



July 2025

Dear Southwestern Families,

I hope this message finds you well and enjoying a joyful and restful summer.

At Southwestern, our mission is **Learning for All: Engaging and Preparing for Future Success**. As we look ahead to the 2025–2026 school year, we remain committed to fostering a physically, socially, and emotionally safe and inclusive learning environment where every student can thrive. In support of this goal—and in alignment with our values of **Integrity, Kindness, Connections, and Excellence**—we are making an important policy update regarding personal electronic devices.

This spring, Governor Kathy Hochul signed the “Bell-to-Bell” Cellphone Ban into law as part of New York State’s new Distraction-Free School Law. This legislation prohibits the use of smartphones and other internet-enabled personal devices during the entire school day in all public schools across New York. In response, Southwestern will update our Code of Conduct to comply with this new law. The following document provides specific information about our plan.

Beginning in the 2025–2026 school year, students will no longer be permitted to use cell phones, earbuds/headphones, smartwatches, or similar devices during school hours. If students choose to bring these items, they must be turned off and stored in lockers by the 7:45 AM bell and remain secured until dismissal at 2:45 PM for the middle and high school, and at the elementary school between the hours of 8:50 AM – 3:15 PM.

This change supports our core belief in providing a learning environment where students can build meaningful connections, demonstrate integrity in their choices, and stay fully engaged in their learning. We understand this is a transition and encourage you to begin conversations with your child to help them prepare for a school day that is more focused and less dependent on personal technology.

We have created a special area on our district website about the cell phone policy. We created a FAQ document based on the feedback from the *Thoughtexchange* distributed in the Spring. Please check out the information and resources on our website regarding the cell phone policy: [Cell Phone Policy - Southwestern Central School District](#)

We will continue to provide information and resources about this policy and why we are supporting the bell-to-bell restriction. We will educate our students about the policy and why it is important. We also plan to provide incentives and rewards for our students to celebrate a less distracting learning environment! Detailed information about contacting your children during the school day will be provided closer to the beginning of the school year.

We thank you for your ongoing partnership and trust. Together, we will continue to promote a school culture rooted in excellence, Trojan kindness, and shared responsibility.

Sincerely,

Molly Moore  
Southwestern CSD Superintendent