal, school nurse (students only), ~~or~~ employee’s supervisor ~~or human resources (for staff only)~~ at least two weeks before the need for lactation accommodations arises [lawyer question]. The District will endeavor to meet the break and private space needs of each person with lactation needs. However, when ordinary accommodations (as discussed below) create undue hardship for the operations of the school/workplace, the District will work with the person with lactation needs to determine whether other reasonable accommodations may be made. Such other accommodations could include items like a change in work/class assignments or schedules, additional break periods, permitted absences for medical appointments, and/or access to extra food and water throughout the day. When reasonable accommodations are unattainable, the ~~school nurse~~, building Principal or ~~other administrator working with the person with lactation needs supervisor~~ should consult with the District’s Human Rights/Non Discrimination Officer, Title IX Coordinator, or Superintendent.

A lactation accommodation plan should be revisited upon request of the person with lactation needs, or at least every three months, with adjustments made to the accommodations for lactation breaks as lactation needs change.

C. Reasonable Time to Express Milk during the School Day.

Absent other accommodations as established under Section B, above, a person with lactation needs will have a minimum of three opportunities (“lactation period”) during a work or school day, at agreed upon intervals (which should include flexibility as appropriate and practicable) for the purpose of lactation or to address other needs relating to lactation. An employee or student

can choose to use usual break and meal periods.

MERRIMACK SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

ACN

ACCOMMODATION OF LACTATION NEEDS (continued)

A person with lactation needs who is an hourly employee ~~[CHOOSE ONE OF TWO OPTIONS]~~
~~[OPTION 1] will not be paid during lactation periods unless either (a) the lactation period falls during a regular paid break (e.g., a paid lunch), or the person is not completely relieved of duties during the lactation break.~~ [OR OPTION 2] will be paid during lactation periods. People with lactation needs shall not be required to “make up” time relating to the use of unpaid lactation periods.

D. Suitable Private Areas for Lactation.

People with lactation needs will be provided with a private place, ~~other than that is not a~~ bathroom, in each school district building in which a person with lactation needs spends the working or school day. The lactation area:

1. May be temporary or permanent;
2. Shall be shielded from view and free from intrusion by other persons, including without limitation other staff or students;
3. Shall be within a reasonable walk of the workstation or classroom of the person with lactation needs unless otherwise agreed by the person with lactation needs;
4. Have at a minimum:
 - a. An electrical outlet;
 - b. Appropriate seating;
 - c. A surface sufficient to place a breast pump;
 - d. A sink with running water or be in reasonable proximity to one;
 - e. A refrigerator for milk storage or be in reasonable proximity to one; and,
 - f. Shall be cleaned regularly by District staff assigned to that duty.
 - g. Either a lock or a sign on the door displaying when in use.[lawyer question]
5. No employee will be required to surrender their workspace to a person with lactation needs. [lawyer question]

E. Responsibilities of the Person with Lactation Needs.

A person with lactation needs will:

1. Provide at least two weeks' advance notice of the need for lactation accommodations, preferably prior to their return to school. This will allow school administrators the opportunity to establish a location and work out scheduling issues. Note that, notwithstanding the requested two weeks' notice, an unnecessary delay in making a reasonable accommodation for a person with lactation needs could constitute a violation of the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA). ~~And Title IX Sexual Harassment.~~

- 95 2. Maintain the lactation area by wiping down surfaces with antibacterial wipes so the area is
96 clean for the next user.
97 3. Provide their own supplies as is necessary.
98

DRAFT

MERRIMACK SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

CAN

ACCOMMODATION OF LACTATION NEEDS (continued)

F. Prohibited Conduct.

Any intentional act which violates a lactating person's privacy, aims to frustrate a lactating person's intentions to use the lactation space, or constitutes harassment on account of a lactating person's needs or lactating status is prohibited, and shall be treated as violation of the applicable code of conduct with possible disciplinary consequences, and may constitute sex discrimination and shall be reported to the Title IX Coordinator in accordance with policy ACAC.

G. Dissemination of Policy.

This policy shall be printed or summarized in applicable employee and student handbooks. For employees, if the handbook is not provided at the time of hire, then the District will provide a copy of this policy at the time of hire. [Ask Melissa or building principals if this is accurate.](#)

Legal References:

RSA 275:78-83, Policies Relating to Nursing Mothers
 RSA 354-A:1, (Human Rights) Title and Purposes of Chapter
 RSA 354-A:27, Opportunity for Public Education without Discrimination a Civil Right
 RSA 354-A:6, Opportunity for Employment without Discrimination a Civil Right
 89 FR 291182, Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA)
 20 U.S.C 1681, et seq, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
 42 U.S.C. 2000gg, Pregnant Worker Fairness Act (PWFA)
 42 U.S.C. 218d, Pump for Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP Act)

1st Reading: June 16, 2025

2nd Review: August 25, 2025

Adoption:

DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Board recognizes that developmentally appropriate daily physical activity, exercise and physical education are ways to minimize health risks created by chronic inactivity, childhood obesity, and other related health problems. The Board recommends that students and staff participate in developmentally appropriate physical activity and exercise for at least 30 to 60 minutes each day as a way to minimize these health risks. The Board recommends the following practices:

1. Encourage parents/guardians to support their children's participation in enjoyable physical activities, and recognize that parents/guardians act as role models for active lifestyles;
2. Support special programs such as student and staff walking programs, family fitness events, and events that emphasize lifelong physical activity;
3. Integrate health and physical activity across the school curriculum;
4. Encourage student-initiated activities that promote inclusive physical activity on a school-wide basis;
5. Commit adequate resources that include program funding, personnel, safe equipment, and facilities;
6. Provide professional development opportunities for all school staff that will assist them to effectively promote enjoyable and lifelong physical activity among youth, and that will assist school staff to recognize their influence as role models for active lifestyles;
7. Establish relationships with community recreation and youth sports programs and agencies to coordinate and complement physical activity programs;
8. Encourage physical activity recess periods; and
9. Institute a tracking and evaluation method to ensure that all students are engaging in developmentally appropriate daily physical activity.

Legal References:

~~RSA 189:11-a, Food and Nutrition Programs~~

~~NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 306.04-(f) 306.31~~

~~NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 306.04-(a)-(17) 306.32~~

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 310, Appropriate Daily Physical Activity

1st Reading: November 3, 2008

2nd Review: November 17, 2008

3rd Review: December 1, 2008

Adoption: December 22, 2008

Revision

1st Reading: June 16, 2025

2nd Review: August 25, 2025

Revision:

**Merrimack School Board Special Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
July 14, 2025**

5:00 p.m. – Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) & (c) – Merrimack TV Training Classroom

• **Student Welfare**

Present: Ms. Lori Chair Peters, Chair; Ms. Jenna Hardy, Vice-Chair; Ms. Laurie Rothhaus, Board Member; Ms. Rachel Paepke, Board Member; and Ms. Naomi Halter, Board Member.

Also Present: Mr. Everett Olsen, Chief Educational Officer; Ms. Kathleen Scholand, One-year Interim Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum; and Mr. Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

At 6:00 p.m., Chair Peters called the regular meeting to order.

Chair Peters read aloud the Merrimack School District's mission statement into the record as follows:

The Merrimack School District will provide a high-quality, future-driven education to all students in the community. Students will engage in learning opportunities that reflect both rigor and relevance and meet their cognitive, social, and emotional needs. The district will prepare students to understand, adapt, and adjust to civic, economic, social, and technological changes in the world. Our overall goal is to inspire, create, and encourage students to be curious, connected, prepared, resilient, and dedicated individuals who are lifelong expert learners. Merrimack graduates exercise judgment; they are innovative and will become responsible contributors to society. We hope the discussions we have tonight will always align with that mission.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public comments.

3. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

1. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen welcomed Dr. Kathleen Scholand, One-year Interim Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen reminded everyone that they were looking for a Director of Special Education.

2. Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Scholand said she was happy to join the team. She said summer programming had begun for students. She added that Camp Invention had been held at the James Masticola Elementary School, and it was a great success. She thanked Cathy Goodman and Amanda Lessard, who were the camp directors.

Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Scholand explained that teachers were also busy working on some content area curriculum development and revision projects happening in math, science, social studies, world languages, and the unified arts.

Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Scholand stated that the district received the preliminary allocation for the Title I Grant, which was approximately 40% of what they anticipated for their funding. She said, however, that the three other Title programs they participated in — Title II, Part A: Professional Development; Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners; and Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment — were currently on hold.

Board Member Paepke asked how much the 40% was and if they expected to receive the balance. Ms. Scholand replied that she hoped to receive the rest, but noted they had asked to be level-funded in the current year.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said there would probably be \$300,000 held back in Title funds, but the big one was the IDEA Grant, which was \$1 million, and nothing was forthcoming. He stated that services were still mandated to be provided by the school district, but they were no longer receiving government funding.

Board Member Halter pointed out that the money would have to be spent on the programs the following year, and regardless of whether they received reimbursement or not, the excess burden would directly affect local taxpayers.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus suggested it would be prudent to set aside \$1 million to cover unfunded mandates.

Board Member Paepke asked if the district had the cash flow to cover its current expenses. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied that they were currently okay.

3. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the windows, which were approved two years prior for the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, would finally be installed over the summer, and the roof would also be installed.

4. School Board Update

Chair Peters stated that on June 19, the Board and administration had met for the annual Goal Setting meeting. She said that in September, there would be a comprehensive presentation regarding the goals.

Chair Peters also said the School Board participated in the July 4th parade.

Chair Peters stated that she enjoyed seeing the amazing projects at Camp Invention.

4. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

106 **5. NEW BUSINESS**

107
108 a. Educational Funding Discussion

109
110 Chair Peters stated that the New Hampshire Supreme Court had ruled that the Per Pupil
111 Advocacy Grant was too small and said it should be approximately \$7,300; however, she said
112 the disappointing part of the ruling was that two of the justices said the legislature had to take
113 it up in a "timely manner." She said she would have preferred an actual deadline.
114

115 Chair Peters read aloud a portion of what Governor Ayotte said as summarized below:
116

117 "The court reached the wrong decision today. The fact is that the State of New Hampshire is
118 in the top ten in the country when it comes to funding our children's education. We are
119 evaluating the ruling to determine the appropriate next steps."
120

121 She added that on the New Hampshire Republicans' Facebook page, they used a graphic
122 from the World Population Review on per-pupil spending in New Hampshire, and it ranked
123 seventh in the nation's per-pupil cost. She said, however, that they were 50th in the country
124 for the state portion of the per-pupil cost.
125

126 Board Member Halter commented that New England had one of the highest costs of living in
127 the country, which meant that goods and services were more expensive.
128

129 Chief Educational Officer Olsen suggested that a sales tax in New Hampshire could provide
130 more revenue.
131

132 Vice-Chair Rothhaus said that she disagreed with Governor Ayotte's opinion and agreed with
133 the Business Enterprise Tax.
134

135 Board Member Hardy stated that the district was losing money and noted that it was the state
136 representatives' job to go to Concord and represent them. She said that the school had no
137 revenue streams and no means to offset the financial imbalance.
138

139 Chair Peters stated that she would draft letters to be sent to the state representatives and
140 also request that a specific date be set, rather than in a "timely manner."
141

142 b. August 2025 Leadership Retreat Discussion

143
144 Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the district's annual leadership retreat would be
145 held on August 7th & 8th where they would discuss goals for the upcoming school year,
146 including safety and reunification procedures, and the bullying investigation processes,
147 among others.
148

149 c. Cell Phone Policy Discussion

150
151 Chair Peters explained that the law had changed, so cell phones were now banned from "bell
152 to bell." She read aloud from the new law, as summarized below:
153

154 "School Boards shall develop and adopt a policy governing student cell phone use in schools.
155 Such a policy shall prohibit the use of personal devices by students during the school day and
156 be implemented schoolwide, with approved exceptions determined by the student's medical,
157 disability, or language proficiency needs. Such policy shall be developed in collaboration with
158 any applicable local educator associations and school district parents and shall be reviewed

and updated annually. School district policy shall not prohibit students with disabilities from using a device to support their learning as identified by their IEP (Individualized Education Plan) developed under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29USC §794 or are required to support emergent multi-lingual students with appropriate language access programs and services pursuant to Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.”

Chair Peters asked if the law included iPads, Smartwatches, Beats Headphones, Kindles, and other similar devices. Chief Educational Officer Olsen replied that the conversation was currently being had with legal counsel.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus said she would like to know the intent behind the actual law. She said there was a lot of information that needed to be fleshed out. She also asked what might happen if a teacher asked a student for their cellphone and the student said no.

Board Member Paepke inquired about the law's application in elementary schools, particularly when parents felt compelled to ensure their children's well-being.

Board Member Hardy asked if the law would include teachers.

Board Member Hardy also mentioned that the communication system between Merrimack Middle School and the Merrimack Fire Department was not functioning. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied that they would continue that conversation.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus said that it would be extremely important to push the information out to the parents/community and the students.

6. POLICIES

Chair Peters stated that the School Board was going to hold off on discussing the below policies and encouraged members of the Board to contact Sandy Swanson, Naomi Halter, and her with edits or questions:

- a. Second Review of School Guidance and Counseling Program Policy (JLD)
- b. Second Review of Revised Behavior Management and Intervention Policy (JLDBA)
- c. Second Review of Accommodation of Lactation Needs Policy (CAN)
- d. Second Review of Revised Daily Physical Activity Policy (IMAH)

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. June 2, 2025, Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Halter made a motion to accept the public minutes of the June 2, 2025, meeting, as presented. Board Member Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

- b. June 16, 2025 Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept the public minutes of the June 16, 2025, meeting, as presented. Vice-Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

211
212 **8. CONSENT AGENDA**
213

214 a. Educator Resignations
215

- 216 • Kelly Chiappetta, Classroom Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
- 217 • Keith Tanner, Classroom Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School

218
219 b. Educator Nominations
220

- 221 • Jennifer Gagnon, Classroom Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- 222 • Melissa Zupkosky, Classroom Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- 223 • Emma Eafrazi, Special Education Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- 224 • Ash (Julia) Saladino, 1-year Special Education Teacher, James Mastricola Upper
- 225 Elementary School
- 226 • Michelle Labbe, Science Teacher, Merrimack High School
- 227 • Ryan Ziegler, Technology Education Teacher, Merrimack High School
- 228 • Mandy Tran, Classroom Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
- 229 • Erika Fenstermacher, Classroom Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
- 230 • Austin Fox, Classroom Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School

231
232 **MOTION:** Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, as presented.
233 Board Member Paepke seconded the motion.
234

235 **MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**
236

237 **9. OTHER**
238

239 a. Committee Reports
240

241 There were none.
242

243 b. Correspondence
244

245 Vice-Chair Rothhaus stated that she had received a telephone call from a former teacher at
246 Pinkerton Academy. She said she would forward the information to the administration.
247

248 Chair Peters stated that she and the Board had received correspondence regarding a
249 parent concern, including one from a parent who wanted to meet with the Board. She also
250 mentioned that she had received correspondence from an involved community member who
251 provided the Board with some information that he was passionate about.
252

253 c. Comments
254

255 Board Member Rothhaus commented that she had attended a gathering where a number of
256 recent Merrimack graduates were present. She said she asked each one of them if they were
257 prepared for college, and they all said that they were very well-prepared.

258
259 **10. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**
260

261 There were none.
262

263 **11. ADOURNMENT**
264

265 **MOTION:** At approximately 7:20 p.m., Board Member Hardy made a motion to adjourn.
266 Board Member Halter seconded the motion.
267

268 **MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**
269

**Merrimack School Board Special Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Memorial Room
August 11, 2025**

Present: Ms. Laurie Rothhaus, Vice-Chair; Ms. Jenna Board Member Hardy, Board Member; Ms. Rachel Paepke, Board Member; and Ms. Naomi Halter, Board Member.

Not Present: Ms. Lori Chair Peters, Chair was excused from the meeting.

Also Present: Mr. Everett Olsen, Chief Educational Officer; Dr. Kathleen Scholand, One-year Interim Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum; and Mr. Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

At 6:00 p.m., Vice-Chair Rothhaus called the regular meeting to order.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus read aloud the Merrimack School District's mission statement into the record as follows:

The Merrimack School District will provide a high-quality, future-driven education to all students in the community. Students will engage in learning opportunities that reflect both rigor and relevance and meet their cognitive, social, and emotional needs. The district will prepare students to understand, adapt, and adjust to civic, economic, social, and technological changes in the world. Our overall goal is to inspire, create, and encourage students to be curious, connected, prepared, resilient, and dedicated individuals who are lifelong expert learners. Merrimack graduates exercise judgment; they are innovative and will become responsible contributors to society. We hope the discussions we have tonight will always align with that mission.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public comments.

3. POLICY

- a. First Reading of Prohibition on Use of Student Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Communication Devices Policy

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to waive the first reading and go directly to discussion. Board Member Paepke seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

Discussion:

Vice-Chair Rothhaus explained that on June 26, 2025, through a press release, the New Hampshire School Districts, received information that Governor Kelly Ayotte had signed a law banning cell phones in all New Hampshire schools from bell to bell. She added that the school district had no discretion regarding the law and that the law was the strictest in the nation. She said it was clear that even though each school was giving the task of writing a policy, the policy had to align with state law.

Board Member Hardy said the state had not provided the schools with any leeway.

Discussion: Survey Results

Board Member Halter stated that approximately half of the respondents were in favor of the policy the way it was currently written, approximately one quarter of the respondents were opposed to any ban, and approximately one quarter of the respondents were in favor of banning devices during instructional time but wanted them to be allowed during passing periods and lunch.

Board Member Halter said any changes needed to be brought forward to the state legislature.

Board Member Paepke said the policy would be reviewed annually, and there would be opportunities in the future to tweak the policy.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus commented that the administrators from each school would review how they would comply with the new law. She also said she felt the new policy should be included in the student handbook.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus said she felt it would be important to be in contact with the Student Council at the high school.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen noted that the Bill received significant support in the legislature. He said they would revisit the law in six months. He commented that any and all emergencies would be addressed through the office and not via a student's cell phone.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the student handbook would contain the origin of the new law as well as the consequences if the law were not followed.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were none.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At approximately 6:30 p.m., Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Paepke seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.