



# Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

## Office of the Superintendent

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Superintendent of Schools

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May 13, 2025

Dear Hastings Families and Staff,

As you may know, the just-adopted NYS Budget includes a new law prohibiting the use of “internet-enabled devices during the school day.” The focus is on non-educational use of personal devices, especially smartphones and smartwatches. Here is a summary of the law:

***Summary of NYS Section 2803 – Use of Internet-Enabled Devices During the School Day:***

*This new section of NYS education law mandates that all New York school districts, charter schools, and BOCES adopt a written policy banning student use of internet-enabled devices (most notably, smartphones and smartwatches) during the entire school day on school grounds, except under certain conditions. Exceptions include use for educational purposes, health management, emergencies, translation, caregiving responsibilities, or when required by law or a student’s education plan (IEP/504).*

*In addition to other requirements, the policy must provide a way for parents to contact students and include secure on-site storage options for devices. Schools must involve stakeholders in policy development, publish the policy online by August 1, 2025, and translate it upon request. By September 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, schools must report on policy enforcement, including demographic data and any disparities. Importantly, students may not be suspended solely for violating this policy.*

I am meeting with the Central Office and building-level leadership to consider policy and procedure recommendations relative to this mandate. (The law applies district-wide, but in reality has direct implications for FMS and HHS.) HHS and FMS leadership will continue to confer with faculty and staff, and with students at HHS, to consider best approaches in light of the new mandate. I also am conferring with area school superintendents, as well as the district’s legal counsel. With this range of input, I will bring policy and procedure recommendations to the BOE for public discussion and review. We will be sure to provide ample opportunity for public comment.

Please stay tuned for additional updates as we move forward to meet the new requirement from NYS to prohibit personal internet-enabled devices from bell-to-bell in all Hastings schools—effective the start of the 2025-26 school year.

Sincerely,

*Bill*

William S. McKersie, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools