



Mission Statement: To support and challenge all students to achieve personal and academic excellence in a student-centered environment.

**BERLIN-BOYLSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL STUDENT SUCCESS and
TECHNOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Friday, September 5, 2025 at 3:30pm-4:15pm
ZOOM meeting**

**<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85423670605?pwd=n8zxWcRtGAbQvUXgJbwl76zASt3bBd.1>
Meeting ID: 854 2367 0605
Passcode: 251951**

This meeting may be recorded, and your image or voice may be broadcast.

Due to technical issues this meeting may not always stream live, but we will make every attempt to do so and to record the meeting for future posting.

The items listed on the agenda may be discussed out of order as the Chair decides due to potential scheduling and timing requirements.

Minutes written by Jessica Degliaberti, 9/5/25. 4:35pm.

Attendees include Chair subcommittee Jessica Degliaberti, Beth Mancini, Joe Sposato and Al Ganem. The meeting was recorded on zoom and to be uploaded by WBAC for public access.

I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order 3:31pm

II. Business Items

- **Joseph Sposato- Tech update-** Chromebook safety monitoring/at home

protections (bark parent control at home?), middle school parent communication options (in school-upload photos/printing at home) and coach/sports communications- ? Game Changer, etc)

-Joe and Al had meeting with administration and had input from teachers and they decided to create a WHITE LIST for MIDDLE SCHOOL students including parent/guardian emails in POWERSCHOOL. The decision to limit the middle school had been an administrative procedural one after an urgent safety concern with middle school emailing. This topic will appear under Joe's Technology Update on the full S.C. meeting on the 9th. If discussion goes well on the 9th, the plan is to try to make it happen for September 15th implementation. Parents will be responsible for making sure their PowerSchool emails are up to date. (this topic was taking out of order per the chair of the subcommittee, as it changed much of the discussion around the topics). Parent concerns included communication for after school events, inability to email for school projects, printing and also delaying the giving of a smart phone.

-Jessica and Beth thanked Joe for his hard work updating the district and protecting students. As parents and as school committee members, they appreciated his efforts to update protections for the students and tools for staff.

-Chromebooks now have at home protections that follow them off school wifi. Bark is in place in the district, however it is Securly that is a newer program in the district that will eventually give parents the ability to control the chromebook under their home wifi. Securly is first going to be up and running for a tool for teacher's in the classroom to allow teacher's to limit the programs they are in for a particular class/project and to monitor their desktops from their own laptop. Settings are being configured and eventually, trainings for staff will be first (tool teachers can choose to use, not required) and then training for parents how to use Securly at home (timeline TBD but in progress).

-Bring Your Own Computer (BYOC) will be phased out in order to allow district safety guards to be in place in schools on district wifi.

-Parents will be able to email with their students regarding sports and other after school activities and rides, etc. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the front office via written note still per the handbook. There may be future discussions with new Athletic Director about apps, like Game Changer.

• **Discussion- Dismissal App** – Used at BES/BMS, implement at MS/HS?

-AI had a discussion with middle and high school administration and staff and the ultimate concern is that students would log into the app and log dismissals or absences, rather than the parents. They prefer the note delivered to the office, which also helps foster communication skills for the students. Dismissal App is currently used at the elementary level to report absences, early dismissals and change in dismissal plans.

- **Current cell phone MA legislation & feedback from other schools**
(<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/S2581>)

-**The STUDY ACT (Safe Technology Use and Distraction Free Education Youth Act)**, or MA Legislation S2581, has passed in the Senate and gone to the MA House. Past meetings, we have mentioned the **Mass A.G. Cell Phone and Social Media in Schools Toolkit**
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/cell-phones-and-social-media-in-schoolsa-toolkit-for-school-leaders-and-communities-1232025/download#MaEdu> which lays out a pathway for schools and districts to know why there is an issue and how to explore how to create policy's. One such recommendation is Community/Parent nights for discussion after a few talking points/video/student testimonials. April 17th, BES parents requested a New Norms discussion. BES 5th grade parents (now 6th grade parents) had approached the principal who organized a Cyber Security Event with the Boylston PD on 2/24/25. Several parents were concerned about the level of bullying occurring via phones and messaging. (Bark App, app that uses AI to monitor phone usage and content, was discussed at that time. The District currently uses this on Chromebooks/email).

-Jessica outreached to several schools listed in the Toolkit and eventually heard back from Brockton's HS principal, when school committee members forwarded my inquiries. (SEE BELOW)

Discussion with Brockton HS principal after 1 full year Cell Phone Free (9/5/25)

Kevin McCaskill was generous enough to talk on the phone with me today about their journey of going Cell Phone Free in Brockton High School (9-12).

He started as Principal in Jan 2024 and the school committee had gone to Springfield and seen their implementation of the Yondr pouches and Cell Phone Free policy. In March 2024, the administrative team at the high school started a series of nights for parents. They showed the 15 min video from Yondr (15 minutes) about the data explaining its importance for education and our students to go Cell Phone Free and also student testimonials of students going Cell Phone Free. They did not have a panel of experts to facilitate conversation.

Kevin McCaskill, Brockton's HS principal, talked about the parent nights, had the short introduction video and mentioned a few talking points and then opened it up for questions. He mentioned that they were careful not to call it a ban, because it is a Cell Phone Free helps 1) focus back on education 2) Interpersonal skills (conversations skills increased- peer-to-peer and student-to teacher 3) 50% drop in skipping class (not texting to meet in bathroom) 4) Increased performance- A.P. passing scores increased by 12% 5) MCAS participation increased; slight increase in math scores (felt MCAS ELA scores impacted by 1st year not graduation requirement).

The principal then discussed the issues they improved to deal with no cell phone communication. They improved their website and phone numbers for all staff. He also mentioned that the biggest concern from parents is an active shooter situation. He said that a cell phone in a student's hand is a source of misinformation and also safety concern of phones ringing bringing attention to the student with the phone. He also cited all the cell phone calls/texts would jam the cell phone tower that would not allow Police, etc to communicate.

He is the principal at the HS, one only grades 9-12 and 4,000 students. Interestingly, their students are allowed to email outside of the school, but not each other, which was for bullying purposes. They have electronic passes with a timer limit on them as well.

For class projects, a teacher or staff member has the special unlock for use and has to relock it at the end. For IEP and 504, they use velcro pouches that they can use their phones per their IEP/504.

Yondr – \$30-40/pouch, \$140,000 for 4,000 pouches and also the unlocking magnets (regular magnets DO NOT WORK).

He directed me to contact Lisa Thomas, Principal of South Middle School, regarding their policies. Looking online, they are similar to our current HS policy allowing phones at lunch. There are 7 middle schools, so the cost was a limiting factor when implementing them for their district (4,000 students in their HS). I'm waiting for her reply as of the time of the meeting. -Jessica Degliaberti

- **Community evening event proposal**/Live YouTube streaming- Anxious Generation book chat, Community Norms, Wait until 8th, Let Grow, technology safe tips by Joe? (Bark App, etc)>Vote by full committee with proposal
-As laid out in the AG Cell Phone and Social Media in Schools Toolkit (see above for link), they recommend Community Norms and Parent Sessions to discuss why cell phones in schools are an issue and how it is effecting mental health, academic performance and frontal cortex development (executive functioning). John Campbell has mentioned the research and conclusion in prior subcommittee meetings.

-Jonathan Haidt (Social Psychologist) wrote *Anxious Generation*, which Lisa Sequira had read and sent out a wonderful newsletter on, has 4 main Norms that he feels our social needs to work on together, in order to protect our children from further harm.

1. No smart phone until age 14/high school (not internet, but smart phone).
2. No social media until age 16 years.
3. Phone free schools
4. Increase Free Play and Increase Independence.

-Wait Until 8th is a movement that allows parents to take a pledge to wait for a smart phone until after 8th grade. (Community Norm)

-Let Grow is a movement, that challenges parents and students, to develop confidence doing new skills independently, which in turn decreases anxiety.

-The envisioned Community Discussion Night would have a 10-15 minute video (Brockton used Yandr's video with talking points and student testimonials or we could consider an a-political video of Jonathan Haidt or see what the MA AG's office has for resources with AI's former student, Julie Bronowski (sp?). A panel would be assembled of pediatricians/doctors, therapists, school counselors, principals if they want to participate, teachers, parents whose purpose would be to facilitate fact based conversations with parents and community members who attend.

-Ideally the event would be live streamed. Many 5th grade parents give in to child pressures during the 5th grade year, because of fears being left out from group chats socially, impending middle school and the need to communicate for after school events/transportation (again, excitement is mentioned for middle school emails being open to parents to email their students which helps parents delay a cell phone).

-Fall competing events with Superintendent Search and Strategic Plan are scheduled, but the planning and solidifying of the plan for the Community Event should move forward at a Full Committee level as not to delay the event, even if it takes place in January, after a Superintendent has been chosen and events are over for the Search.

• **A.I. summer program** discussion (tentative)-

<https://www.inspiritai.com/team>

-Email regarding possible summer Artificial Intelligence program at Tahanto. Not Phishing, google led to website. Defer to Joe and Renee to see if something district would like to pursue.

-Recognize that using Artificial Intelligence is a skill to be learned and also potentially dangerous, which led to a search that lead to DESE's

website. DESE's Office of Educational Tech (EdTech) has a multi-year A.I. Roadmap. In August 2024 they created a Task Force. In the Spring Summer 2025 they were tasked to create A.I. Literacy, Guidelines & Policies, and still pending are Student Data Privacy resources. In the school year of 2025-2026 (current), they plan on creating workshops, trainings, tool recommendations to enable districts to create Policies and Curriculum in the school year of 2026-2027. Beth mentioned that she saw a WCVB/5abc news segment on Mendon-Upton schools embracing A.I. and using a program called, Magic School, to support learning in their 8th grade at Miscoe Hill Middle School. One classroom used it to generate opening sentences for essays if they had writer's block.

- **Subcommittee function summary**

Proposed: The BBRSD School Committee's Student Success and Technology Sub-Committee aims to facilitate collaboration and communication with staff, parents and students to improve student learning, engagement, and academic and personal success while encouraging responsible and ethical use of technology.

This includes advocating for equitable access to technology, evaluating its impact, and helping to implement and refine strategies that integrate technology into the curriculum and school operations to boost student achievement across all levels.

III. Upcoming Meeting

-Al Ganem mentioned Berlin Insurance donated computer monitors and they will be posted on the Full Committee's agenda for September 9th, 2025 meeting. Al and Joe left the meeting to post the agenda before 5pm. Al requested that future meetings be at 1:15-2:15pm and via zoom to facilitate staff attending.

- **Schedule Monthly Meetings**

Beth and Jessica discussed monthly meetings; will aim for 1 week after the full committee meeting. November has a lot of Superintendent Search events, so will not plan one for now.

Tuesday, October 21st, 2025 @ 1:15pm-2:15pm, likely Zoom

Tuesday, December 16th, 2025 @ 1:15pm-2:15pm, likely Zoom (tentative)

The listing of items is those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may, in fact, be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.