

- **Engaged Intellectually**
 - **Connected Socially**
 - **Equipped for the Future**



MI Phone-Free Schools



Embracing An Opportunity For Personal
and Collective Advancement



“Cellphone free schools allow adolescents to gain independence, as they learn how to take care of themselves and behave in a way that reflects the people they are—or at least those they aspire to be... smartphones interrupt this in a really profound way.” –Michael Rich, Director Of Boston Children’s Hospital Digital Wellness Lab



What is the new opportunity in front of us?

Create more intentional learning environments by removing cell-phones during the school day.



How Will We
Successfully Navigate
This Transition?



Why are we creating this opportunity?
Mercer Island Schools are spaces that promote academic excellence, healthy physical and emotional development, and social connectivity.

WALK THE TALK

MERCER ISLAND

SCHOOL DISTRICT

STUDENTS
ARE THE
PRIORITY

VALUES

WE BELIEVE IN:

- Supporting the whole child.
- Creating inclusive and equitable learning settings.
- Ensuring our school communities are safe and supportive.
- Providing rigorous and challenging learning.

MISSION

The District will foster learning by engaging students in thinking critically, solving problems creatively, and working collaboratively.



VISION

Inspiring our students to be lifelong learners as they create their futures.

Healthy Youth Survey Data- Growing Concerns



- MISD Students report often or very often experiencing increased social anxiety from social media or the internet:
 - 8th grade - 5%
 - 10th grade - 12%
 - 12th grade - 10%
- MISD Students report often or very often feeling a sense of withdrawal when away from social media or the internet:
 - 8th grade - 6%
 - 10th grade - 13%
 - 12th grade - 10%

Healthy Youth Survey Data- Growing Concerns



- MISD Students report often or very often losing motivation because of social media or the internet:
 - 8th grade - 10%
 - 10th grade - 28%
 - 12th grade - 30%

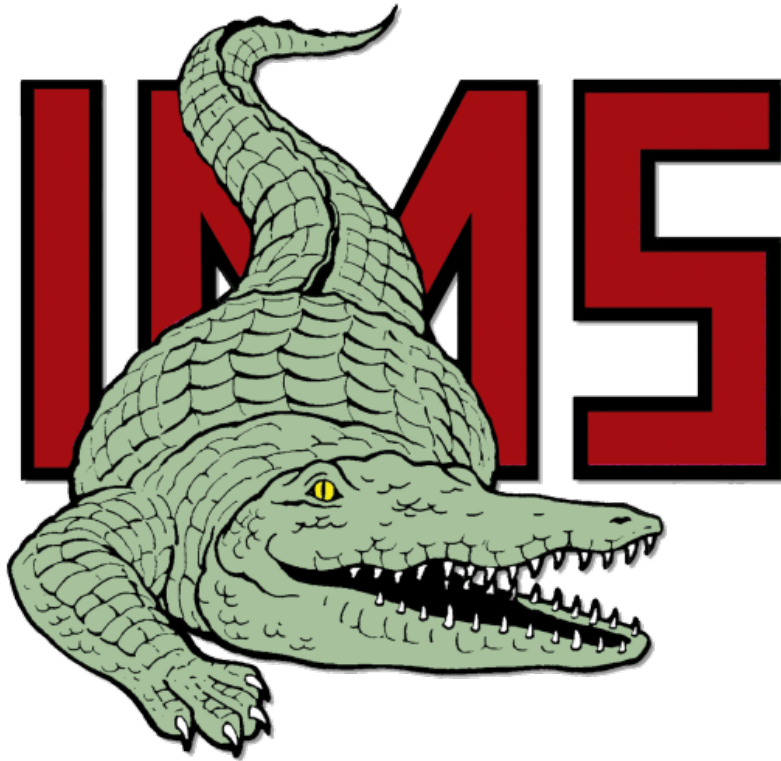
Healthy Youth Survey Data- Growing Concerns Regionally and Across WA

- The risk factor to students increased for each grade level between 2021 and 2023:
 - 8th grade - 19% to 39% in King County
 - 10th grade - 21% to 49% in King County
 - 12th grade - 23% to 50% in Washington (not enough 12th graders took the survey to be released by HYS)
- Though not asked in 2021, when asked in 2023 if students used social media several times per day:
 - 6th grade - 33% in King County
 - 8th grade - 51% in King County
 - 10th grade - 68% in King County
 - 12th grade - 75% in Washington



King County

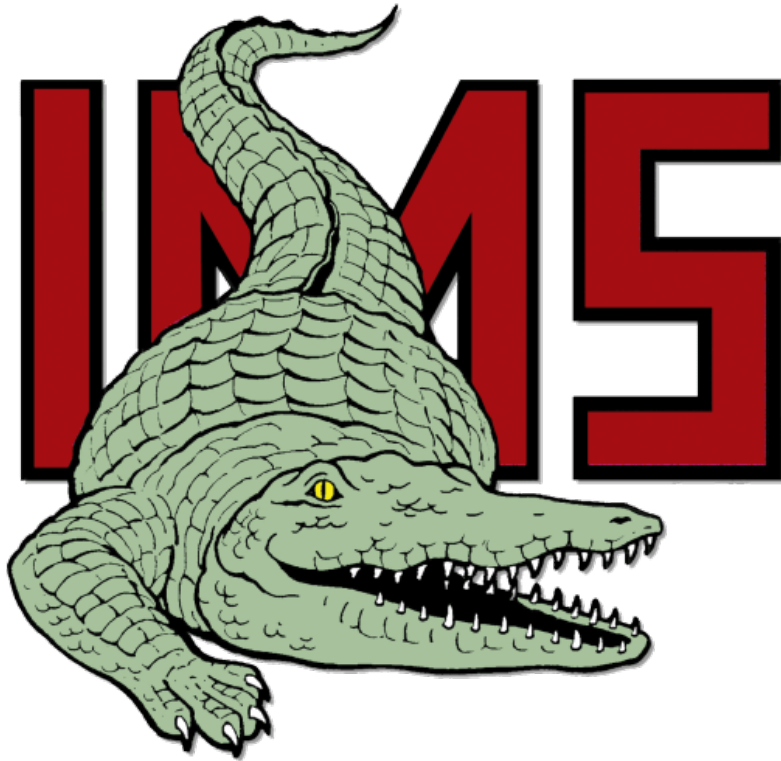
Islander Middle School Feedback Spring 2024



- The IMS staff survey included the question, “What kind of policies would you like to see at IMS regarding cell phones?” This question, which received 35 responses, had three responses to choose from and the responses were:
 - No cell phone usage in classrooms (Students may use their phones before school, during lunch and after school)- 42.9%
 - Cell phones must remain in bags from 8:25am to 2:50pm- 53.3%
 - Phones can be used for instructional purposes with the teacher’s permission and supervision- 11.4%

*** Some respondents chose more than one option, which explains the slight variation in data.

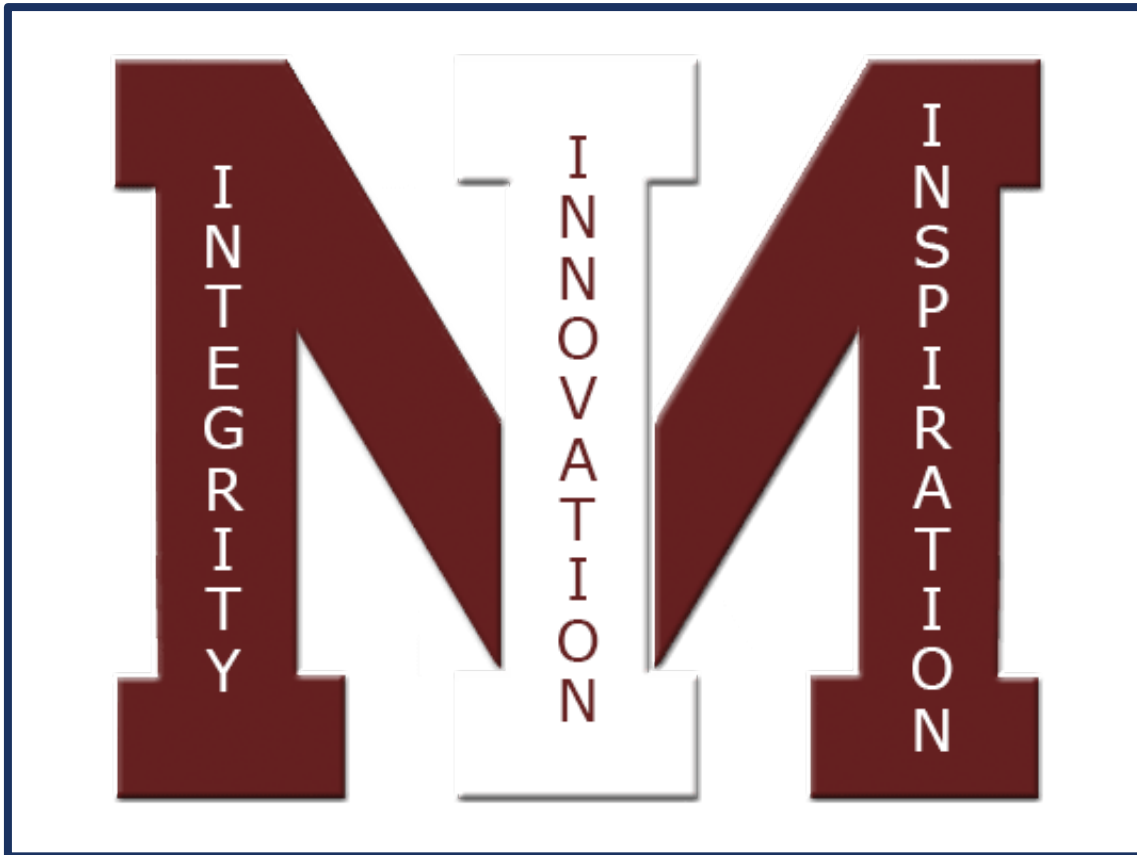
Islander Middle School Feedback Spring 2024



- The IMS family survey included the question “What kind of policy would you like to see at IMS regarding cell phones?”. This question, which received 244 responses, had three responses to choose from and the responses were:
 - Cell phones should be banned at school - 47.3%
 - Students may use their phones before school, during passing times, during lunch, and after school- 32.9%
 - Students may use their phones before and after school but it will be off and away during school hours - 22.8%

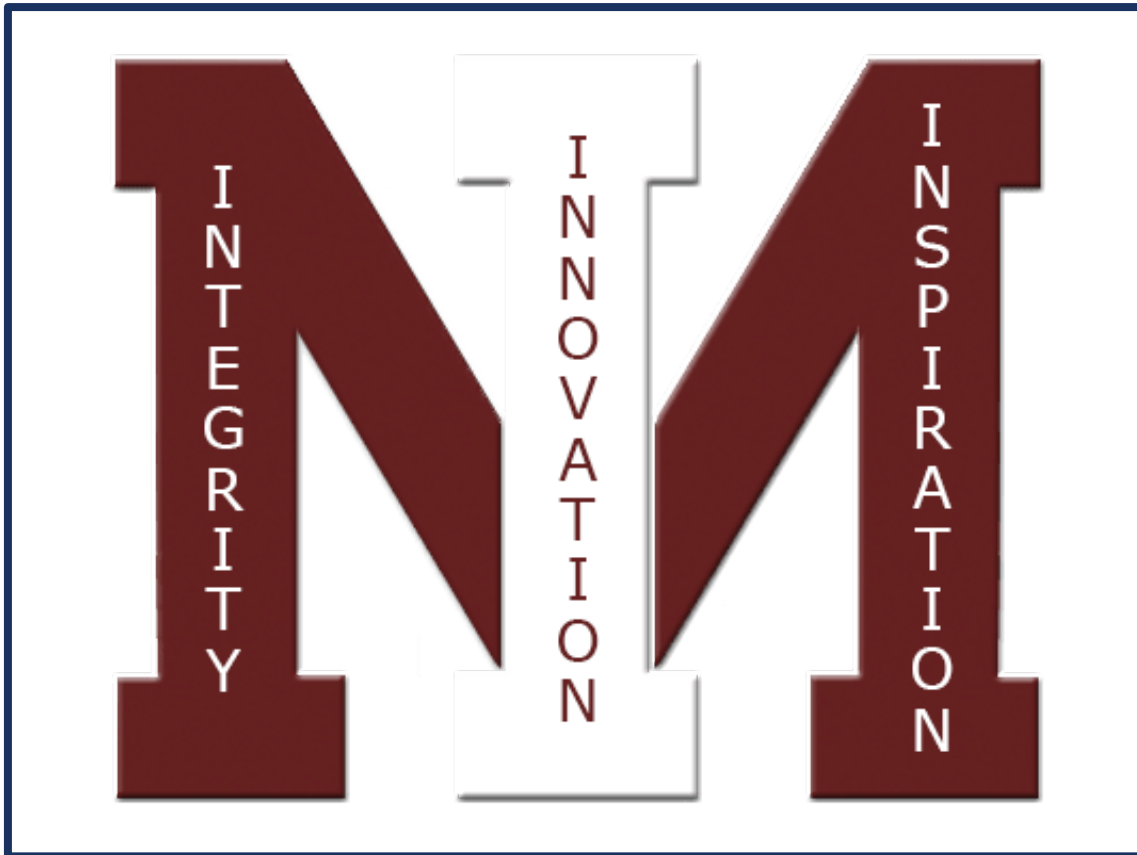
*** Some respondents chose both the first and third option, which explains the slight variation in data.

Mercer Island High School Feedback Spring 2024



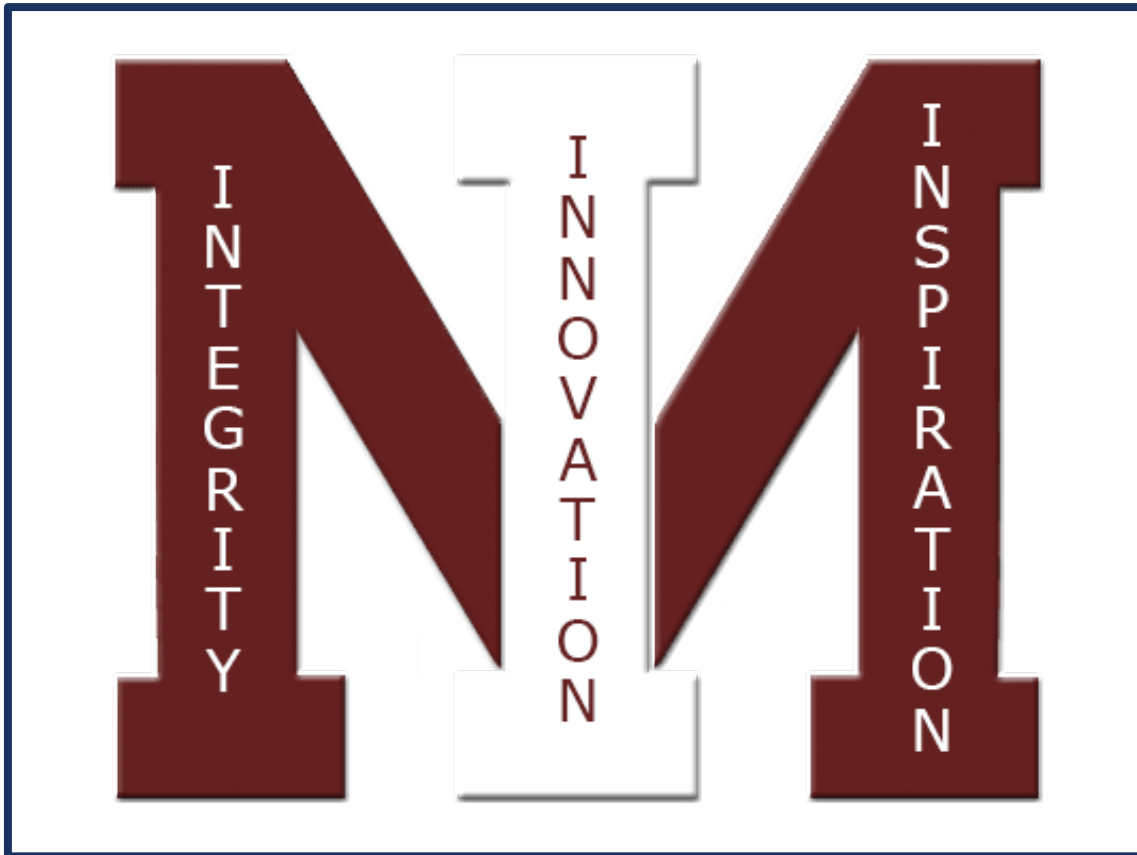
- How often do you use your phone during class time for non-academic reasons (for example: checking social media, texting with friends, or playing games)? (242 student responses)
 - I don't have a cell phone - 1.2%
 - Never - 33.1%
 - Occasionally (once or twice a week) - 44.2%
 - Often (three or four times a week) - 13.2%
 - Always (every day) - 8.3%

Mercer Island High School Feedback Spring 2024



- What are some of the reasons you use your cell phone during school hours (including in the classroom, in the halls, and in the bathrooms)? (Check all that apply)
 - I don't use my cell phone during class time 13.6%
 - Texting friends - 52.5%
 - Texting family - 78.9%
 - Checking social media - 26.4%
 - Checking the time - 80.2
 - Listening to music - 78.1%
 - Watching videos - 17.8%
 - Playing games - 17.8%
 - Completing class work - 77.7%

Mercer Island High School Feedback Spring 2024



- Rate your thoughts on this statement: Cell phone use during school is necessary to support student learning and engagement. (831 responses from students, families, and staff)
 - Strongly Agree - 10.8%
 - Agree - 13.6%
 - Neutral - 14.2%
 - Disagree - 26.5%
 - Strongly Disagree - 34.9%
- Do you believe there are negative consequences to cell phone use in schools?
 - Yes - 96.1%
 - No- 3.9%

Reminders and Future Considerations

Reminders

- Elementary Schools
 - No change to our current ELEMENTARY expectations and practices
 - Smartphones and watches must be stored in backpacks and not accessed during the school day

**MERCER ISLAND
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

STUDENTS ARE THE PRIORITY

Future Considerations

- Compiling and FAQ with anticipated questions and concerns & survey I will share next
- Examples of questions already anticipated:
 - Will exceptions be made for health-related needs?
 - How will a parent communicate with their child about possible schedule changes?
 - What happens in an emergency?

Opportunities And Expectations

What Opportunities Do Phone-Free Schools Provide?

- Increase engagement
- Promote connection
- Reduce distractions
- Improve social interactions
- Decrease anxiety
- Set our students up to succeed

What Won't Phone-Free Schools Do?

- Eliminate every barrier to learning
- Stop conflict
- Improve performance as a standalone variable
- Make our schools unsafe

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STUDENTS ARE THE PRIORITY

“Clarity is the
anecdote to anxiety.”

– Marcus Buckingham

