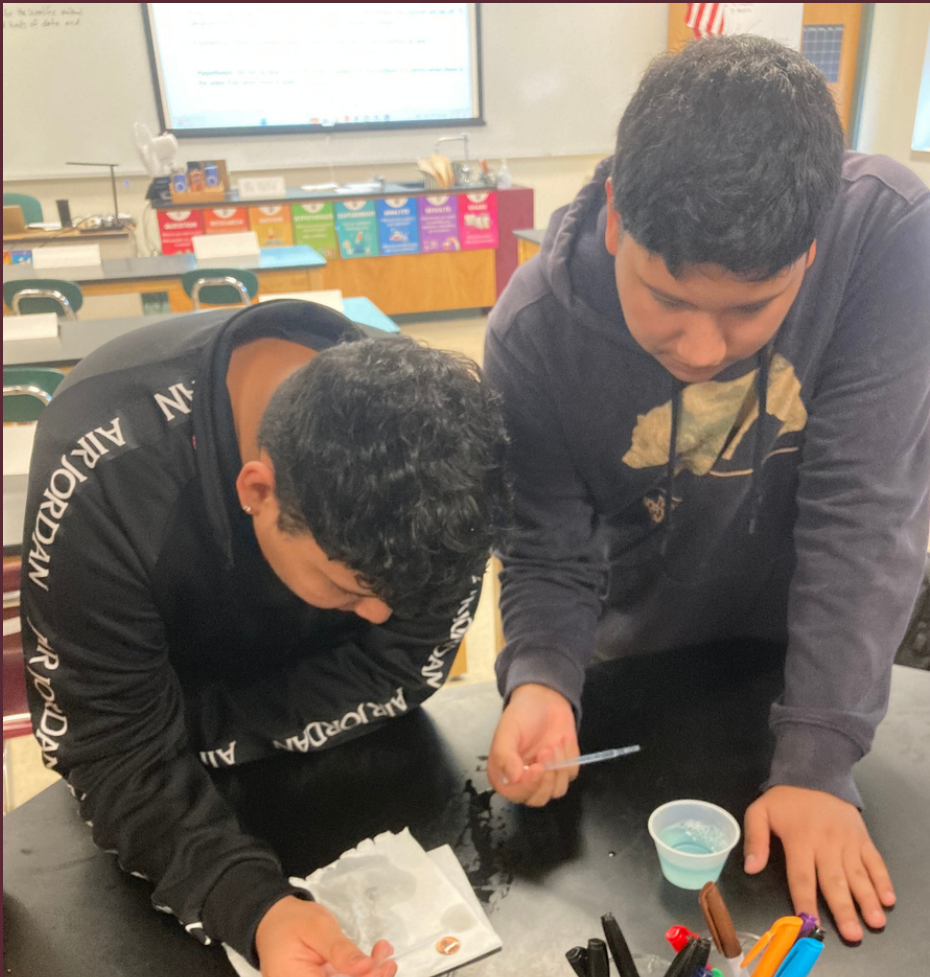




REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

9.16.26



Cell Phone Protocol and Update

Legislation:

- *July 2025: MA Senate Bill passed*
 - *Prohibits student cell phone use during the school day*
- *April 2026: MA House Bill passed*
 - *Prohibits cell phone use from school arrival through dismissal*
 - *Creates protections from social media for students under 14, parental approval for students 14-15*
- *September 2026:*
 - *Awaiting resolution between the House and Senate*



Cell Phone Protocol and Update

Spring 2026: DESE guidelines define, make recommendations re: various approaches:

- **“Phone-free ‘bell-to-bell’”:** Phones are not physically accessible to students until the end of the day (i.e. Yondr pouches, Lockers, Software-based options [Doorman, others])
- **“Off + away”:** Phones turned off and stored out of sight for entire day (i.e. Shoe-caddies, etc.)
- **“Limited Use”:** Cell phones are expected to be powered off and stored out of sight during day- may be used during designated times and in specific areas



Cell Phone Protocol and Update

Summer-Fall 2026:

ARHS Objectives:

To reduce as much as possible:

- *the distraction cell phones in class*
- *the attraction cell phones generate for being out of class*



Cell Phone Protocol and Update

Spring 2026:

- *NSBORO joins MetroWest Digital Wellness Collaborative:*
 - *Focus is on 'helping young people engage with technology in healthy ways'*



Cell Phone Protocol and Update

RESULTS FROM FALL 2025 MWAHS:

- Social media use: Nearly doubled — 22.6% (2016) → 42.9% (2025)
- Smartphone use: 3+ hours/day increased — 50.6% (2021) → 65.4% (2025)
- Problematic technology use is concerning:
 - 40% of all ARHS students screened at or above the threshold for further evaluation*:
 - Higher for females (46.5%) than males (32.5%)

* As measured by the Problematic and Risky Internet Use Screening Scale (PRIUSS)



Cell Phone Protocol and Update

Spring 2026:

- *Explore approaches for Fall 2026 for managing cell phones.*

Options considered:

- Continuation of “Off + away” approach
- “Phone-free ‘bell-to-bell’” solutions
- *Survey of families to identify priorities:*
 - Widespread acknowledgment of issues of phones in schools, impact on teen mental health
 - Strong desire to contact their child in case of emergency



Cell Phone Protocol and Update

Spring 2026:

- *Exploration of “Phone-free ‘bell-to-bell’” solutions:*
 - *Yondr pouches*
 - *Geofencing apps*
 - *Doorman*



Cell Phone Protocol and Update

Spring 2026:

- *Program development, incl. vendor vetting of Doorman:*
 - *April- May:*
 - *Virtual meetings with, school visit to Watertown HS, which employs Doorman*
 - *Virtual meetings with Doorman staff*
 - *June:*
 - *Review/approval of data privacy policies - completed by The Education Collaborative*
 - *DPA signed*
 - *Reviewed, approved by NSBORO legal counsel*
 - *Community education, engagement - early efforts (stakeholder groups, email update to families)*



Cell Phone Protocol and Update

Fall 2026:

- *August- September:*
 - *Community engagement and education*
 - *Preparation - then delay - of launch*
 - *Sept. 2 and Sept 16 launch dates pushed back*
- *Current Priorities:*
 - *Identify and address technical issue*
 - *Build understanding and consensus in the community around ARHS approach to cell phones*
 - *Incl. accessing student voice*
- *In the meantime:*
 - *“Off + away” program (i.e. shoe caddies) in effect*



Algonquin Regional High School



PRINCIPAL'S REPORT



9.16.26

