



Office of Youth Leadership

Boston Public Schools
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street, 6th Floor
Roxbury, Massachusetts 02119
BSAC@bostonpublicschools.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: Boston School Committee
FROM: Dennisse Rorie, Director Office of Youth Leadership
CC: Mary Skipper, Superintendent, Samuel DePina, Deputy Superintendent of Operations
DATE: December 3, 2025
RE: BPS Cellphone Policy Working Group

Background and Context

In November 2024, students from the Boston Student Advisory Council began advocating for a reformed cell phone policy with a specific focus on ending the use of Yondr pouches in schools. Through this process students gathered over 1200 signatures on a petition in support of ending the use of Yondr pouches, hosted multiple town halls with students, school leaders, and educators, and developed a cellphone policy proposal absent of Yondr pouches. From this advocacy, a working group was suggested to tackle these issues.

Since the BPS working group was announced in May of 2025, the State of Massachusetts put forward bill S.2561 which will require all public schools to have a “bell to bell” ban on cellphones during the school day. In anticipation of the incoming state-wide cell phone reform, the working group is reviewing and assessing the current BPS cellphone policy, reviewing the Senate bill S.2561 and working collaboratively to plan for the incoming state-wide cell phone reform. The working group is on track to provide recommendations to the Superintendent and School Committee regarding an updated policy recommendation at the latest in Spring 2026.

BPS’s current cellphone policy was last updated in 2005. Currently, cell phones are not permitted for use during the school day and should not be visible. As it stands the cell phone policy is an “off and away” policy.

[Senate Bill S.2561](#) was passed in August of 2025. This bill calls for a bell to bell ban on cell phones in all public schools in Massachusetts.

“Each public school or district shall adopt a policy regarding the prohibition of student use of a personal electronic device, as defined in section 38 of chapter on school grounds during the school day and during school-sponsored activities during the school day. The policy shall include, but not be limited to: (i) a prohibition on the use and actual possession, strictly on their person, of a personal electronic device by a student during the school day, which shall include, but not be limited to, recess, a lunch period and time in between classes.”

The bill goes on to outline that students with differing needs or medical needs will be exempt from this policy but guardrails will still be put in place to ensure students are using their phones solely for the purposes outlined in their IEP or from a doctor.

Cell Phone Working Group

A cell phone working group was established in October of 2025 and has met three times. The group consists of representatives from Sociedad Latina, The Mattapan Teen Center, a BPS social worker, a BPS parent, and two students. The goal of the working group is to provide recommendations to the Superintendent and to focus on two guiding questions:

- 1) What do our students, families and educators need in order to adopt this new cell phone policy?
- 2) What method or mechanism will BPS use to enforce the bell to bell policy?

The working group collected feedback from the school leader cabinet through a survey and is hosting one hour focus groups with parents, students, educators and administrators.

Next Steps for Working Group

- Collect additional feedback from the school leader cabinet
- Host focus groups with educators
- Host focus groups with students and parents
- Meet with appropriate experts (legal, other districts, etc.)
- Draft initial policy recommendation and gather feedback from internal and external stakeholders
- Present final draft to Superintendent and School Committee (Spring 2026)
- Implement new policy in (Fall 2026)