*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:** | May 17, 2023 |
| **Subject:** | Presentation on Use of Electronic Communication Devices in High School |

There is growing evidence of the negative impact of the use of electronic communication devices such as cell phones during class time and during the school day. In addition to the distraction from teaching, learning, and student engagement, research shows that cell phone use and social media have contributed negatively to mental health and poor sleep habits in teens. This has been exacerbated by the unprecedented growth in cellphone and social media use during the pandemic.

Massachusetts public schools and districts have taken a variety of approaches to cell phone use. For example, some have instituted policies requiring students to turn in their phone at the beginning of the school day and students retrieve it at the end of the day; or have students place their cell phone in a magnetically-sealed pouch upon arriving at school and unlock it at the end of the school day; or encourage teachers to adopt classroom rules and practices where students are required to place their cell phone in a “cell phone hotel” during the class but can access it between classes and during the lunch period.

At the meeting on May 23, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will hear from representatives of several schools and districts about the approaches they have taken on this issue. They will provide reflections on their experience implementing these practices and the results in their school communities.