PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
John F. Kennedy High School
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Dr. Laurie W. Newell
Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We are writing to share an important update regarding student use of personal internet-enabled devices (i.e., cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, etc.) during the school day. In accordance with a recently enacted law and the New Jersey Department of Education's 2026 Guidance for Schools on Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices, all school districts are required to adopt policies that prohibit the use of personal internet-enabled devices, from "Bell-to Bell". This policy requires that all personal internet-enabled devices must be turned off and not in use for the duration of the school day; from the first bell to the last bell. Except for circumstances outlined in the law and guidance, personal devices may not be used at any time during the school day, including during lunch or in between classes.

This law was enacted as a public health measure in response to growing concerns regarding the impact of excessive device and social media use on adolescents. Research shows that:

· Nearly 95% of high school-aged students use social media, with many reporting frequent or near-constant use.

· Teens may spend up to 7 hours per day on social media, with a portion of that time occurring during the school day

· Students who spend more than three hours per day on social media are at greater risk for anxiety and depression

Reducing access to personal internet-enabled devices during the school day is intended to support student learning, improve focus, and increase opportunities for meaningful, in-person interactions with peers and school staff.

Staying connected with your child:

We recognize that many families may have grown accustomed to communicating directly with their children during the school day. To support this transition, we encourage the following:

· In case of an emergency, please contact the school's main office, and staff will ensure messages are delivered promptly.

· Students may access the main office if they need to contact a parent or caregiver.

· Students may continue to use their district-issued email accounts to communicate with their parents as appropriate.

· (If permitted by local policy) Students may use basic communication devices that do not have internet capabilities (e.g., flip phones or similar non-internet-enabled devices) to
contact parents during lunch or between classes. This allowance is determined at the district level and applies only to devices that cannot access the internet.
We understand that this policy may represent a change from the regular routines of students and families. However, it reflects a shared commitment to supporting students' academic success, social development, and overall well-being.
We appreciate your partnership as we implement this policy and work together to foster a focused, supportive, and healthy learning environment for all students. If you have any questions, please email vserrano@paterson.k12.nj.us .
Thank you for your continued support.
Warm regards,
Dr. Vanessa Serrano
Principal
John F. Kennedy High School